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**Critical Analysis of Social Work Supervision in the KwaZulu-Natal Department
of Social Development: An Afrocentric Perspective**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi, hereby declare that this thesis is my original work. I also declare that in this thesis, except where indicated through sources in-text and bibliography, does not contain other person's data, pictures, or other information. The study has not been previously submitted for examination to any university or institution.

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DEDICATION

"Before I formed you in your mother's womb, I chose you. Before you were born, I set you apart. I appointed you..."

Jeremiah 1:5

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple."

Psalm 27:4

"I come as one, but I stand as ten thousand."

Maya Angelou.

I dedicate this study to **ALL children** who were born unplanned for like myself. I want to say ALL your dreams are valid and possible. I dedicate this study to all social workers who are at the frontline in working with the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized populations. Colleagues, continue with the good work despite the challenges you face because the struggle is not over yet.

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ABSTRACT

The study seeks to use an Afrocentric perspective to critically analyse social work supervision in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Social Development (DSD) to suggest possible ways to develop Afrocentric-based supervision. Threading through this study is the significance of an ongoing relationship on the one hand between supervision and social work practices and on the other the development of supervision alongside the latter. Despite the proximal relationship between social work practice and supervision, the vast scholarly contribution to Afrocentric social work, and several Afrocentric-related studies conducted in the DSD, there is a view that there is not much published expression on the conceptual and contextual understanding of supervision that embraces the Afrocentric paradigm. The Afrocentric theory and critical social theory underpinned the study. Twenty social workers and supervisors were purposively sampled from the identified districts on the KZN DSD. Three key informants were also selected for expert opinions in relation to the critical analysis of social work supervision through the Afrocentric perspective. Data was collected from the participants through in-depth semi-structured interviews and analysed through thematic data analysis. Findings reveal that participants mainly conceptualise supervision that would be Afrocentric-based as one that is culturally relevant, considers African spirituality and traditions, is people and community-centered, and is characterised by humanness and holistic. Hence, participants described the features of Afrocentric-based supervision as one that should recognise African cultures and traditions and be community-centered, holistic, and Ubuntu-centered. Participants' description of the features of the Afrocentric-based supervision is consistent with the key informant's description as they concluded that Afrocentric-based supervision should be informed by justice, truth, commitment, peacefulness, calmness, and community. Policy transformation and restructuring, stakeholder engagement and consultation, and conducting extensive research on Afrocentric-based supervision were among the possible ways that participants deemed critical towards the development of Afrocentric-based supervision. The study recommendations are threefold and relate to recommendations relating to future research, current social work practice, and policy restructuring.

Keywords: Afrocentricity, Afrocentric-based supervision, social worker, supervisor, supervision.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Terminology
Africanisation	<p>Louw (2010:42) provides a comprehensive definition of Africanisation and states that:</p> <p><i>“Africanisation is the process of defining or interpreting African identity and culture. It is not a process of exclusion, but inclusion. It is a learning process and a way of life for Africans. It involves incorporating, adapting and integrating other cultures into and through African visions to provide the dynamism, evolution and flexibility so essential in the global village”.</i></p>
Afrocentricity	<p>Chawane (2016:17) defines:</p> <p><i>“Afrocentricity as a manner of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. He further states that Afrocentricity is an exercise in knowledge and a new historical perspective. In this study, the term Afrocentricity is sometimes used interchangeably with the term Afrocentric”.</i></p>
Colonisation	<p>Chivuara (2020:65) defines colonisation as:</p> <p><i>“an action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of a geographic area”.</i></p>
Colonialism	<p>Smith (2012:169) provides a detailed definition of colonialism and defines it as follows:</p> <p><i>“Colonialism is an ongoing process by which imperialism creates outposts by resettling the lands it has stolen. This</i></p>

	<p><i>has often been done by abducting Indigenous populations and enslaving them in other colonised territories where they might displace those Indigenous populations. Other strategies used by colonisers include the appropriation of sovereignty by dismissing Indigenous societies' systems of order and displacing them with European-controlled government and legal systems, as well as cartography (map making) and the 'charting of territory' thereby forcing indigenous people to learn new names for their own land".</i></p>
Decolonisation	<p>Lysaker, (2022:1) defines decolonisation as the:</p> <p><i>“process of rejecting Euro-centricity in favour of indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in which individuals and systems subvert established norms”.</i></p>
Supervision	<p>The SACSSP and DSD (2012:18) provide a detailed definition of supervision within the profession of social work and state:</p> <p><i>“Supervision is a formal arrangement where supervisees review and reflect on their work. It is related to ongoing learning and performance. Social work supervision is an interactional process within the context of a positive anti-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models and perspectives on supervision whereby a supervisor with the required experience and qualification, and to whom authority is delegated, supervises a social worker, student social worker, social auxiliary worker and learner auxiliary worker by performing educational, supportive and administrative functions to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services”.</i></p>
Indigenisation	<p>Law and Lee (2016:69) define indigenisation as the:</p>

	<p><i>“process of developing culturally relevant social work”</i>. With regards to supervision in this study, it is used to describe the process of developing African cultural relevant supervision”.</p>
Managerialism	<p>O’Reilly and Reed (2010:962) define managerialism as:</p> <p><i>“the belief that all aspects of organisational life can and should be managed according to rational structures, procedures, and modes of accountability in the pursuit of goals defined by policymakers and senior managers”</i>.</p>
Ubuntu	<p>Sulamoyo (2010:41) defines <i>Ubuntu</i> as follows:</p> <p><i>“as humaneness which is a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness that individuals and groups display for one another. Ubuntu is the foundation for the basic values that manifest themselves in the ways African people think and behave toward each other and everyone else they encounter”</i>.</p>

ACRONYMS

DSD	Department of Social Development
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NFD	Non-Financial Data
PCQA	Professional Compliance and Quality Assurance
SACSSP	South African Council Social Service Profession
HoD	Head of Department
SWP	Social Work Practitioner
SWS	Social Work Supervisor
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context

Threading through this study is the significant theme of the ongoing relationship between supervision and social work practices, as well as the development of supervision as regards the latter. The chapter presents an overview of the historical developments of social work supervision from a global perspective and in the South African context. Literature on supervision practice reflects that supervision has been at the heart of social work practices globally. Pecora, Cherin, Bruce, and de Jesus Arguello (2010) state that social work supervision has drawn on the practice traditions that emerged when the profession of social work first began. Munson (2012) mentions that it is not known for certain where, when, or how the traditional model of social work supervision originated. Scant scholarly attention has been paid to uncover the historical developments of social work supervision; hence, little is known about how and when it began (Tsui, 2005).

Engelbrecht (2012) mentions that the origin of social work supervision, internationally, is embedded in its administrative function and can be traced back to the Charity Organisation Societies movement in Europe and North America in 1878. Throughout the history of supervision, the dual forces of social service organisations and the social work profession shaped social work supervision with its development and emphasis accentuating either managerial or professional interests (O'Donoghue, 2010). As the early social work practice was mainly preoccupied with defining problems, identifying social ills, and constructing theories to explain problems, supervision is believed to have been instrumental in this regard, though its role cannot be articulated accurately.

Evident from literature originating from the early years of social work supervision is that supervision was mainly viewed in the light of its administrative functions only and could not clearly define the roles of social workers who were being supervised. O'Donoghue (2010) outlines that in the early stages of social work supervision, the focus was predominantly on the role and activity of the supervisor and supervision

literature is silent concerning the role and activity of the supervisee. A major shift in the field of supervision was realised through the scholarly contribution in the form of a book by Virginia Robinson (1936), who acknowledges education as another integral function of supervision. This book is viewed to have expanded the definition of supervision, by including an educational aspect as one of the functions of supervision and led the way for other significant publications that expanded on the educational function of supervision (Engelbrecht, 2012).

Social work supervision in South Africa is not a new phenomenon having been practiced for more than half a century (Engelbrecht, 2012). Building on the global academic developments of supervision in South Africa, supervision has gradually received scholarly attention. In the South African context, the history of supervision has been directly linked to the country's unique history of administrative systems (colonialism, apartheid, and democracy) and the developments in social work practice. O'Donoghue (2015:137-138) explains that "social work supervision is inseparable from social work practice as the evolution of supervision has primarily been influenced by the development of the social work profession with supervision aiding the development of practitioners and their social work practice with clients". On the other hand, O'Donoghue and Engelbrecht (2021) mention that the differential understanding of colonialism, apartheid, and the democratic eras are shaping the narrative of the evolution of social work supervision in South Africa. There is sufficient literature alluding to the reciprocal relationship between social work practice and supervision or supervision as a core element of practice (Engelbrecht, 2012; Ncube, 2016; Tsui, 2009). It is on these grounds that it is important to narrate the history of social work supervision by being specific to the era as that has a great bearing on the socio-economic development of the country.

From 1652 to 1910, South Africa experienced a colonial occupation by the Dutch and British, which resulted in slavery, racial segregation, poverty, and the severe exploitation of the indigenous people. During the colonial era, a welfare system that was founded upon the norms and values of the Western society, fostered initially not by government but by missionaries, was introduced and enforced during that era (Ross, 2018). Patel (2014) held a similar view, mentioning that colonial administrations adopted the socio-economic organisation of the colonies, to their interest, with the

primary aim of establishing and sustaining the conditions necessary for economic activity. In the process of colonisation, social work supervision and social work in particular were instrumental in enforcing colonialism doctrine and aspirations to social work practitioners in South Africa. O'Donoghue (2010) asserts that as part of social work, supervision has been used as a tool to reinforce the colonisation process of the 19th and 20th centuries. The deliberate use of supervision as a tool to reinforce colonization made the practice of supervision in South Africa to be more centered around the norms and values of western-influenced supervisory ideas and neglected the indigenous African ways in which people were supervised and mentored. In support of the view shared, Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) state that the first problem entails the fact that social work is based on theories and paradigms that are underpinned by a Western worldview. As a result, the concept of welfare was found mainly in cities, as the British welfare programs focused on juvenile delinquency and correction, while in francophone Africa, the French welfare programs focused on medical-social programs (Ross, 2018) with social work supervision at the centre of enforcing the doctrine of colonialism.

Formalised social work came very late to South Africa, well after the unification in 1910. Noyoo (2021) asserts that the reason for establishing social work practice in South Africa was crystallised after the National Conference at Kimberley in 1934 on the 'Poor White Problem', resulting in the creation of the state Department of Welfare in 1937, both under Hertzog's Nationalist government. The establishment of the state Department of Welfare was as an attempt to resolve the escalating poverty within the white population, neglecting the poverty plights faced by Africans in particular. Before the establishment of the State Department of Welfare, several non-governmental organisations were established to deal with poverty (O'Donoghue & Engelbrecht, 2021). It is upon this basis that Patel (2014) states that the colonial era laid upon was the foundation of racial discrimination, denigration of indigenous ways, paternalism in social services, and the distorted nature of social welfare policies favoring whites as the welfare elite. Therefore, social work supervision has always adjusted itself to the current socio-political context as supervision during the colonial era was deeply rooted in the doctrine and aspirations of colonialism, even though it was largely administrative. Spitzer, Twikirize, and Wairire (2014) state that social work education

and practice essentially serve the needs of the colonial government. Consequently, the doctrine of white supremacy became the basic foundation upon which the system of apartheid was built.

Patel (2014) states that in 1948 the National Party came to power as a result of a class alliance of the Afrikaners, with a strong support base amongst white workers. Noyoo (2021) explains that the racist values of white supremacy informed residual social welfare in apartheid South Africa that had institutionalised the policy of apartheid or racial segregation. The transition of the country from being a colonial state to being an apartheid state necessitated the adaptation of social work practices and supervision to suit the aspirations and ideology of apartheid which segregated people according to race or ethnic groups. In reference to the practice of supervision during this era, Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) mention that during the apartheid era, social workers in South Africa were supervised according to their race. As a result, supervision was differently applied across different races.

The differential application of supervision across different races had a negative impact on supervision, particularly in the implementation and execution of supervision in South Africa and caused social work supervision to be weakened even further. As a result of having supervision applied differently across races, massive exploitation of social workers from other racial backgrounds and the deprivation of their professional growth subsequently increased their workloads and stress levels. Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) state that the exploitation of social workers became a common cause because the newly graduated white social workers were allocated supervisory roles based on their race. This happened as a result of what Noyoo (2021) described when he stated that apartheid policies and legislation heavily impacted the social welfare system of the country, in turn influencing social work education and social work practice. Smith (2014:316) explains that: “the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 impacted on social work training institutions, creating separate-race educational institutions and restricting admission of ‘other-than-white’ students to ‘non-racial’ universities such as in Cape Town, Natal and the Witwatersrand”.

The impact of separate-race institutions created a situation where black social workers could be trained but could not supervise because of their race, but they could be supervised by their white peers. Despite the racial apartheid ideology that characterised social work supervision and social welfare system, the field of

supervision in South Africa marked significant scholarly attention as several publications were published during apartheid. O'Donoghue and Engelbrecht (2021) state that the interest in supervision in social work was fuelled by the first articles on South African supervision published by Barretter (1968). The turning point was signified by Botha's (1971) exposition of administration, education, and support as integrated functions of supervision, which sparked an interest in the expansion of the sole administrative function of supervision to include education and support (Engelbrecht, 2021). Several scholars interrogated the field of social work supervision until democratic dispensation was realised in South Africa.

Swart, Gouws, Peterson, Erasmus, and Bosman (2012) assert that since the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has embarked on a long and strenuous process of reconstruction and development. The country embarked on the path towards transformation and redressing of the injustices of the past and consequently adopted a developmental approach to social welfare. The adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) led to the construction and transformation of social welfare in South Africa (Nicholas, Rautenbanch, & Maistry, 2010). The transition meant that the social work profession and social work supervision had to undergo fundamental changes from racially discriminating practices to human rights centered practices grounded upon justice and equality which suit the ideals of the developmental state. Noyoo (2021) confirms that after South Africa became a democratic country, social work education became crucial in propagating the new welfare system, believing it would impact positively on practice.

It is evident that the transformation to developmental social welfare, owing to the change in political dispensation, presented new social work supervision challenges for the Department of Social Development (DSD). The recognition of social work as scarce in 2006 led to the massive recruitment of social workers which compromised the quality of social work supervision as there was a lack of structured supervision and poor-quality supervisors, who themselves also lack the capacity to conduct professional supervision (Engelbrecht, 2010; DSD, 2006). The massive recruitment which did not prioritised the strengthening of supervision in the DSD resulted in a 'brain drain' within the supervision expertise (Engelbrecht, 2010). The supervision problems identified by the department led the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and DSD (2012) to formulate the Supervision Framework for

Social Work Profession in South Africa (herein referred to as the Supervision Framework) as a means of overcoming supervision challenges so that the service delivery to service users could be improved to realise the goal of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). Even after the formulation of the Supervision Framework, several scholars (Baloyi, 2017; Chibaya & Engelbrecht, 2022; Engelbrecht, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013; Gumbi, 2021; Makoka, 2016; Ramabulana-Ndzuta, 2022) found that supervision is influenced and impacted negatively by lack of human and capital resources, poor planning and disorganised work, heavy workloads, and prioritisation of the administrative function.

The defining moment in the democratic dispensation in South Africa has been the massive 2015 protests by students and academics calling for fee-free education and the decolonisation of education in higher education institutions. Ross (2018) asserts that the #Fees-Must-Fall movement of 2015 did not only focus on the exorbitant tuition fees charged by universities, but it was also accompanied by a plea for the decolonisation of South African education. Ultimately, this collective pursuit has been to arrive at a goal that would have the effect of starkly focusing universities on the need to revisit the impact of colonialism, and the concomitant need to indigenise curricula. This call to decolonise education has serious long-term implications for both social work practices and the practice of supervision in South Africa as it necessitates the revisiting of the curriculum, literature, and theories used in schools of social work.

According to Engelbrecht (2019), decolonisation, specifically in the context of supervision of social workers in South Africa, may imply a dismantling of Western-dominated theories and knowledge to address local challenges. In response to the call to decolonise knowledge, the researcher further argues for the need for the Africanisation and indigenisation of knowledge in the field of social work, particularly social work supervision. Le Grange (2018:09) explains that “decolonisation and Africanisation are not synonymous as Africanisation could, in fact, be an impediment to decolonisation because it involves the systematic and deliberate deployment of Africans in positions that enable them to gain control of society”. It is on this basis that the researcher argues that the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision in social work practice would empower social workers to understand African problems facing clients from the African context and be relevant in addressing these social problems.

Therefore, threading through this study are the intersecting views of social workers, social work supervisors, and key informants that are critically analysing social work supervision within the DSD with the aim of proposing possible ways for achieving Afrocentric-based supervision.

1.2. Rationale and Significance

The 2015 nationwide protests by students and academics posed critical questions on the nature and type of education and curriculum in South Africa. In the process, the #Fees-Must-Fall movement, as it was called, advocated for the decolonisation of education in South Africa. The call to decolonise education found its significance in social work education in higher education. Several social work researchers and scholars responded and continued to respond to such a call with implications that necessitated the critical review of the social work curriculum (Manomano, Nyanhoto & Gutura, 2020; Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018; Rasool & Harms-Smith, 2021; Turton, 2019). The critical review of the social work education curriculum is believed to achieve that which Yadav (2020) mentions when he states that social work education and practice should engage in empowering marginalised and minority sections of society and contribute to emancipatory and developmental goals. Supervision in the social work profession is considered the core of social work practices as it allows social workers to deliver effective and efficient services to clients, which is critical in developmental social welfare (Engelbrecht, 2010; Ncube, 2016; Tsui, 2004). However, for supervision to enable social workers to deliver effective and efficient services has to lean towards professional supervision, which balances the execution of the educational, supportive, and administrative functions rather than managerial supervision (Gumbi, Mazibuko & Sithole, 2024; Sithole, 2020; Chibaya & Engelbrecht, 2022).

The South African government's adoption of the developmental social welfare approach was influenced by the acknowledgment that the country's problems are unique and require unique interventions. Edigheji (2010) states that building a developmental state in South Africa emanates from the need to address development challenges facing South Africa, notably growing the economy and reducing the high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment to improve the livelihoods of all South

Africans. According to Mathebane and Sekudu (2018), the starting point towards addressing current imbalances, inequalities, and biases would be to recognise that all forms of knowledge are particularistic and situated in their local context, and that is, Western knowledge is particularistic to the West, as is Afrocentric knowledge to Africa.

This has made several scholars, such as Schiele (1996,1997, 2019), Mungai (2015), Mathabane and Seduku (2018), and others extensively research Afrocentric social work. Afrocentric social work is described as work that embraces the African worldviews and values to be relevant to the needs of the African people (Mungai, 2015). Schiele (1997:818) describes the Afrocentric paradigm of social work as providing “an alternative means through which human problems can be understood and eliminated and it emerges to address and challenge the hegemony that the Eurocentric worldview has over social work's knowledge base.” Supervision in social work enables the supervisees to deliver effective, efficient, and quality services to their clients consistent with the organisation's mandate and professional practices (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). From the literature on the social work practice, little appears to have been done to explore social work supervision through the Afrocentric perspective as there have been several publications and scholarship on Afrocentric social work. Therefore, for social work practitioners to be able to deliver the best services to clients, they need the kind of supervision that is Afrocentric-based and particularistic to Africa. Therefore, the rationale of this study is to endeavor to address the existing gap that exists between Afrocentric social work and Afrocentric-based supervision which has little to no relevant research. Hence, the study aims to use an Afrocentric perspective to critically analyze social work supervision in the DSD with the view of proposing possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

In addition, a study conducted at the DSD in King Cetshwayo District found that supervision is still confronted with major challenges such as the supervision practice being largely influenced by Eurocentric models and approaches, leading to difficulties in its implementation (Gumbi, 2021). Therefore, social work supervision being mainly influenced by Eurocentric models and approaches, alienates it from African values and cultures, thereby negatively affecting the supervision experience. Eurocentric human service paradigms tend to omit content on spirituality, cultures, overly rely on protestant ethics and individualism (Schiele, 1996, 1997; Mabvurira, 2020). The study

also revealed that supervision in the DSD at King Cetshwayo is characterised and negatively influenced by the inconsistent application of supervision methods, lack of support and guidance, and high and unmanageable workloads of both social workers and supervisors (Gumbi, 2021). These findings were deemed as impacting the aspirations to achieve a social work practice grounded upon the developmental social welfare as mandated by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

The challenges of supervision within the DSD as a social service organisation have been deemed as a symptom of serious institutional and systemic problems that the department is facing with the effective execution of the social work practice. This view has been supported by Ncube (2019) who states that social work supervision has largely remained alienated from the developmental approach mandated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), which has compounded problems for effective implementation of social welfare services. Therefore, the researcher believes that there is a need to critically analyse the supervision that is being implemented in the DSD through the appropriate use of the Afrocentric approach.

1.3. Problem statement

Supervision and social work practices are two inseparable constructs, with supervision regarded as the core activity of social work practices. Supervision is regarded as essential in producing positive outcomes in the discourse of social work towards eliminating social problems (Cojocar, 2010). The complexity of social work supervision could be attributed to its contested nature and its relationship with the social work practice. Several studies describe supervision as involving broad activities, namely as the main channel, discourse, vital component, and core practice activity to developing a reflective practice for social workers, with the goal of improving job satisfaction and delivering quality services to clients (Beddoe & Maidment, 2015; Hussein, Stevens, & Sharpe, 2015; Manthorpe, Moriarty, Tsui, 2005).

This study acknowledges the developments around social work practices in general and Afrocentric social work in particular. Afrocentric social work is not a new field, considering that has been subject to scholarly attention by international scholars (Davis, Williams, & Akinyela, 2010; Graham, 1999; Hollingsworth & Phillips, 2017; Mungai, 2015; Pellebon, 2007; Schiele, 1996, 1997) and local scholars (Gatwiri, 2019; Kurevakwesu & Maushe, 2020; Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018; Thabede, 2005) for

decades. There are several studies related to Afrocentric social work that have been conducted in the DSD in South Africa (Mathebane, 2021; Mogorosi & Thabede, 2018; Thabede, 2005). Despite the proximal relationship between social work practice and supervision, the vast scholarly contribution to Afrocentric social work, and several Afrocentric-related studies conducted in the DSD, there is a view that there is not much expression on the conceptual and contextual understanding of supervision that embraces the Afrocentric paradigm. In this regard, the evident scholarly contribution in Afrocentric social work seems not to have cascaded towards understanding the nature of supervision from an Afrocentric perspective in social work practices.

This study sought to bridge the gap in Afrocentric social work practice by critically analysing social work supervision with an Afrocentric perspective, with the subsequent aim to suggest possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. Mungai (2015) not only argues that marginalisation is a reality for Africans and people of African descent but also asserts that overcoming marginalisation is a major objective of Afrocentric social work. In an endeavor to bridge this gap and contribute to similar knowledge, this study utilised the voices of social workers and social work supervisors to understand social work supervision from their perspective with the view to suggest ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. Over and above that, the key informants were sourced to add expert voices in some areas.

1.4. Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

1.4.1. Research Aim

The main aim of this study was to critically analyse social work supervision within the DSD with the aim of proposing possible ways for achieving Afrocentric-based supervision.

1.4.2. Research Objectives

1.4.2.1. To examine social workers' and supervisors' conceptual understandings of the supervision practice and the context in which supervision is implemented in the Department of Social Development.

1.4.2.2. To explore what social workers and supervisors regard as Afrocentric features of the Afrocentric-based supervision practice.

1.4.2.3. To identify the participants' views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision.

1.4.2.4. To explore possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

1.4.3. Research Questions

1.4.3.1. What are social workers' and supervisors' conceptual understandings of supervision practices and the context in which they are implemented in the Department of Social Development?

1.4.3.2. What do social workers and supervisors regard as the Afrocentric features of the Afrocentric-based supervision practices in the Department of Social Development?

1.4.3.3. What are the participants' views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision?

1.4.3.4. What are possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision?

1.5. Theoretical Framework

The proposed study was underpinned by the combination of two theories, namely Afrocentric theory and critical social theory. The Afrocentric theory in the study focuses on the conceptual and practical understanding of supervision practice as applicable in the DSD. The critical social theory in the study focuses on gaining insight into DSD as a structural context in which supervision is undertaken.

1.5.1. Afrocentric Theory

The Afrocentric theory was the main theory, which was used for this study because of its relevance, will be articulately justified. The relevance of the Afrocentric theory emanates from the notion that Afrocentricity becomes a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate, (Kumah-Abiwu, 2016). In so doing, this theory provides an alternative social work supervision practice. Mathabane and Seduku (2018) assert that the current social work knowledge that is characterised by colonial domination in South Africa demands new visions that should be aimed at producing an epistemic revolution that would see the re-emergence of previously silenced knowledge. Therefore, this assertion

necessitates the intentional application of Afrocentricity across social work knowledge which includes supervision.

Midas (2016) asserts that Afrocentricity dates to the 1970s and was popularised by Asante during the 1980s when he developed epistemological and methodological foundations for an Afrocentric curriculum based on an African perspective but aiming for global understanding. The previously stated point was expanded by King and Swartz (2016) who explain and described that the foundations of the construction of this theory can be traced from the work of a Black-American scholar Carter Woodson (1919) who sought to locate African people at the centre of phenomena. One of the pioneers of the Afrocentric theory, Asante (1991), explains Afrocentricity as a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person, while the Afrocentric approach seeks in every situation the appropriate centrality of the African person (Asante, 1987). Furthermore, Fairfax (2017) explains Afrocentricity as a theory concerned with African epistemological relevance to achieve intellectual agency and social change and for inquiries in historical, political, cultural, and developmental proportions where the African culture is at the centre of discovery.

Maphaka and Rapanyane (2020) argue that the central argument of the Afrocentricity theory is that African phenomena or communities cannot be understood in cases where they are studied from outside. The philosophical foundations that underpin an Afrocentric worldview are the interconnectedness of all things and beings, the spiritual nature of human beings, collective/individual identity and the collective/inclusive nature of family structure, oneness of mind, body, and spirit, and the value of interpersonal relationships (Graham, 1999). Davis, Williams, and Akinyela (2010) assert that the usefulness of the Afrocentric research approach is to centre the question on the lived experience of the African peoples so that when the phenomena have been contextualised, it is then viewed from not only a contemporary perspective but a historical perspective as well. This theory was useful in allowing the researcher to explain the critical analysis of supervision in the DSD. This was utilised to achieve what Schiele (2000) stated when he said the Afrocentric perspective is applied to social work research to help generate information on the implications of human behaviour and social events in the lives of people of African descent.

1.5.2. Critical Social Theory

The study also uses critical social theory in the investigation of the topic under consideration. Delanty (2020) asserts that critical social theory emanates from Horkheimer's work in 1937 and 1941 which was a new synthesis of what Hegel, Marx, Weber, and Freud began as a form of immanent critique that was normative, diagnostic, and constructive. Brown (2017) adds that the critical social theory originated during a period of the protracted crisis of capitalism and its critique reflected the diminishing prospects of an emancipatory transformation, therefore, it consequently sought to expose the connections between the rationalisation of modernity and the social pathologies of capitalist reification.

Dobbins, Piga, and Manca (2020) mention that the constructs of a critical social theory are on two-levels, which are social integration of the communicative dimension (lifeworld/society) and systematic integration of the technical-functional dimension (system). This theory is valuable in the study as it also takes into consideration the need for the transformation of societies that were socially disrupted by disruptive systems. Morley (2016) asserts that from a critical social theory perspective, a key understanding of any analysis is to focus on the missing voices of the oppressed groups and clients who require a series of strategies to ensure the inclusion of these voices in social work practice. This theory adds an important aspect to this study as it allows the researcher to view social workers as active advocates of the oppressed, marginalised, and disadvantaged groups or people. Therefore, in combination with the Afrocentric theory it added an interesting dimension to the study as social work practice strives for the promotion of social justice, human rights, and empowerment. The significance of this theory to supervision was that it enabled social work practitioners to fulfil what Hughes (2010) stated, that supervision should allow social work practitioners to reflect on their practice and also grant them a forum to reflect, assess, examine, and create inventive solutions.

As the social work profession aims to promote social justice and human rights, social work supervision makes these aims possible for social workers to reach. Therefore, through the appropriate and critical applications of this theory, the researcher was able to explore how Afrocentric-based supervision can be used as a tool for social transformation and the promotion of social justice. This has been supported by

Delanty's (2020) assertion that critical social theory is concerned with social transformation and the elimination of social injustice, but above all, with the key problem of domination and social irrationality, which justifies and underpins the study. Furthermore, Bentz and Shapiro (1998) mention that this theory also calls for an investigation of the social order and an understanding of why collective needs go unmet when the existing power structure is maintained. Therefore, this theory, in collaboration with the Afrocentricity theory, provides a unique insight into how Afrocentric-based supervision could be used to tackle the challenges faced by social work practitioners in serving DSD service users.

1.6. Introducing Research Methodology

This section provides a brief overview of the research methodology that was undertaken for this particular study. Comprehensive details of the methodology are provided in Chapter Four of this thesis. This study is qualitative and adopts the interpretivist paradigm as a philosophical worldview of approaching the study. Pickard (2017) asserts that interpretivists believe that realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic and there is no single, tangible reality; instead, there are complex, multiple realities of the individual. The advantage the researcher gained from utilising this paradigm was that it allows the researcher to view participants' realities from multiple angles and gives the researcher liberty to understand participants' realities as individuals embedded in their context.

The research study adopted both exploratory and descriptive research designs. The researcher combined the two research designs to form one research design called exploratory-descriptive research design. The aim of adopting this research design was to build from the strengths of the two research designs so that a detailed description and exploration of the Afrocentric critical analysis of the social work supervision in the DSD could be built. The adopted research design ensured that the research findings describe the phenomena and situation being researched and also discover deep information that seeks to answer in greater detail the research questions.

The population for this study were social workers and social work supervisors. Social workers and social work supervisors were sampled according to the pre-established

sampling criteria provided in this section. This research study also included three key informants. The purpose of including key informants in the study was to collect information from experts or professionals who may have expert or first-hand knowledge about the phenomena being researched (Tolich & Tumilty, 2021). Two key informants were experts on professionals from the schools of social work; one was the employee of the DSD at the provincial level. The key informants' profiles are as follows:

- **Key informant one**

The key informant one is social work educator at the professorial level at one of the South African universities. He was chosen based on his reputable contribution to social work supervision research in South Africa.

- **Key informant two**

The key informant two is also a social work educator at the professorial level at one of the South African universities with reputable scholarly contributions in Afrocentric and indigenous social work.

- **Key informant three**

The last informant is an employee of the DSD within the Professional Compliance and Quality Assurance (PCQA) division. She occupies a managerial position at the PCQA division of the DSD and is responsible for compliance, quality assurance, and supervision policy development in the province of KZN DSD. Her selection was mainly based on similar expertise.

For sampling, the researcher utilises non-probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling to sample the participants of the study. Pickard (2017) mentions that the logic of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth. Therefore, the researcher purposively sampled participants that fit the pre-established criteria. In conducting research, the researcher sampled a total number of twenty participants; fifteen were social workers, and five were social work supervisors at the DSD. This approach was guided by the principle of saturation of knowledge. Additionally, three key informants were interviewed to add an expert voice to the subject under exploration. For data collection, the researcher utilised individual face-

to-face and telephonic interviews that are in-depth in nature. For the researcher to gather as much information as possible from the participants, the interview sessions ranged from 50 to 60 minutes per interviewing session. The research interviews were conducted in person in each selected service office of the eThekweni Cluster and Northern cluster.

After the collection of data, the researcher embarked to analyse the collected data. Aneshensel (2013) defines data analysis as the process of investigating data to make sense of it. For this research, the researcher used thematic data analysis to analyze data. Liamputtong (2011) explains that thematic data analysis is referred to as a process for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. He also mentions that thematic data analysis is perceived as the foundational method for qualitative analysis. The researcher analysed the collected data through following the five steps that were proposed by Terreblanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006), which include immersion and familiarisation, coding, inducing themes, elaboration, and, lastly, the checking of data. In undertaking data collection and analysis, the researcher upheld ethical principles which include amongst others, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent.

1.7. Structure of the thesis

This thesis is made up of six chapters. Below each chapter is summarised:

Chapter One

This chapter provides the general overview and introduction of the study. This chapter presents the research problem, rationale, objectives, and questions.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides the detailed literature that is fundamental to the conceptualisation and understanding of the study. In the chapter, the international and local history of social work supervision is narrated. The challenges and functions of social work supervision are provided. Lastly, this chapter outlines the mandate of the DSD in light of social work supervision and argues for Afrocentric-based supervision.

Chapter Three

This chapter concerns itself with comprehensively outlining the theoretical framework with respect to social work supervision. The Afrocentricity theory and critical social theory are interrogated in light of social work supervision.

Chapter Four

This chapter focuses on the outline of the research methodology to be employed when collecting data.

Chapter Five

This chapter builds from the collected data and focuses on the data analysis and interpretation. The analysis and interpretation of data is the core business of this chapter. The chapter analyses and interprets data relating to the first three objectives of the study.

Chapter Six

This chapter is the continuation of the data analysis and interpretation. It focuses on presenting and analysing data related to the fourth objective of the study, which sought to explore possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

Chapter Seven

This chapter focuses on making recommendations and conclusions emanating from the collected, analyses, and interpreted data.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to critically appraise and outline the relevant literature regarding social work supervision as it relates to Afrocentricity in the DSD. This chapter begins by outlining the historical development of social work supervision literature, both internationally and in South Africa in particular. The historical development of supervision is included to contextualise current supervision practices in DSD, which operate under the post-apartheid social welfare paradigm emphasising human rights, cultural diversity, and indigenous elements of South African society. It then narrates the mandate of the DSD in South Africa as it relates to the provision of social protection services to vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities in attempt to address historical injustices such as high levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. The chapter also discusses in detail the mandate of the DSD and the role of social work supervision. Challenges to social work supervision are outlined followed by the discussion on the conceptualisation of social work supervision with the DSD and the critical role of the Supervision Framework.

2.2. Historical Developments of Social Work Supervision

In this section, the researcher mainly discusses that the South African literature, models, and practice on social work supervision that has been adopted in South Africa were largely influenced by Western/European epistemologies. This discussion is crucial in understanding the arguments that the researcher will make for the critical analysis of the social work supervision in the DSD through the Afrocentric perspective. From this critical analysis of history, the researcher argues for the need for Afrocentric-based supervision.

2.2.1. International Historical Development of Social Work Supervision

The international historical developments of supervision can be separated across different times as the field gradually developed. The researcher traces the international development of supervision through the stages proposed by Tsui (1997) and Mo, O'Donoghue, Wong, and Tsui (2021). These stages include the origins and

development of supervision, professional freedom and creative developments, organisational change and supervision-specific models, and new direction.

2.2.1.1. Origins and Development (1870s–1940s)

From the international point of view, supervision can be traced back to around 1878 when it was adopted into the profession of social work. Mo *et al.* (2021) state that knowledge development in social work supervision was initially linked to the development of practice in social casework, which originated in the Charity Organisation Society in 1878. Engelbrecht (2010) shares a similar view but extended it to state that the Charity Organisation Society was in Europe and North America and implemented purely administrative supervision. The administrative nature of supervision was mainly for accountability purposes of ensuring that the unskilled volunteers met the demands of their jobs. Mo *et al.* (2021) support this point by mentioning that supervision was administrative at the beginning as supervisors were the employers who were untrained volunteers but had a responsibility to supervise paid agents for the purposes of accountability. Munson (2002) also explains that supervision during these times dealt more with supervising institutions to ensure that clients were being serviced and that the institutions were being run effectively and efficiently. Therefore, supervision became the primary mode for ensuring the delivery of services is in the best interest of service users.

With regard to the academic development of the supervision literature during this period, not many noticeable developments were recorded. However, Kadushin and Harkness (2014) mention that the first social work text on supervision was by Brackett (1904) which was concerned with the supervision of welfare agencies and institutions by public boards and commissions. Geniets, O'Donovan, Hakimi, and Winters (2021) state that Brackett (1904) viewed the purpose of training and supervision as intended to help the social worker develop practice, knowledge, and skills and provide emotional support to the social work role. Though this publication is significant to the field of supervision and suggested the supportive function of supervision, the practised supervision at the agencies was still predominately administrative. Though the interpretation of what training and supervision entail has changed over time, by the end of the 1900s the priority was still the administrative function (Geniets *et al.*, 2021).

2.2.1.2. Professional Freedom and Creative Developments (1950s–1960s)

Professionalising the field of supervision within the practice of social work was the characterising feature in the period as the field of social work was being professionalised. Reisch (2012) states that during this period, both the field of social work and supervision was marked by professional freedom. This period was predominantly characterised by global debates about the importance and value of the need for continuing social work supervision of professionally trained social workers, as the independent practice was regarded as a hallmark of a well-developed profession (Engelbrecht, 2010). These debates emanated from growing calls, globally, to incorporate supervision into the practice of social work as the key feature to promoting a practitioner's development. Mo *et al.* (2021) state that this resulted in a period of exploration regarding whether career-long supervision would be part of the social work's professional culture or whether it would be limited to field education and the beginning of practitioner's career. During this era, debates about supervision incorporated the educational and supportive functions which began to take form.

2.2.1.3. Organisational Change and Supervision-Specific Models (1970s–1980s)

After the field of social work and supervision developed professionally, supervision began to adopt various models resulting from the development of literature that fostered organisational changes. O'Donoghue (2012) states that in the 1970s, efforts were made to develop supervisory evidence-based practice through basic descriptive studies of supervisory practice in specific situations. These studies yielded supervision literature that began to influence organisational change as they attempted to contextualise supervision in specific situations.

Mo *et al.* (2021) elaborates that the two factors that led the knowledge development in this period were firstly the change in the organisational environment as social workers realised that supervision was an effective tool in orienting new social workers in the organisation, and another factor was the creation of the functional model of supervision, as it formed the basis of knowledge in social work supervision. Furthermore, O'Donoghue (2012) mentions that since the 1980s, research into social work supervision has been concerned with supervisory issues, namely role,

relationship, responsibilities, interactional process, gender, and cultural differences, as well as the effect of supervision on job satisfaction and client outcomes.

2.2.1.4. New Direction (the 1990s–beyond)

The 1990s were characterised by a rapid process of knowledge creation about supervision in which theory, models and research was proliferated marking a significant turn in the way supervision is conceptualised and practised. Mo *et al.* (2021) assert that this period was one in which the professional autonomy of the practitioners was emphasised, together with the need to develop alternatives to the prevalent model of career-long individual supervision. This period brought about a clear conceptualisation and understanding of supervision within its three functions which are the administrative, supportive, and educational functions. The researcher supports Sewell's (2018) assertion when he asserts that there is now an understanding of and value placed on all three functions of supervision within social work which are administrative, supportive, and educational. The three supervision functions serve the agency-context and lifelong, continuous professional development, in which social work supervision continues to be typically situated.

Mo *et al.* (2021) summarise that this period is characterised by a move to new directions in which knowledge on supervision encompassed growing interest on the influence of gender, racial, cultural, and environmental factors. Empirical studies that consider the complicated aspects of managerialism and social construction were encouraged. Munson (2012) mentions that the social work practice has traditionally reflected the attitudes and values of society and supervision has been the arena in which practice strategies and societal patterns are consolidated and integrated. The traditional societal attitudes and values that social work supervision embodied at this point were of western societies and did not coincide completely with African societies.

2.2.2. The Development of Social Work Supervision in South Africa

The history of social work supervision in South Africa is tied to the international developments of social work supervision and the history of the international social work profession. The researcher concurs with an assertion made by Khosa (2022) who states that the history of social work as a profession in South Africa has shaped

how supervision emerged as an essential tool to hold workers accountable and enhance service delivery in social work practice. Social work supervision has been shaped by a difference of understanding on South Africa's socio-political discourses of colonialism, apartheid, and democracy (O'Donoghue & Engelbrecht, 2021). Below, the researcher details the history of social work supervision from different socio-political discourses, when settlers landed and introduced oppressive paradigms of satisfying their needs and control-embedding in or through the welfare system.

2.2.2.1. Colonial Era (1652-1948)

Before colonialism in South Africa, indigenous people relied on communalism and collectivism as a means of meeting the needs of the members of the community. Midgely and Piachaud (2011) state that the pre-colonial society in South Africa relied mainly on kinship groups, women, communalism, and mutual aid to meet human needs. The researcher argues that the introduction of colonialism in South Africa in 1652, firstly by the Dutch and followed 143 years later by the British invasion, disrupted the traditional ways in which the indigenous people used to live, interact, and assist each other. Noyoo (2021) explains that the colonial invasion of the Dutch in 1652 by Jan van Riebeeck reproduced adverse forms of inequity, slavery, and a reduction of the indigenous people to landless labourers. The traditional African communities relied on Afrocentric values such as *Ubuntu*, collectivism, and communalism to meet the needs of individuals and society (Lauer & Anyidoho, 2012). The researcher argues that the disruption of the traditional African societies with their Afrocentric values severely impacted collective accountability and monitoring systems from the family and wider community towards the perpetuation of individualisation.

Notably, during this era there was increasing poverty amongst the white population which then became a source of concern. Midgely and Piachaud (2011) assert that in the 1920s urban poverty and associated social problems among white people began to receive increasing attention. Fourie (2007) explains that the causes of the poor white problems, first noted at the Dutch Reformed Church Synod in 1886, were unclear; many blamed the inadequate education system, urbanisation, cheap wages, or cultural factors, while others argued that external events such as the rinderpest disease or the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) added to the numbers of poor whites. The

uncontrollable levels of poverty gave rise to the social work profession. The social work practice, which grew from this context, was characterised by paternalism and welfare policies that favoured whites as the welfare elite (Smith, 2014). Furthermore, Gray, Coates, Bird, and Hetherington (2013) mention that social work training was tied to colonial social welfare systems and based on Western curricula while social welfare programmes designed to solve urban problems of highly industrialised countries were transplanted into African societies without serious examination of local priorities and needs as well as local approaches to problems. There was little attempt towards their adaption.

The role of the social work supervision that was practised in this era was predominantly administrative and was designed for social workers to be accountable for their roles in relation to the mitigation of the effects of uncontrollable poverty faced by white people. At the centre of the colonial agenda was for social workers to address the escalating 'white' poverty while ensuring that they assisted in the removal of indigenous people from their land and resources, (Fortier & Hon-Sing Wong, 2019). O'Donoghue (2010) insists that the social work supervision practiced in the colonial era in South Africa existed to ensure the reinforcement of colonialism and that social workers accounted for their work. Therefore, the researcher argues that the agenda of supervision of social workers during this era was alienated from the African values and ways of life as it contributed to the destruction of African communities and indigenous knowledge and practices, amongst other things. Notable during this era is that the field of supervision did record gradual academic growth as there were the first supervision-related articles in South Africa that focused on supervision within a group context (Pieterse, 1961). O'Donoghue and Engelbrecht (2021) mention that the publications by Barette (1968) fuelled scholars to interrogate social work supervision in as much as they described supervision within the confines of its administrative function. The researcher argues that the administrative nature of supervision during the era ensured the enforcement of the implementation agenda, which then set the foundations for the apartheid era.

2.2.2.2. Apartheid Era (1948-1994)

The apartheid era began in 1948 when the Nationalist Party obtained power as a result of a class alliance of Afrikaners, with a strong support base among white workers (Midgely & Piachaud, 2011). Furthering this point, Seekings (2020) mentions that the National Party had no clear plan of governance except for intentions to institutionalise racial segregation between Africans and Europeans and to deepen the already existing segregation between these racial groups. Apartheid was only codified through policies and was legislated through various laws after 1948 which heavily impacted the social welfare system of the country, in turn influencing social work education and the social work practice (Noyoo, 2021). As indicated, racial differentiation was an explicit principle for the South African social welfare system which in consequence influenced the social work and supervision practices.

Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) explain that during the apartheid era in South Africa the supervision of social workers was different across the racial groups, wherein newly graduated white social workers were given supervisory roles; and this preference defeated the purpose of this critical function, resulting in the development of negative perceptions towards supervision. This was because during the apartheid era in South Africa, the social work practitioners were trained and prepared for the discriminatory social work practice as opposed to the anti-discriminatory social work practices (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000). Therefore, the supervision practice in South Africa during the apartheid times existed to ensure that it perpetuated the doctrine of apartheid. Important to note is the point by O'Donoghue and Engelbrecht (2021) who acknowledge that during this period a plethora of academic publications were noted and there was a general acceptance of supervision within its three functions, which are the administrative, supportive, and educational functions. The plethora of academic social work publications relied more on Western epistemologies and paradigms.

2.2.2.3. Democratic Era

South Africa achieved its independence in 1994 after more than 300 years of colonialism and 46 years of apartheid. The post-apartheid society was characterised by social transformation and confronted by the legacies of colonialism and apartheid,

such as race, class, gender, and spatial inequality. Midgely and Piachaud (2011) explain that it was a negotiated settlement that was reached in 1994 that paved the way for the democratic elections and consequently dismantled the old colonial and apartheid order and created a constitutional democracy. The transformation from the politics of the doctrine of apartheid to democracy was accompanied by social welfare system reform based on a developmental understanding of social welfare and social work, culminating in the adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2014). The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) is built upon the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, Act 108 of 1996). Nicholas, *et al.* (2010) mention that the adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare led to the construction and transformation of social welfare in South Africa. Therefore, social workers were thus required to depart radically from the forms of intervention and service provision of the apartheid era (Smith, 2014). Social workers were required to neglect the social welfare systems that provided social services according to race to one that is human rights-oriented, being guided by the principle of *Ubuntu*. The researcher argues that the principle of *Ubuntu* in this context was used as a general African principle and did not imply that the social welfare system was Afrocentric in its design.

However, the recognition of social work as a scarce skill by the South African government in 2006 led to a recruitment drive to attract more qualified people to the social work profession (DSD, 2009). The Recruitment and Retention Strategy, according to Engelbrecht (2010), may also be regarded as a confirmation of the brain drain of supervision expertise as many social workers were leaving the profession. This had adverse implications for supervision and led the SACSSP and DSD (2012) to formulate the Supervision Framework as a means of overcoming supervision challenges so that the service delivery to service users could be improved to realise the goal of the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). This Supervision Framework places social work at the centre by strengthening it with supervision to ensure that the developmental social welfare goals are achieved at the service office level. The field of social work supervision during this era received much attention from different scholars. However, several scholars, such as Baloyi (2017), Chibaya and Engelbrecht (2022), Gumbi (2021), Ramabulana-Ndzuta (2022), and Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) have discovered that social work supervision in the DSD is still a major challenge.

2.2.2.4. The Defining Moment: 2015 #Fees-Must-Fall Movement

In the South African context, decolonisation and Afrocentricity in the field of social work have been subject to scholarly attention for decades by scholars such as Smith, (2008); Van der Westhuizen, Dykes and Carelse, (2023); Mungai, (2015); Mathebane and Sekudu, (2018); Harms-Smith and Nathane (2018) and Van Breda, (2019), amongst others. However, the 2015 #Fees-Must-Fall movement signified a fundamental shift in the history of tertiary education in South Africa as it challenged the costs of tertiary education and the decolonisation of the curriculum. The researcher concurs with Maringira and Gukurume (2016) who state that the #Fees-Must-Fall movement sparked heated debates on fee increases at universities and also demanded the decolonisation of the educational system and the transformation of universities to address racial and gender inequalities. A campaign toward the decolonisation of university curricula in South Africa was a result of the demonstrations by students and academics from all over South Africa (O'Donoghue & Engelbrecht, 2021). These calls for the decolonisation of education did not exclude social work education which includes social work supervision. Harms-Smith and Nathane (2018) assert that South African social work education is situated in Western modernism and is broadly within the ideological project of racist capitalism, which requires an interrogation of its assumptions and discourses. The assertion by these authors puts into question the role and impact of social work education in the social work profession in the South African context. Noyoo (2021) states that after South Africa became a democratic country, social work education became crucial in propagating the new welfare system, believing it would positively impact the practice.

Social work supervision should enable social work practitioners to fulfil the aims of social work, which are social justice, dignity, and empowerment, and therefore necessitates engaging with issues of ideology, power relations, oppression, and decolonisation (Harms-Smith & Nathane, 2018). This point is also emphasised by Spitzer, Twikirize, and Wairire (2014), who said it was expected that these social work value systems, when put into practice would promote social development and human wellbeing for individuals and communities. This links to what the DSD (2020) mentions when it states the task of the department is to develop and monitor the implementation of social policies that both create an enabling environment for and lead to a reduction

in poverty as well as providing social protection and welfare services to all people. Therefore, the currently implemented social work supervision has been proven by scholars to have some implications for social workers in assisting them to deliver social welfare services while at the same time enabling them to cope with their personal, professional, and organisational obligations. This calls for the revisiting of the initial work and practices of primary authors who conceptualise supervision in South Africa (O'Donoghue & Engelbrecht, 2021). The researcher argues that revisiting the primary authors that conceptualised supervision would mean interrogating their work in deliberate attempts to reconceptualise and define social work supervision through an Afrocentric lens.

2.3. The Mandate of the Department of Social Development

Owing to the change in the political dispensation in South Africa after the 1994 democratic elections there was a need to restructure and change the welfare system of the country to align with the aspirations of a developmental state. Phiri (2018) states that changes within the political landscape, from apartheid to democracy, influenced the social welfare system, which led to the drafting of, amongst other things, the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) in South Africa. As a result, South Africa adopted a developmental approach to social welfare. Expanding on this point, Patel (2016) explains that South Africa's developmental approach to social welfare evolved from the country's unique history of inequality and the violation of human rights as a result of colonialism and apartheid. The adopted welfare approach to social welfare is mainly centred on human rights as contained in the Bill of Rights section, in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (Patel, 2016).

The DSD Annual Performance Plan 2022/23 states that the mandate of the department is to provide social protection services and lead government efforts to forge partnerships, through which vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities can become capable and self-reliant participants in their development. This role emanates from the acknowledgement of the history of the country that perpetuated the high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment that are currently experienced. Emphasising the previously mentioned point, Lombard and Twikirize (2014) state that South Africa is a highly unequal country, which is reflected in the

extreme inequalities in income and access to opportunities, unemployment, and poverty. The department has a huge mandate along with the national development plan seeking to address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality (DSD Annual Performance Plan 2019/20). For the DSD to be able to meet this mandate it must ensure that social workers are up to the task and are well-capacitated to do this work in their service offices at a local level. This point has been emphasised by Midgley and Conley (2010) who outline that social workers can influence human, social, and economic capital development directly or indirectly. This can be done by ensuring that social work supervision in the DSD is harmonised with the context within which social work practitioners operate. The researcher supports Makoka's (2016) assertion that supervision is fundamental in providing competent professional social work services and is central to the development of the social work practice. To promote social development services, supervision has to be conducted as it determines the quality of services rendered, professional development, and job satisfaction of the social workers (Shokane, Makhubele, Shokane & Mabasa, 2017).

The DSD has four spheres, namely the national, provincial, district, and local levels, with distinct roles and responsibilities. The DSD (2005) Service Delivery Model explains that the national level amongst other functions has a responsibility to develop quality assurance systems and norms and standards for social service programs, while the provincial level has the responsibility to formulate, coordinate, maintain, and review provincial policy and planning. The same model places it at the district level to identify service needs and set priorities and gives the local level powers to provide direct services to clients (DSD, 2005). Shokane *et al.* (2017) mention that the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) expects social workers to address issues of poverty and inequities and to promote social development services through the DSD.

2.3.1. The Role of Supervision in the Department of Social Development

Social work supervision is core to the effective delivery of social services in the DSD. Without supervision social work practitioners may find it difficult to deal with clients' problems, manage caseloads, and develop professionally. In agreement with this view are Bourn and Hafford-Letchfield (2011) who state that as a pivotal activity in delivering social work services, supervision is central to achieving quality assurance and has a

particular role in developing a skilled and professional workforce. More than ensuring quality assurance and promoting the development of workers, supervision also plays a significant role in helping social work practitioners build and maintain healthy and professional relationships with themselves, clients, and colleagues. Wonnacott (2012) argues that good supervision involves the capacity to develop and maintain relationships, manage the emotional dimensions of the work and make judgments and decisions, often in light of conflicting information. This is demanding work and will only be effective if social workers are encouraged to reflect critically on their practice and to continue developing their knowledge and skills (Wannacott, 2012).

2.3.2. Challenges of Supervision

Social work supervision is not without any challenges, especially in the DSD. A study that was conducted by Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) reports that in the DSD most supervisors who render supervision do not have a recent and up-to-date theoretical knowledge base as they seem to have forgotten the knowledge they received during their academic training and also have not received supervision training after being qualified as social workers. Moreover, some challenges in supervision are contextual. This point is further explained by Khosa (2022) who states that some of the challenges might vary depending on the context in which supervision is practised meanwhile others cut across different contexts. The researcher briefly outlines some of the challenges that Afrocentric-based supervision could help to overcome once developed and implemented.

2.3.2.1. Power Dynamics

Power is one of the challenges in the supervisory relationship that could have a positive or negative impact. De Stefano, Hutman, and Gazzola (2017) mention that power is inherent in supervision, and it has the potential to be used positively and negatively. The way both the supervisor and supervisee define, understand, and conceptualise power has bearing effects on the supervisory relationship. Hair (2014) states that supervision in social work has been uniquely shaped by power relations situated in the practice context as organisations delegate explicit authority to supervisors to use their positional power to influence or control others. In the South African context, where colonialism and the apartheid government had abused their

power against the majority, hence the need to conceptualise what power entails in Afrocentric-based supervision.

De Stefano *et al.* (2017) assert that the fact that supervision is an arrangement between individuals with unequal power and status makes having an authentically collaborative and non-hierarchical relationship a challenge. The potential for power struggles and other conflicts, especially if ignored, to result in unproductive supervision experiences is high. Khosa (2022) gave an example that within the supervisory relationship, personalities may also clash, thereby hindering progress during the supervision process. The researcher argues that Afrocentric-based supervision offers a unique conceptualisation of power that is centred on service to others rather than being individualistic. From the critical social theory point of view, Hair (2014) describes supervision in social work as being uniquely shaped by power relations situated in the practice context as organisations delegate explicit authority to supervisors to use their positional power to influence or control others. One of the findings of this study reflected that successful, collaborative relationships meant that social workers' knowledge was valued, and learning was mutual. Supervision from a position of authority carries many risks, therefore, it is crucial to have sound power relations in a supervisory relationship for effective supervision, (Copeland, Dean & Wladkowski, 2011; Khosa, 2022). The Supervision Framework does not explicitly address the issue of power relationships within the supervisory relationships. It outlines the roles of the supervisor and supervisee within the supervisory process.

2.3.2.2. Managerialism

Social work supervision in South Africa has been criticised as being managerial rather than supportive and educational. Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) assert that the core of the profession's identity is being eroded by neoliberalism and managerialism, which are primarily concerned with governmentality and economics, a trend impacting not only the social work practice but education as well. Social work supervision is no exception to managerialism. Khosa (2022) adds that managerial supervision primarily serves as a yardstick for measuring the quantity of supervisees' work more than the quality of services, which removes the element of impact in the service users' lives. This type of supervision may be more harmful than helpful to the supervisees and service users (Beddoe, 2017).

Wonnacott (2012) mentions that good social work supervision should provide a relationship where social workers can be challenged to think critically and supported in a role which involves working at the interface of clients and professional systems. Therefore, the dominance of managerialism in social work supervision impedes the social work profession to be able to deal with high levels of poverty and inequality as the focus is on measuring the quantity of the supervisee's work. In addition, Wynne (2020) states that managerialism fails to recognise the importance of the emotional life of human beings as well as the importance of relationships and this failure hinders the quality and effectiveness of social work and erodes the practice, potentially leading to harmful supervision. Therefore, the need for Afrocentric-based supervision that is built on the principles of *Ubuntu*, collectivism, cultural competence, and communalism can help ensure that supervision fulfils its goals and benefit the supervisor, social worker, client and organisation.

2.4. Conceptualisation of Supervision in the Department of Social Development

Supervision has been practised in South Africa since colonial times and is not a new phenomenon. Social work is not a new phenomenon and is considered as a core feature in the development of social work's professional identity and practice and provides an important vehicle through which its outcomes are mediated and supported (Engelbrecht, 2010; Hafford-Letchfield & Engelbrecht, 2018). In conceptualising social work supervision with the DSD, the researcher will argue around the plethora of definitions that currently exist for supervision and deduce from them common factors and also provide an understanding of social work supervision's functions within the department. It is crucial for the department to understand the role of social work supervision, hence, the researcher provides an exploration of the supervision's role.

2.4.1. The Supervision Framework

The SACSSP and DSD (2012) formulated the supervision framework that was aimed at providing a basic framework for the training of social work practitioners. The Supervision Framework is aimed at providing a framework for effective supervision of social workers, student social workers, social auxiliary workers, learner social auxiliary workers, social work specialists, and private practitioners to ensure competent

professional social work practices that serve the best interests of service users in South Africa (SACSSSP & DSD, 2012). Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) assert that in South Africa there was a need to standardise supervision within the DSD, which calls for the formulation of the framework for the supervision of social workers.

2.4.1.1. The Content of the Supervision Framework

At the centre of the supervision framework is the need to address that which Botha (2002) mentions in the South African context, the nature of the social work practice is non-routine, unpredictable, highly individualised, non-standardised, and imperceptible, which demands supervision. The supervision framework starts by outlining the rationale, aim, and objectives of the framework. It then advances to provide the reader with the policy legislative framework within which social service employers and employees operate. In attempts to conceptualise key concepts in social work supervision, the supervision framework provides definitions and explanations of social work supervision and social work supervisors and goes further to explain the functions and roles of supervision in detail.

The supervision framework also explains and outlines the roles of the supervisor and supervisee and articulates student supervision in the social work organisation. The supervision framework explains that the conceptualisation of key concepts “is imperative to ensure a context that can be used as a framework for the understanding and execution of supervision within the social work profession” (SACSSP & DSD, 2012:18). Khosa (2022) asserts that the supervision content information can serve as a refresher for supervisors, but the Supervision Framework does not address the day-to-day challenges encountered by supervisors in the field.

The last two chapters of the supervision framework deal with the norms and standards of supervision that guide the supervision of all social service professionals. The norms and standards outlined, in the framework include the development of the supervision policy, supervision legislative requirements, supervision ethics, and the articulation of the supervision of auxiliary workers, amongst other things. The supervision framework articulates how the supervision sessions should be structured and explains that “supervision sessions must be structured including all the functions of supervision,

should be properly planned and linked with the personal development plan of the social worker with a specific goal, have an agenda and a report written and signed by both the supervisor and supervisee” (SACSSP & DSD, 2012:33). Important to note in the supervision framework is the acknowledgement that the framework does not serve as the theoretical basis for supervision (Khosa, 2022).

2.4.1.2. Supervision Framework’s Definition of Supervision

Supervision in the field has been defined in many ways by many scholars, especially by those who are pioneers in supervision literature. Furthermore, it is not only scholars have defined supervision differently, but social work practitioners also have a variety of definitions of the term supervision. This point has been agreed upon and emphasised by Engelbrecht (2010) who states that at different times supervision has been defined differently. However, in the South African context, the SACSSP and DSD (2012) attempts to indigenise social work supervision to suit the context within which it is practised. This is to ensure that supervision helps social work professionals fulfil their mandate, as prescribed by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997). In support of these views is Ncube (2019) who states that social work supervision plays a critical role in guiding social workers to provide quality social welfare services as mandated by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

The SACSSP and DSD (2012:18) define social work supervision as a “formal arrangement where supervisees review and reflect on their work. It is related to ongoing learning and performance. Social work supervision is an interactional process within the context of a positive anti-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models and perspectives on supervision whereby a supervisor with the required experience and qualification, and to whom authority is delegated, supervises a social worker, student social worker, social auxiliary worker and learner auxiliary worker by performing educational, supportive and administrative functions to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services”.

This definition of supervision contains content that could be of great importance for discussion and arguments relating to Afrocentric-based supervision. The researcher notes the argument that was made by Engelbrecht (2019) when he writes that the formulation of the supervision framework was the first step towards indigenising in

creating a context-specific supervision practice. However, the researcher argues that the Supervision Framework still founded upon Western-dominated theories, models, and perspectives as it relates to social work supervision. The researcher further argues that when the framework mentioned that supervision is a process “based on distinct theories, models and perspectives on supervision” (SACSSP & DSD, 2012:18) it implicates itself in adopting and upholding Western theories and models. Lastly, the researcher calls for the dismantling of Western-dominated theories and a generation of Afrocentric theories and hybrid models of supervision to address local problems.

2.4.2. Functions of Supervision

Social work supervision is widely accepted in its three core functions which are administration, education, and support. Concerning the social work practice in South Africa, the SACSSP and DSD (2012) recognise three functions of supervision: administration, education, and support. These functions are very important in the social work practice but also need to find their meaning in the African context for them to ensure successful supervision.

2.4.1.1. Administrative Function

History depicts social work supervision to have been mainly focused on the administrative function before it incorporated the educational and supportive function. Howe and Gray (2013) explain that the administrative function is often seen as the managerial function of supervision where the supervisor is concerned with standards and quality of work, often because of line management responsibility and accountability. In this function of supervision, the supervisor is concerned with ensuring that the supervisees do their work in line with the organisation’s policies and procedures in pursuit of the organisation's mandate.

The DSD and SACSSP (2012) assert that the administrative function’s primary focus is on the correct, effective, and appropriate implementation of agency policies and procedures. The supervisor fulfils this through the monitoring of the progression of allocated work, performance management, and workload management within agency policies are an integral aspect of this function (Davis, 2011). However, Kadushin and Harkness (2014) extend the previously stated assertion as they argue that both the

supervisor and the supervisee have a duty to achieve agency objectives in accordance with agency policies and procedures, although the supervisor and supervisee have varied roles.

In addition, from the Afrocentric point of view, both the supervisor and the supervisee should work together to ensure that the social welfare policies in their organisation help to dismantle the status quo and cultural oppression of their previously disadvantaged clients. In support of this view, Schiele (1997) mentions that in as much as social welfare policies seek to affirm the dignity and worth of all members and groups within a society, social welfare policies should aim to dismantle cultural oppression by insisting on cultural pluralism.

2.4.1.2. Educational Function

The educational function of supervision is mainly concerned with the personal and professional facets of social work practitioners to ensure that when performing their duties workers are competent and up-to-task. Vefuti (2017) affirms that the educational supervision function is concerned with the improvement of practice knowledge and the essential skills to upgrade the competence and job satisfaction of social workers. The holistic development attained by social work practitioners should empower them to be able to understand themselves and their limitations, understand their context, and gain knowledge to be able to empower their clients. This assertion is also affirmed by Davis (2011) who explains that the educational function often refers to issues such as self-awareness and improving the knowledge base as being applied to specific clients or client groups, decision-making about specific interventions and expected outcomes, assessments, diagnosis, available resources, and appropriate referrals.

Howe and Gray (2013) mention that the development of professional skills and the knowledge of supervisees should include understanding the service users and their environment. The researcher argues that for this to happen, the educational function of supervision should recognise that the social work practice and the supervision knowledge that social work practitioners received was western dominated and that it did little to empower them to understand their clients and context holistically and thus

should be capacitated in this regard. This view has been supported by Bent-Goodley, Fairfax, and Carlton-LaNey (2017) who state that social workers as students leave social work programs having not been exposed to African-centred education and knowledge which limits their knowledge and distorts their reality.

When explaining the benefits of Afrocentric education, Shockley and Frederick, (2010) state that it provides a sense of agency, empowerment, and entitlement to Black communities to positively change the socio-material circumstances therein. Therefore, for social work practitioners to acquire holistic development, the educational function should rely on Afrocentric education to inspire confidence in workers. The view previously stated is supported by Kadushin and Harkness (2014) who posit that the knowledge and skills social workers acquire through educational supervision gives them confidence and a sense of assurance in their job performance. In addition, Khosa (2022) asserts that when performing the educational function, the supervisor is expected to reflect on and monitor the work performance of supervisees and identify gaps in their performance.

2.4.1.3. Supportive Function

The supportive function of supervision is very critical in the practice of social work as it ensures ongoing support to social work supervisees on personal and work-related issues. Khosa (2022) justifies this view by stating that social workers work under emotionally demanding circumstances, and supportive supervision plays a critical role in enhancing the workers' well-being. However, this function has received less attention in the DSD. Vefuti, (2017) states that there is evidence to suggest that supportive supervision is lacking in the practice environment. This is because in the DSD the administrative function is often prioritised. The studies of Engelbrecht (2013) and Vefuti, Goliath, and Perumal (2019) also emphasise that there is a lack of structured supervision in the social work practice due to priority being placed on the administrative function of supervision.

Howe and Gray (2013) mention that the supportive function of supervision involves working with supervisees to unpack the personal and emotional impacts of engaging professionally in highly complex and distressing situations. In addition, Kadushin and

Harkness (2014) mention that the main purpose of the supportive function is to promote psychological well-being to social work practitioners so that they can cope with their work and at the same time protect themselves from work-related stress and 'burnout'.

It is important to note that how power relations in the supervisory relationship are defined can affect the nature of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. This can in turn have serious bearings for the effective execution of the supportive function of supervision. Supporting this view are Mangione, Mears, Vincent, and Hawes (2011) who mention that supervision involves an ongoing analysis of power and this process, based on the supervisor's ability to be authentic and open, is crucial to the establishment of a truly collaborative supervisory relationship. Therefore, the supportive function of supervision places the supervisee before the supervisor as a vulnerable human being with personal and work-related problems that need to be fixed for the benefit of the worker, client, and supervisor. From an Afrocentric mindset Schiele (1997) states that although the problem of the client is the focal point of the relationship, the supervisor understands that the problem is a human one that can and does have direct or indirect implications for his or her own life. Therefore, for the support function of supervision to be effective, both the supervisor and the supervisee should relate to each other in the spirit of humanness (*Ubuntu*). Mathabane and Seduku (2018) describe humanness as a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, and respect and responsiveness that individuals and groups display for one another. Therefore, a supportive function of supervision that adopts Afrocentric values such as *Ubuntu* can be impactful and yield fundamental results for a supervisory process and relationship.

2.5. Conclusion

The chapter focused on reviewing the literature on social work supervision. The researcher provided a detailed history of the development of social work supervision, from an international perspective to the South African context. Notable from the international perspective was the gradual development of supervision from predominately being mostly administrative to incorporating the educational and supportive function through the years. The South African development of social work

supervision has been largely influenced by the socio-political dispensations of colonialism, apartheid, and democracy. The 2015 #Fees-Must-Fall movement marked the turning moment in the discourse of tertiary education as one of the demands by students and scholars was the decolonising of tertiary education. Furthermore, the researcher provided a comprehensive description of the mandate of the DSD and contextualised the role of social work supervision and the need for Afrocentric social supervision. Lastly, the challenges and functions of supervision were provided.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on reporting on theories that underpin the study. The Afrocentric theory and critical social theory underpin the study. The Afrocentric theory was adopted as the main theory of the study, while the critical social theory was adopted in this study as a supporting theory to the Afrocentric theory. The researcher provides compressive details on the historical overview of the Afrocentric and critical social theories along with their philosophical tenets, applications, and relevance in the study. The researcher also conceptualises Afrocentric social work in relation to Afrocentric-based social work supervision. Then, the researcher presents arguments about the shift towards Afrocentric-based supervision and the distinguishing features of such supervision. Furthermore, the researcher presents indigenisation and decolonisation as essential goals towards development of an Afrocentric-based social work supervision.

3.2. Afrocentric Theory

The Afrocentric theory is the main theory that underpins this study. In this section the researcher discusses the Afrocentric theory in brooders terms.

3.2.1. History of the Afrocentric theory

The historical foundations of Afrocentricity cannot be traced with specifics as it has a long existence in the communities of people of African descent. Chawane (2002) asserts that the history of Afrocentrism cannot be established with certainty but records that the theory proposes that Africans must approach knowledge from an African perspective. Afrocentrism originated in the United States from the African American community who continue to experience oppression of all forms and was popularised by Molefi Asante (Chawane, 2016; Asante, 1983). They suffer identity crises and racism and advocate for liberation, self-determination, and freedom through Afrocentrism. Afrocentrism erupted as a result of the acknowledgement of the destructive and negative impact of the more than 400 years of oppression and slavery

that left African Americans physically separated, culturally eradicated, and spiritually disconnected (Bakari, 1997).

The history of the Afrocentric theory could be viewed from three segments, which includes Africans, African Americans, and externals. Nadezhda (2016) mentions that from an African perspective, Afrocentricity could be traced to individuals such as Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906-2001) who was the first president of Senegal and widely renowned as a philosopher and poet; and also, individuals such as Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) who was regarded as a Pan-Africanist. From the African American perspective, Midas (2016) points out that Afrocentricity dates back to the 1970s and was popularised by Asante during the 1980s when he developed epistemological and methodological foundations for an Afrocentric curriculum based on an African perspective but aiming for global understanding. Afrocentricity in the United States was inspired and built upon the work of Black-American scholars Carter Woodson Marcus Garvey, Du Bois, and others who sought to locate African people at the centre of phenomena and advocate for self-determination and black identity (King & Swartz, 2016; Kumah-Abiwu, 2016). Lastly, the externals include people who are outside of the African descent and diaspora whose work has played a role in providing arguments for Afrocentricity, such as the work and ideas of Gandhi and Confucius (Nadezhda, 2016).

Molefi Asante is considered to be one of the pioneers of Afrocentricity as he developed the idea into a theoretical framework. When defining Afrocentricity Asante (1987) defines it as a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of African persons, while the Afrocentric approach seeks in every situation the appropriate centrality of the African person. Furthermore, Fairfax (2017) explains Afrocentricity as a theory concerned with African epistemological relevance to achieve intellectual agency and social change and for inquiries in historical, political, cultural, and developmental proportions where the African culture is at the centre of discovery.

3.2.2. The Philosophical Basis of the Afrocentric Theory

The Afrocentricity theory is underpinned by three philosophical bases that constitute its construction as a legitimate theory that is “grounded in practical and intellectual experiences” (Asante, 2007:2). As the Afrocentric theory put emphasises that its interest lies in putting African people at the centre of any discussion and analysis, therefore, its philosophical basis centres around ensuring that the theory does not lose its intended work of ensuring that African people and people of African descent achieve freedom, self-determination, and spiritual connection. Mazama (2003) proposes three philosophical bases of Afrocentricity theory, and these include: the emphasis on Africans to achieve literacy and freedom, the consciousness that determines one being, and the emphasis on time as a contributing factor to the role of history in social change. The researcher below provides a comprehensive discussion on these three philosophical bases mentioned earlier.

3.2.2.1. The emphasis for Africans to achieve literacy and freedom

The Afrocentric Theory recognises the centuries of oppression, enslavement, and degradation that African people have been subjected to and, therefore, advocates for African liberation and freedom. The African's fight for freedom is for the achievement of a better and new world, freedom of the mind and freedom of the conscience (Richardson, 2000). For this freedom to exist, Afrocentricity contends that African people should be the ones who define what freedom means for them and then contends that Africans should not accept a generalised version of freedom. Traoré (2007) asserts that people of African descent should go the extra mile in understanding freedom identifiers such as the right to vote, work, and speak one's mind but also to focus on inner change. Harris (2005) also adds that true freedom is derived from one's history and grants one the ability to conceptualise the world in ways continuous with one's history. Literacy is also an important consideration in this philosophical basis of the Afrocentric theory and talks about the practical dimensions of the freedoms of Africans. Literacy concerns itself not only with ascertaining that African students master skills but also with the ability of African students to look inward into their thoughts, cultural/language patterns, and history while projecting into the outside world as they seek to intervene in their own context (Richardson, 2000). Literacy in the Afrocentric paradigm is viewed as important because of the recognition that African

literacy has been defined in terms of the skills revolution that benefits the European/Western context and did not allow African people to understand themselves and their context in ways congruent with their values, beliefs, language, and cultures. Literacy is the application of historical knowledge as the confluence between personality and situation dictates (Harris, 2005).

3.2.2.2. The consciousness that determines one's being

At the centre of the Afrocentric worldview, consciousness about oneself, others, and the outside world is crucial as Afrocentricity stresses African values such as communalism, harmony, and collectivism. The European/Western culture in Africa has placed more emphasis on individualism and strived to continue this trend through the distortion of African knowledge, culture, and spirituality. Mazama (2003) asserts that consciousness should be understood as a way that an individual or people could think about their relationship with themselves, others, nature, and the supreme being. Ntseane (2011) asserts that the Afrocentric worldview is about ensuring that Africans systematically gain the self-consciousness of the need to reclaim their place in the world. Mazama (2001) asserts that the Afrocentric worldview aims to restore the importance of the African experience and ultimately reclaim back their victorious consciousnesses. Therefore, the Afrocentric worldview is opposed to the radical individualism that seeks to isolate Africans from each other, their culture, and their spirituality.

3.2.2.3. Emphasis on time as the contributing factor to the role of history in social change

As Afrocentricity seeks to locate African people at the center of any analysis, discussion, or study, the notion of history becomes an important consideration. Midas (2016) asserts that Afrocentricity requires that the historical and cultural perspectives of Africans be regarded as important and be consistent with the interpretative life of the African person while allowing Africans to see view themselves from their own perspectives as Europeans do. Mazama (2003) explains that the way one thinks about time determines the role that history plays in social change and that if time is conceptualised cyclically, then history plays a fundamental, one might say definitional, role in social change. Africans have been victims of oppression through colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and even apartheid and, thus, have been subjects to

intergenerational marginalisation and had their place in history distorted and destroyed as authors of civilisation. Ntseane (2011:309) asserts that African people have a history of transformational learning as a result of social change periods of colonialism, imperialism, and, most recently, going through global capitalism and in a context characterised by the marginalisation of local knowledge systems. Knowledge acquired through transformation is important for social change. If time is conceptualised linearly, then history has little if any role to play in social change (Mazama, 2003).

3.2.3. The Application of the Afrocentric Theory in the Study

This study intends to critically analyse the social work supervision in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) DSD through the Afrocentric theory. Therefore, the application of the Afrocentric theory in this study is justified on the basis that it is the primary theory that underpins the study. Kumah-Abiwu (2016) asserts that the Afrocentric theory becomes relevant to African studies because it translates itself to be the mode of thought and action where the researcher puts into the center the interests, perspectives, and values of Africans. To critically analyse supervision through an Afrocentric perspective to propose possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision is the first attempt to inspire a mode of thought and action that puts African people and their experiences at the center with regard to social work supervision. Social work supervision knowledge and practices in Africa have been adopted from Europe and the West and, as a result, it disregards African knowledge systems, values, and cultures. Hair and O'Donoghue (2009) assert that little critique has been granted to social work supervision as its compositions mostly relies on the influence and thoughts prevailing from Europe and the West, which in most cases perpetuates the marginalisation of individuals. African education in general, and university education in particular, has favored Western knowledge tremendously, which has allowed Western intellectual traditions and practitioners to write themselves into the past, present, and future of Africa as civilisers, saviors, initiators, mentors, and arbiters (Mekoa, 2018).

The reliance of social work knowledge, education, and epistemologies on European and Western knowledge and epistemologies has created a spark amongst Africans to decolonise and Africanise education and other practices. In response to these calls, the 2015 #Fees-Must-Fall movement called for the decolonisation of tertiary education

in South Africa. This did not exclude social work supervision, whose knowledge, models, and epistemologies mostly rely on the West and Europe and, therefore, need to be Africanised to better suit the African conditions and context, hence, the critical analysis of this study. The Afrocentric theory allows the researcher to investigate and critique social work supervision that is practiced in the DSD with the thought and ideology that seeks to place African social work practitioners at the center while putting first their supervision interests and needs. Afrocentric studies have, undoubtedly, brought about new contexts, methods, insights, and theories that have revolutionised many disciplines, so much so that Western approaches have lost their paradigmatic prestige and coherence (Mekoa, 2018). Through the application of the Afrocentric theory, the researcher can be able to propose ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision, which will serve as the foundation for the conceptualisation of Afrocentric social work supervision models.

In so doing, the theory will help the researcher to advocate for the alternative Afrocentric social work supervision practice and knowledge that is context and culture specific. Kershaw (1998) asserts that the role of Afrocentric scholars is to generate knowledge that will change the perceived negative status quo into a positive force that can impact the lives of African people. A generation of African-centered knowledge with regards to social work supervision is very crucial as supervision in the field of social work is regarded as the core function to help social workers execute their duties for clients. Social work supervision is crucial in the sense that it not only assures the quality of social work services rendered to and received by service users but also plays a fundamental role in ensuring the professional development of social workers (Tsui, 2005). Therefore, the Afrocentric-based knowledge to supervision will reassure the generation of knowledge that it is congruent with the contexts, values, and cultures of the African people so that the services are rendered holistically and at the same time equip social workers to be culturally competent.

3.3. Conceptualising Afrocentric Social Work

For this study that calls for Afrocentric-based supervision, it is important that the researcher lays the conceptual background of Afrocentric social work as it is critical for Afrocentric-based supervision. Afrocentric social work arises from the recognition

of failed western models and epistemologies in the African context to make social work practice and education relevant to African cultures and contexts. The researcher agrees with Tascon and Ife (2021) who state that Afrocentric social work is a result of seeking to develop social work profession in Africa that is free from colonialism and domination from western epistemologies. Afrocentric society, therefore, recognises that social work knowledge in Africa was adopted from Western and European contexts which are not particularistic for the African context. Afrocentricity in social work provides the opportunity for social work practitioners to be engaged in a practice that is congruent with the cultures, principles, and values of their communities and societies. Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) assert that the Afrocentric paradigm provides an important organising principle for social work knowledge development on individual, community, societal, and global levels. The Afrocentric paradigm in social work is an important professional development toward rendering social work practice more culturally competent as it utilises African philosophies, history, and culture as a starting place for interpreting social and psychological phenomena to create relevant approaches to personal, family, and community healing and societal change (Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018; Schiele, 2017).

Schiele (1997) defines Afrocentric social work as a method of social work based on traditional African philosophical assumptions that are used to explain and solve human and social problems. It is about documenting, discussing, and advancing African-centered knowledge and utilising African philosophies, history, and culture as a starting place for interpreting social and psychological phenomena to create relevant approaches to personal, family and community healing and societal change (Bent-Goodley *et al.*, 2017). Schiele (1996) discusses three primary assumptions of Afrocentric social work: (1) that individual identity is conceived as a collective identity; (2) that the spiritual aspect of humans is just as legitimate as the material component; and (3) that the affective approach to knowledge is epistemologically valid. These basic assumptions allow an Afrocentric social worker to understand their client's environments holistically and optimally. Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) mention that the African-centered practitioner understands how to use the unique contributions, strengths, and capacities of African people to inform innovative practices and

programs which will in turn create best practices that highlight the significance and potential contribution of the individual, family, community, and group unit.

Afrocentric social work knowledge and epistemology, when incorporated into social work education and training, can produce social work students who are activists of their people and work for the liberation of their people from systematic oppression and alienation. The researcher agrees with Tascon and Ife (2021) who mention that Afrocentric social work should teach African social work students how to recognise and be aware of patterns of internalised racism, colonial attitudes, patterns of domination, and different power dynamics so that they can be better positioned to challenge those issues within a structural and institutional framework. The researcher argues that Afrocentric-based supervision can strengthen the practice of Afrocentric social work in Africa. As supervision is the core of social work practice, therefore, Afrocentric-based supervision can bring congruency in practice as it will provide alternative ways in which social workers could be supported to ascribe to the Afrocentric social work practice. Schiele (1997) states the emphasis on collective and reciprocal obligation in the Afrocentric paradigm lays the foundation for an Afrocentric social welfare policy. Therefore, for the supervision framework to claim its Afrocentricity, it should incorporate the Afrocentric values of collectively and reciprocity. This calls for policymakers that are culturally literate (Shockley & Frederick, 2010). Lastly, the Afrocentric-based supervision framework will enhance educational opportunities and promote a friendly workplace and cooperative atmosphere (Schiele, 1997).

3.4. Towards Afrocentric-based Supervision

In this chapter, it has been articulated and demonstrated that the South African social work and supervision practice has its roots in the West. This has created many difficulties in the application of social work in ensuring that it responds to the local distinct needs. Mathebane (2021) concurs with this point and stated that the entanglement of African people with a system of westernised social work alien to their worldview produces a paradigmatic and epistemic crisis. Emphasising this point, Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) state that it is a general knowledge that mainstream social work is nothing but Western indigenous social work which does not resonate with contextual realities and the cultural orientations of communities in other parts of

the world. Therefore, these assertions do not exclude the social work supervision practice.

To develop social work supervision that is Afrocentric would mean developing supervision that is particularistic to the African context and could be utilised as a core feature in Afrocentric social work that seeks to address injustices and local problems. This is to contribute to blinding African-centered theories and models in the field of social work supervision. In support of this point, Mathebane (2021) states that in South Africa, several social work scholars argued that the absence of authentic African-rooted theories and models implies that the African lived experience is silenced within the existing social work body of knowledge and practice. The benefit of having Afrocentric-based supervision will fulfill what Rankopo and Diraditsile (2020) stated when they said it would establish a fully functional Afrocentric-based supervision model that will be anchored around indigenous cultural values and principles.

Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) mention that indigenous African social work would be termed Afrocentric social work. Therefore, indigenous African social work supervision should be termed Afrocentric social work supervision. This type of Afrocentric social work should be based on and conceptualised in light of the values, principles, and philosophical assumptions of Afrocentricity. The Afrocentric perspective is congruent with the values and ethics promulgated by the social work profession: the right to self-determination, the emphasis on strengths rather than weaknesses, and the appreciation and value of all human experiences (Mabvurira, 2020).

3.4.1. Features of an Afrocentric-based Supervision

The major challenge facing the practice of social work supervision in Africa and South Africa, in particular, is that the development and conceptualisation of the practice of social work and supervision were adopted from Western/Eurocentric ideologies and systems that mostly disregarded African values and knowledge systems. Mabvurira (2020) asserts that the problem with the current social work practice in Africa is that, following its development in the West, it came to Africa grounded in values and ideologies stemming from capitalism, social Darwinism, protestant ethics, and individualism, which are all un-African. The challenges faced by social work practitioners is to redefine, reconceptualise, and develop a supervision practice that is

congruent with their being and serves them better. This would mean developing an educational curriculum that will appreciate and acknowledge African worldviews, cultures, and values that seeks to be put at the centre of the African people. The researcher agrees with Ross (2010) who states that Afrocentric social work educational curricula should be respectful and appreciative of African worldviews, even if this runs counter to the social worker's value systems. Like Afrocentric-social work, Afrocentric social work supervision should include knowledge, values, and skills that evolve from a foundation of historical and cultural aspects of Africans (Wells-Wilbon, McPhatter, & Ofahengaue-Vakalahi, 2016).

Afrocentric social work supervision should draw its features mainly from Afrocentricity as a theory that seeks to put Africans at the center. This could be done by soliciting distinguishing Afrocentric values for social work supervision. Mungai, Wairire, and Rush (2014) state that such core African values include the centrality of the community, respect for tradition, a high level of spirituality and ethical concern, harmony with nature, the sociality of self-hood, veneration of ancestors, and the unity of being. Schiele (2000) shares a similar view as he argues that traditionally the cosmological and axiological attributes of the Afrocentric worldview underscore interdependency, collectiveness, spirituality, and affect. Adding to what the previously mentioned authors Bent-Goodley *et al.* (2017) stated, key elements of African-centered thought include promoting the fundamental goodness of people, recognising the importance of family and community, encouraging individual and collective functioning, understanding the role and significance of spirituality, and acknowledging the critical ways that people are interdependent. Deducing from the assertions stated by mentioned others, to have Afrocentric-based supervision it is important to incorporate into social work supervision the value of fundamental goodness, self-knowledge, communalism, interconnectedness, spirituality, and cultural competence.

3.4.1.1. Fundamental Goodness

The supervision process should view both the supervisor and the supervisee as those inherently good and have noble intentions to assist the marginalised and disadvantaged to end societal problems. Wells-Wilbon *et al.* (2016) state that these principal views people as inherently good and that they have a desire to live in

harmony with others. When the social work supervision process is characterised by this principle it will mean that both the supervisor and supervisee promote each other's well-being and inherent goodness which could in turn cause the supervisee to act the same when dealing with their clients. This principle aligns itself with a very fundamental Afrocentric belief that has been well articulated by Sewpaul, Krieter, and Raniga (2021), who state that within the Afrocentric paradigm the well-being of the individual is aligned with the well-being of the society, with an attempt to maintain a “delicate balance between the concepts of community and individuality”. Therefore, when the well-being and inherent goodness of the supervisee is maintained and upheld in the supervisory process, it will translate itself when the supervisee deals with clients. This point is supported by Wells-Wilbon, *et al.* (2016) who mentions that adopting this principle will help social workers begin to see people as worthy and valuable members of society.

3.4.1.2. Self-Knowledge

Chawane (2016) mentions that Afrocentricity is an exercise of self-knowledge where Africans are entitled to give their perspective on the African experience. This principle essentially denotes the importance of the social worker being conscious of themselves and their nature, recognising areas of deficit and needs for growth and healing, and acknowledging, for example, their privileged status and how that status often contributes to maintaining structures that oppress others (Wells-Wilbon *et al.*, 2016). The worker must come to grips with their lack of knowledge about experiences and commit to beginning the process of remedying this void in their education and practice experiences, and it is most critical regarding self-knowledge for the worker to honestly assess the extent to which their work is damaging to the individual and community empowerment that must occur in his or her practice with Africans.

3.4.1.3. Communalism

Wells-Wilbon *et al.* (2016) states that this principle talks about the sensitivity to the interdependence of people and the notion that group concerns transcend individual strivings. Much of what is thought in social work focuses on the individual and often negates the familial, let alone community, the context in which individual functioning and behavior occur. Bent-Goodley and Smith (2017) define communalism as

sensitivity to the interdependence of people and the notion that group concerns transcend individual strivings. In social work supervision, this Afrocentric principle can be practiced through the awareness of both the supervisor and the social worker that they are interdependent, and their relationship should be cooperative, empowering, and mutual. Furthermore, both the participants in the supervisory relationship should at all times acknowledge the interdependence of their clients with the wider communities and also identify themselves as part of that community.

3.4.1.4. Interconnectedness

Schiele (2017) points out that although individual identity and responsibility were recognised, human beings were conceived as a continuous web of interconnectedness and interdependency. Social work supervision should recognise the interconnectedness of all people and that in the supervisory relationship both the supervisor and supervisee are connected to each other and also to the clients, communities, and stakeholders. This view has been supported by Wells-Wilbon *et al.* (2016) who states that this principle further highlights the connections of Africans make in collective struggles for survival, to respond to oppression, and to work toward the health and well-being of the collective. Therefore, Afrocentric-based supervision should draw clear interconnections between the agency that provides services, supervisor, supervisee, client, community, and stakeholders.

3.4.1.5. Spirituality

Schiele (1997:805) asserts “that there is no perceptual separation because people are seen as being spiritually connected”. The supervisory relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee should be founded on the belief that there is a spiritual bond that exists between them beyond that of a professional relationship. Mabvurira (2016) states that Afrocentric social workers should believe that if there is more emphasis on spiritual development, there will be fewer social problems and human misery. Therefore, even Afrocentric social work supervision should acknowledge the spiritual dimension of both the supervisee and supervisor in an attempt to overcome problems that normally disrupt the supervisory relationship. Wells-Wilbon *et al.* (2016) put forth that the wider social work profession has to accept and embellish the role of

spirituality in human development and behavior and the subsequent practice of social work.

Recognising the role of spirituality within supervision will create a sense of oneness in the supervisory relationship and also a general acceptance of divergent beliefs that both the supervisor and supervisee have which will, in turn, create harmony and trust in the supervision process. The researcher supports the view of Schiele (2017) who states that spirituality fosters both the collectivistic and xenophilic thrust because for human beings to affirm and promote collective interests, shared responsibilities, and positive interactions with culturally divergent others, they must acknowledge and affirm human interconnectedness. This understating and acceptance of spirituality in the social work supervision will help social workers to do what Wells-Wilbon *et al.* (2016) stated when they said a social worker who has grasped the significance of spirituality will know and converse with their clients about the role of a pastor or traditional healer in their social work interventions. In noting the important ways that spirituality can be interwoven into the practice experience, the African-centered practitioner will recognise spirituality as a protective factor and will understand how to use spirituality as a tool for intervention, understanding, and relationship building (Bent-Goodley *et al.* 2017).

3.4.1.6. Cultural Competence

Culture is a very fundamental subject of Afrocentric and very personal for people of African descent. Mabvurira (2016) states that Afrocentric social workers are also encouraged to familiarise themselves with the material cultures of African communities. This is possible when the supervisory relationship recognises that the people who form it might be of different cultural backgrounds and orientations which then calls for both the supervisor and supervisee to understand and be the upholding cultural competence. In support of this view Wells-Wilbon *et al.* (2016) states that culturally competent practitioners conduct professional work in a way that is congruent with the behavior and expectations that members of a distinctive culture recognise as appropriate among themselves. Therefore, if the supervision accommodates cultural competence, it will be easier for social workers to better associate with and uphold the different cultures of their clients. Makaudze (2020) mentions that Afrocentricity argues for a harmonious coexistence of an endless variety of world cultures. The point has

been emphasised by Mabvurira (2016) who states that social workers should be in a position to understand and recognise beliefs that are central to African life and the traditional cultural rituals, such as circumcision passage rituals.

3.4.1.7. Ubuntu (Humanness)

Ubuntu is the basic African value catered for collectively and concerned for other people's well-being. Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) state that *Ubuntu* refers to humanness, which is the pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect, and responsiveness that individuals and groups display for one another. This point is further extended by Mabvurira (2020) who stated that African life is communal, and hinged on the Ubuntu philosophy which is in the foundational belief that "I am because we are". Afrocentric-based supervision should at all times be characterised by *Ubuntu* in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. It also should empower the social worker to recognise that the social service agency and the social worker may not be the only source of the client's solution but also other members of the community or society. The community should, therefore, be included in the helping process and the social workers should always look into the resources that surround clients, and these include other members of the community who may provide emotional and material support (Mabvurira, 2020).

3.5. Indigenisation and Decolonisation as Goals Towards Afrocentric-based Supervision

The main aim of this study was to critically analyse social work supervision within the DSD with an aim of proposing possible ways for achieving Afrocentric-based supervision. The aim to propose the possible ways for achieving Afrocentric-based supervision is to ensure that supervision that is practiced in the DSD is culture and context specific. Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) assert that in post-colonial contexts like Africa, it should be noted that the development of indigenous knowledge rests on decolonisation (deconstruction) and indigenisation (reconstruction). These authors have been supported by Lilley (2021) who mentions that it is in the best interest of Africans to undergo the process of decolonisation and indigenisation to achieve fully Afrocentric knowledge and practice. Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) warn of the dangers that might happen if these processes were separated as they state that the

two processes work in tandem and are mutually beneficial such that a focus on one to the exclusion of the other may result in the reinvention of the wheel of coloniality as an unintended consequence. Therefore, proposing ways to achieve Afrocentric social work supervision should ensure the proposal towards the establishment and development of the supervision knowledge and practice that will not in any way reinvent coloniality through neglecting one or two of these processes. The proposed Afrocentric-based supervision must be an alternative type of supervision to the currently implemented supervision and should ensure that it is particularistic and resonates with the African context.

3.5.1. The Process of the Indigenisation of Supervision

The indigenisation of social work supervision is the most important process within which Afrocentric-based supervision could be achieved. Through indigenising social work supervision, the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, values, and education can be achieved to make supervision in the social work practice more relevant and particularistic. Davis, Hare, Hiller, Morcom, and Taylor (2016) mention that indigenising concerns itself with the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and social and education processes. It also involves the (re)discovery of indigenous cultures, including indigenous ways of knowing, and is about seeking social and cognitive justice for indigenous peoples. Lilley (2021) mentions that for indigenisation to be fully effective, it would involve institutions, organisations, and individuals all undergoing a transformative process as the focus of an indigenisation agenda would be predominantly on transforming existing structures to be inclusive and meet the needs of indigenous communities.

South African social work supervision is still dominated by Western theories, models and practices that have been clearly articulated in the above themes of this chapter. Gray, Coates, Yellow-Bird, and Hetherington (2015) signify that indigenisation encounters a collective identity because it emphasises the local and hence identifies cultures in terms of their unique characteristics. Therefore, fully Afrocentric social work supervision will be that which emphasises the inclusion of the indigenous characteristics that are well articulated through the Afrocentric features discussed in Chapter Three.

3.5.2. The Process of the Decolonisation of Supervision

Decolonisation of the currently implemented social work supervision mode is important if not paramount in the necessity of the realisation of Afrocentric-based supervision. Davis (2016) outlines that decolonisation is the undoing of colonisation. Mabvurira, (2020) explains that in the context of social work practice, it may refer to substituting Western social work methods with indigenous helping methods that have always been in place among Africans before the coming of the whites. In the researcher's provided comprehensive narration of the historical developments of history in South Africa it is evident that through social work supervision the colonialism doctrine was enforced in the practice of social work. Hence, there is a need to decolonise. Gray *et al.* (2015) mention that decolonising social work recognises the limitations and imperialist frameworks inherent in Western social work that must be contested on behalf of populations that have been victimised rather than helped by those approaches. Furthermore, colonisation did not only present limitations and imperialist frameworks in the profession but also denigrated the indigenous knowledge and regarded it as inferior and relegated it to lower levels (Mabvurira, 2020). Therefore, there is a need to engage in the application of decolonising practices. Lilley (2021) points out that the application of decolonising practices can be described as involving the process of restoring status to indigenous knowledge and society by rediscovering indigeneity and identity from the obscurity enforced by colonisation.

This process is necessary in the social work supervision practice as it is still dominated by Western epistemologies. This process, together with the indigenisation process will yield completely Afrocentric-based supervision. Mathabe (2021) describes Afrocentric social work as a typology of social work rooted in and centered around the African world view and it presents an opportunity for Africa to look within itself for solutions to its social challenges while harnessing possibilities and potential for the world to learn from its ways through intercultural translations. However, for this to take place it requires that the profession acknowledges its complicity and ceases its participation in colonising projects, openly condemns the past and the continuing effects of colonialism and collaborates with indigenous people to engage in decolonising activities (Gray *et al.*, 2015).

3.6. The Critical Social Theory

The study also used critical social theory in the investigation of the topic under consideration. The critical social theory comes through with fundamental perspectives that reinforce some aspects that the Afrocentric theory. The detailed overview of the historical foundations and the philosophical basis of the critical social theory is provided. The researcher also provides a detailed discussion of the application of the critical theory in this study thereafter.

3.6.1. History of the Critical Social Theory

The critical social theory originated from the University of Frankfurt in Germany, developed by German scholars through the development of Critical Theory. Critical social theory has been developed from work done through the Critical Theory. Collins (2019) mentions that the critical social theory has its origins in critical theory, which was developed in the 1930s by a group of scholars, philosophers, social psychologists, sociologists, and cultural critics who are from the University of Frankfurt under the Institute for Social Research. These scholars, philosophers, social psychologists, and cultural experts include Eric Fromm, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, and other intellectuals. The critical social theory originated during a period of the protracted crisis of capitalism and its critique reflected the diminishing prospects of an emancipatory transformation, therefore, it consequently sought to expose the connections between the rationalisation of modernity and the social pathologies of capitalist reification (Brown, 2017).

At the center of critical social theory are the dimensions of knowledge, power, and social construction. Critical social theorists concern themselves with understanding the relationship that exists between knowledge and power; questions regarding whose truth counts and understanding how the worldviews and interests dominate that which is understood to be common sense (Finn & Jacobson, 2003). From its inception, critical social theory showed a restlessness towards the reigning division of labor within the academic disciplines at German universities as this division of labor both mirrored and contributed, mightily, to German culture, society, and politics, and thus, to the everyday life of ordinary German people (Simpson, 2002). Critical social theories are very often focused upon situations of domination. They explain how a

status quo which from their point of view is unjust and flawed in a variety of ways which nevertheless persists through time, reproducing themselves and engendering the support or at least the complicity of those involved in it (Crossley, 2005).

3.6.2. The Philosophical Basis of the Critical Social Theory

As a theory that concerns itself with addressing issues of imbalances and injustices that define societies through race, culture, education, and social institutions. Critical social theory is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class, and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion, and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). Critical social theory is characterised by three fundamental philosophical bases. These three philosophical bases include critical enlightenment, critical emancipation, and transformation embedded in social justice (Irving, Malik, Arthur, & Cabrera, 2013; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). Below is a detailed analysis of each philosophical basis that constitutes the critical social theory.

Critical Engagement. In this level the fundamental consideration is the analysis of power possessed by different groups and individuals in society. Murray (2015) asserts that in this dimension the focus of the theory is to critique the distribution of power and privilege in the society to influence transformation that is just. Those who happen to possess power and privilege in society often advocate for the status quo to be maintained to protect their advantage (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). This extends itself to the construction of knowledge as it is mostly controlled by those who possess power and privilege in society. Irving *et al.* (2013) asserts that the understanding of ourselves does not only emanate from within but also constructed through the social environment that communicates particular versions of the world. Criticism functions to cultivate the ability to question, deconstruct and then reconstruct knowledge in the interest of emancipation (Murray, 2015). Dominant discourse, therefore, is used to marginalise, ridicule, or even render invisible alternative possibilities and conceptions of how our world might be constructed in socially just ways that challenge the insidious power of capitalism (Irving *et al.*, 2013:03).

Critical Emancipation: Allen (2015) asserts that emancipation has always been central to the project of Frankfurt School critical social theory. The emancipation of those who are oppressed and marginalised wages a struggle to set themselves free from the oppressive and privilege power of those who control the dominant discourse. Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) assert that those who are oppressed seek emancipation by gaining power and control of their own lives in solidarity with a justice-oriented community. Central to the task of critical social theory is the analysis of power relations in all of their depth and complexity, for it is relations of domination and oppression that enslave human beings, block emancipation, and generate social crises and pathologies (Allen, 2015). Irving *et al.* (2013) mention that emancipation can provide a sense of freedom to critique, think, to imagine, and act beyond the real and imagined constraints imposed by neoliberalism. This sense of freedom that also resonates from the psychological paradigms gives those who have been oppressed and marginalised a desire to achieve their authentic self and continued need for discovery. Therefore, transformation that occurs at a societal level that is imbedded to social justice becomes the ultimate goal for critical emancipation.

Social Change Embedded to Social Justice: The critical social theory places emphasis on social change in challenging domination, (Fook, 2003). Social change that must occur should be on both personal and societal levels. Davies and Leonard (2012) assert that for social change to occur it must be both collective and personal, which can be achieved through recognising that knowledge has an empirical reality but what can be bring this change is to focus on how knowledge gets to be used and interpreted socially and personally. For social change to be effective it becomes important for individual members of the society to recognise how their personal changes are linked with that of the broader society (Fook & Gardner, 2007). To achieve the transformative social change that is interlinked with social justice it is imperative to recognise that social change is continuous and requires consciousness of the issues affecting society. The path to social change exists through everyday occurrences, through increased awareness of conditions that determine them and through believing in people's individual agency and power to effect change (Carten, Siskind, & Greene, 2012). In emphasising the transformative or emancipatory possibilities of social actions, critical social theory is voluntaristic rather than deterministic (Fook, 2003).

3.6.3. The Application of the Critical Social Theory in the Study

Critical social theory is integral for this study as it offers a unique perspective that seeks to allow the researcher to understand the construction of knowledge and how that knowledge in terms of its usage and interpretation could be used to maintain the status quo and be continually used to marginalise societies. Murray (2015) asserts that critical social theory holds basic assumptions about the distribution of power and privilege in society and seeks to expose change the world. Critical social theory does this through tracing the historical developments of knowledge to the present time and then advocates for social justice. Critical social theory attempts to generate a comprehensive explanation of the historical development of the present social order (Owen, 2002). This theory, therefore, reinforces the Afrocentric theory as a theory that seeks to liberate and place African people at the center of analysis of any discussion and study. As explained earlier, the Afrocentric seeks to locate African people in their rightful place in the discourse of humanity. With regards to social work supervision, critical supervision provides a researcher with the broader lens of how social work supervision knowledge and practice can be constructed to suit African conditions and contexts.

The critical social theory becomes significant for this study to help the researcher to interrogate how power and privilege in societal institution and social order can be used to perpetrate injustices. Social work is a profession that is rooted in promoting social justice and social work supervision should allow social workers to achieve this. Critical social theory encourages us to question the way of the world by interrogating how social arrangements are organised, examining where power lies, considering the workings of authority, examining whose interests are privileged, and identifying how, why, and where social injustice may reside (Irving, Malik, Arthur, & Cabrera, 2013:04). Granter (2002) describes the critical social theory as a theory of reflection that interrogates the issues of social development from the standpoint, they become obstacles in human flourishing. Social work supervision has power dynamics that should be deconstructed to be aligned with the Afrocentric values, beliefs, cultures, and context.

Lastly, the critical social theory becomes significant in this study because it offers an opportunity to produce knowledge that describes and advocates for the changing of

the status quo. Wang, Ketchen, and Bergh (2002) assert that the critical social theory, when applied in the study, gives an opportunity not only to produce descriptive knowledge of the society and its systems of oppression, exploitation, and domination, but also produce knowledge on how they can be and should be without these phenomena. The theory achieves this through creating conditions for dialogue and discussion that are aimed at making sense of the world and, therefore, creates for conditions for the marginalised people to engage, voice, and construct a transformed reality (Murray, 2015). The vital problem for research is not to remedy technical difficulties as efficiently as possible but rather produce emancipatory knowledge to change fundamental oppressive structures in the society and emancipate all human beings from oppression (Wang *et al.*, 2002).

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter provides the reader with a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The study is underpinned by the Afrocentric theory and critical social theory. The researcher discussed at length the Afrocentric theory, which is the main theory of the study. The three basic tenets of the Afrocentric theory discussed in this chapter include its emphasis on Africans to achieve literacy and freedom, the consciousness that determines one being, and the emphasis on time as a contributing factor to the role of history in social change. The researcher also provided a detailed discussion of the critical social theory and its application and relevance in the study. In the discussion in this chapter, the researcher discussed the three philosophical bases of the critical social theory, which includes critical enlightenment, critical emancipation, and transformation embedded in social justice. The next chapter focuses on the research methods that were adopted in the collection of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The Afrocentricity theory and critical social theory were discussed in relation to their application to the critical analysis of supervision in the DSD. This chapter reports on the research methods that were applied in the critical analysis of social work supervision through the Afrocentric perspective. Pivotal to the discourse of this chapter is the broad discussion on the research paradigm, approach, design, sample, data collection instrument, data analysis and interpretation, ethical consideration, reflexivity, and positionality and limitations of the study.

4.2. Research Paradigm

The worldview that provides a researcher with theoretical, philosophical, and methodological foundations for this study is the interpretivism paradigm. Bezuidenhout, Davis, and Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014) mention that interpretivist research aims to gain in-depth understanding and it often requires the researcher to spend many hours in direct contact with those being studied to be able to appreciate how they experience daily life and to get an understanding of what is meaningful and relevant to them. In this study the researcher utilises an Afrocentric lens to critically analyse the social work supervision in the DSD. To get an in-depth understanding of the social work practitioners' experiences and understanding of social work supervision within their organisation, the researcher employed the interpretivist paradigm. This required that the researcher spend more time in direct contact with the social workers and supervisors to appreciate their experiences, views, and understanding of social work supervision within their organisation.

Pulla and Carter (2018) mention that through using an interpretivist view, the social work researcher is interested in the meaning that individuals give to understanding other humans and the society that they live in. This is because the interpretivist paradigm is originally rooted in the fact that methods used to understand knowledge related to human and social sciences cannot be the same as its usage in physical sciences because humans interpret their world and then act based on such

interpretations while the world does not (Pham, 2018). Therefore, as a social work researcher, the interest was in understanding how participants understand social work supervision processes within their organisation, how that affects their daily jobs, how Afrocentric-based supervision could help them do effectively execute their role, and what possible methods should be proposed to achieve Afrocentric-based social work supervision. The researcher supports the point outlined by Pulla and Carter (2018), who state that as a social work researcher you are interested in how people make sense of the world, how you understand behaviors of other people, or how you understand interactions between other people.

However, the researcher did note the limitations that the interpretivist paradigm could have presented during the research process if not properly acknowledged and mitigated. Interpretivist research has its critiques as it assumes that reality is subjective and can differ considering different individuals; this can lead to the understanding that research participants would not provide general interpretations (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). The data gathered and analysed would be less likely to be generalised through the adoption of the interpretivist paradigm given the consideration that data were mainly dependent on a specific context, viewpoint, and values (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). To overcome these limitations the researcher sampled participants that belong to the same profession and organisation. This helped the researcher to note the differences that arose in individual experiences on the topic researched but also put together similar views that arose from the understanding of how Afrocentric-based supervision could be realised. Another limitation stated by Pham (2018) is that the interpretivists aim to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of phenomena within the complexity of the context rather than generalise these results to other people and other contexts; hence, it tends to leave out a gap in verifying validity and usefulness of research outcomes with using scientific procedures. To overcome this limitation, the researcher in this chapter details how the trustworthiness of the study could be maintained and how its validity and usefulness can be verified using proper scientific procedures.

4.3. Research Questions

- 4.3.1. What are social workers' and supervisors' conceptual understandings of supervision practice and the context in which supervision is implemented in the Department of Social Development?
- 4.3.2. What do social workers and supervisors regard as the Afrocentric features of the Afrocentric-based supervision practice in the Department of Social Development?
- 4.3.3. What are the participants' views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision?
- 4.3.4. What are the possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision?

4.4. Research Approach

The study has adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative researchers use this approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic under exploration and investigation. Rubin and Babbie (2008) assert that qualitative research attempts to tap the deeper meanings of particular human experiences and is intended to generate qualitative data that is theoretically richer and cannot be easily deduced from numbers as in quantitative research. Therefore, this approach allowed the researcher to solicit comprehensive and in-depth information from the participants so that research questions can be answered. Qualitative research tends to provide a comprehensiveness of perspectives and in-depth descriptions that offer increased understanding to the researcher (Lietz & Zayas, 2010; Royse, 2011).

The researcher utilised this approach to gather study participants' understandings and experiences of social work supervision in the setting within which they work and receive supervision. The research approach benefited the researcher to have a clear understanding of their work environment, experiences, and understanding so that the researcher can be in a position to better understand, interpret, and analyse their meanings in accordance with the research aim. Lietz and Zayas (2010) mention that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Through the qualitative approach the researcher got the opportunity to understand participants'

worldviews and make sense of the narratives provided during the collection and analysis of data.

4.5. Research Design

Research designs allow the researcher to conduct comprehensive planning that would maximise the possibilities of obtaining data that is required to answer research questions while at the same time decreasing the probabilities of allocating more money, time, and resources than needed. Akhtar (2016) mentions that research design is necessary because it makes the smooth sailing of the various research procedures possible, thereby creating research as professional as possible, yielding maximum information with a minimum expenditure of effort, time, and money. This section details the research design that was utilised when the study was conducted. For the purposes of this study, the researcher employed both the exploratory research design and the descriptive research design. The researcher combined these two research designs to form an exploratory-descriptive research design.

4.5.1. Exploratory Research Design

The exploratory research design is useful when as this study aims to uncover new and in-depth experiences of social workers and supervisors in relation to the Afrocentric-based supervision, of which little is known about. Akhtar (2016) asserts that exploratory studies are usually more appropriate in case of a problem about which little research knowledge is available, where a researcher is interested in obtaining insights in the face of little knowledge available about it. Since little is known about Afrocentric-based supervision, the key to the researcher was to explore the phenomenon of Afrocentric-based supervision and, if it does exist, what could be its distinguishing features and, if it does not exist, explore what possible action should be undertaken to achieve it. The exploratory research design was critical for the researcher to uncover the phenomenon of Afrocentric-based supervision. Exploratory research draws definitive conclusions only with extreme caution, given its fundamental nature, exploratory research often relies on techniques such as formal qualitative research through in-depth interviews, focus groups, projective methods, case studies or pilot studies (Thomas & Lawal 2020). In this study the exploratory research design was complimented by the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Babbie (2008) claims that exploratory studies are most typically done for three purposes: (i) to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding; (ii) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study; and (iii) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study. In qualitative exploratory research the data is gathered directly from the subject, which may be individuals or a group of people with specific characteristics that are of interest to the researcher through in-depth interviews, focus groups, or observations (Thomas & Lawal, 2020).

4.5.2. Descriptive Research

The descriptive research design was also critical and fundamental for this research study. Its importance is derived from its characteristic of being able to provide a clear description of the topic of interest. Akhtar (2016) explains that the descriptive research design helps to describe phenomena as they exist and is used to identify and obtain information on the characteristics of a particular issue like communities, groups, or people. Hair, Celsi, Money, Samoel, and Page (2011) assert that descriptive research is designed to obtain data that describes the characteristics of the topic of interest in the research. The topic of social work supervision in the profession of social work has been widely debated and, to a certain extent, has been conceptualised. However, the critical analysis of social work supervision through an Afrocentric perspective has been a gap that this study seeks to bridge through proposing ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. Therefore, the descriptive research design enabled the researcher to provide a detailed description of how the Afrocentric social work supervision should be and what it meant for social workers and supervisors in the DSD.

The main goal of this study was to suggest possible ways to achieve the Afrocentric-based social work supervision as mentioned in Chapter One. Therefore, the descriptive research design assisted the researcher to realise this goal through providing rich descriptions of participants views and meaning of how they conceptualise, describe, and understand Afrocentric-based supervision. Sharma (2017) explains that the descriptive design may be used to develop theories, identify problems with current practices, justify current practices, make judgments, or determine other practices in similar situations. Furthermore, Hair *et al.* (2011) mention

that descriptive research designs are usually structured and specifically designed to measure the characteristics described in the research questions. In the process of proposing ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision the descriptive research design assisted the researcher to ensure that conclusions were clear, in line with the identified problem, and speak to the overall research aim.

4.5.3. Exploratory-descriptive Research

Building upon the strengths of the exploratory and descriptive research designs the study combined these designs into a single research design for the purposes of this study. The exploratory-descriptive design was adopted as the sole design underpinning the study. Dhludhlu (2021) asserts that the exploratory-descriptive research design allows for an open, flexible, and inductive approach to research into new relatively unknown areas of research. As the study focused on the critical analysis of social work supervision through the Afrocentric approach to propose ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision, it was critical to employ the exploratory design so that it could assist in unearthing deep understating of the supervision from the participants. At the same time, the descriptive design was useful in ensuring that it guided the researcher in proposing ways for achieving Afrocentric-based supervision building on the design's descriptive characteristics. Therefore, the researcher used the exploratory-descriptive research design as a way of ensuring that the research findings describe and explore the phenomena of Afrocentric-based social work supervision and also discover deep information that seeks to answer, in greater detail, the research questions. Through this research design, a researcher is in a better position to generate a model (Riazi, 2016) that can explain in detail how social work supervision can incorporate Afrocentrism. For the purposes of this study, the researcher sought to propose ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

4.6. Research Population

Laura *et al.* (2014) mention that the population includes all individuals or groups that possess the characteristic that the researcher aims to investigate. Omari (2011) concurs and 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 population for this study were social workers and social work supervisors. Social

workers and social work supervisors were sampled according to the preestablished sampling criteria provided in this section. The supervision framework developed by SACSSP and DSD (2012) states that for a social worker to qualify to be a supervisor they must have a minimum of five years of experience. Therefore, the researcher selected social work supervisors who have worked for a minimum of five years as social workers and currently held the position of a supervisor. For social workers, the researcher selected social workers who were under supervision for a minimum of three years. This allowed the researcher to get rich information from social workers who were part of supervision and understood the supervision process within their service office. This gave the researcher the advantage of acquiring rich and in-depth knowledge from the participants built upon their practice experiences.

According to the Supervision Framework developed by SACSSP and DSD (2012), supervisors have a responsibility to supervise, plan, and prepare for supervision sessions whereas social workers as supervisees have a responsibility to ensure that they attend agreed upon supervision sessions. Therefore, social workers and supervisors were selected for participation in the study because of their roles and responsibilities designated by the Supervision Framework to ensure that the supervision process is successful within the organisation. The selected category of participants helped the researcher to analyse collected data with greater confidence as some of the inputs of participants emanated from the lived and experiential perspectives that assisted the researcher to draw reasonable conclusions on the topic under investigation. Therefore, their perspectives, narratives and opinions were necessary to pave a way for critical analysis of the social work supervision in the DSD in line with the objectives and the aim of the study. This research study also included three key informants as the extended population of the study. The purpose of including key informants in the study was to collect information from expert professionals with first-hand information and knowledge about the phenomena being researched (Tolich & Tumilty, 2021).

4.7. Research Sampling

While the concept of sampling is often defined differently by different authors, significant among them is the selection process involved. O'Dwyer and Bernauer

(2014) define sampling as the process of selecting a sample from a population that will be used in the research process. Pickard (2017) defines sampling as the process of selecting a few from the many to carry out empirical research.

The study utilised non-probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling to sample the participants. Pickard (2017) mentions that the logic of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. A purposive sample is made up of elements that possess a particular characteristic or attribute that the researcher is interested in studying (Laura *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, the researcher purposively sampled participants that met the pre-established criteria. In conducting research, the researcher was guided by the principle of saturation of knowledge. Nosiri (2021) states that saturation of knowledge is when the researcher has collected a great deal from the interviews, it reaches a point where no new information is obtained from the interviews and no new information is obtained from further data collection. The researcher can then recognise patterns in the interviewee's experiences.

The study, somehow, focused on the voices of social workers and social work supervisors. It is on this basis that the two categories of sample were selected in this study. In addition to triangulating social workers and supervisors as primary samples, the study also included three key informants for the purpose of soliciting information from experts and on a first-hand basis. The total number of primary participants that ended up sampled for this study was twenty. This number involved fifteen social workers and five social work supervisors. The sampled participants were located under the following DSD districts and service offices:

a. Northern Cluster

- i. KwaMsane Service Office
- ii. Mbazwana Service Office
- iii. Hlabisa Service Office

b. eThekweni Cluster

- i. uMlazi Service Office
- ii. Mbumbulu Service Office

The Following Criteria Was Used for Selecting Participants:

- i. The participants had to be social workers and social work supervisors employed full-time at either uMkhanyakude district or the eThekweni municipality.
- ii. The participants had to be registered with the SACSSP.
- iii. Social workers had to have had a minimum of three years under supervision under their respective districts in the DSD.
- iv. Supervisors had to have had a minimum of five years as supervisors in their respective districts.

c. Key Informants

As part of this study, three key informants were selected based on their respective expertise. Allen (2017) defines an informant as one who has specialised knowledge that would otherwise be unavailable or difficult to locate to help the researcher narrow down the scope of their research. In this study, two out of three key informants were educators from the schools of social work of two different universities and had a recognised scholarly reputation in their respective fields. The first key informant was of a professoriate level with reputable scholarly contributions in the field of Afrocentric and indigenous social work. The second key informant was an employee of the DSD within the Professional Compliance and Quality Assurance (PCQA) division, responsible for quality assurance and supervision policy development. The third key informant was a professoriate with a reputable contribution to social work supervision research. These key informants added deep insights and important perspectives to the study ranging from the analysis of the supervision curriculum and quality of the currently implemented supervision to making proposal grounds for Afrocentric-based supervision.

The key informants were recruited on the basis of the needs of the study. The key informants were recruited through the use of emails. The researcher used emails to invite each key informant, requesting them to participate in the study. The key informants responded and consented to participate in the study. Separate arrangements were made with key informants for scheduling interview sessions based on key informants' convenience.

4.8. Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative researchers use a qualitative approach to research to get in-depth knowledge of the topic being investigated. Harding (2013) mentions that qualitative research is conducted to generate new knowledge and a deeper understanding of the study topic to answer the research questions and generate unique contributions to the literature. A suitable methodology was employed to guarantee the credibility of the study and to achieve the overall aim of the study. For data collection instrument the researcher utilised individual face-to-face interviews that are in-depth in nature. Silverman (2016) asserts that qualitative interviewing produces accounts that offer researchers a means of examining interview sets of findings, for example evidence of the nature of the phenomena under investigation, including the contexts and situations in which it emerges, as well insights into the cultural frames people use to make sense of these experiences. Babbie (2013) defines an interview as a data collection tool in which the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee or participant. The individual interviews were semi-structured in nature to allow the researcher to be flexible in asking questions to gain as much information as possible.

For the primary sample, which is social workers and social work supervisors, the interviews took place at service offices of the DSD at the Northern Cluster and eThekweni Cluster. These interviews were in person and held at the office that was allocated for the researcher to collect data. All social workers and supervisors were interviewed individually in an appropriate and safe space to allow participants to share their views, perspectives, and narratives without the fear of being heard by a third party or the fear of victimisation. The individual interviewing sessions with participants was instrumental for this study as it allowed participants to open up and share their frustrations, fears, worries and angers. The interviewing sessions were then used by social workers and supervisors as a debriefing session, which was then used to serve the research aim through providing evidence that the currently in place supervision is ineffective, hence, the calls for the Afrocentric-based supervision. Participants felt safe to voice their frustrations, views, and perspectives because they identified with the researcher as also being a social worker with knowledge of what is happening in the field. The researcher had to employ interview skills and empathy to guide the participants to answer the research questions without invalidating their frustrations and

anger as a result of what they believed was improper lived experiences. Each interview session lasted between 50 to 60 minutes.

Interviews with social workers and supervisors were conducted in IsiZulu, despite the fact that they could speak in English because they were professionals. This was to allow the participants to have the liberty of expressing their perspectives and views as they wish without have to be limited by the use of a secondary language. To ensure that the researcher did not deviate from the questions an interviewing instrument was developed in English (see Annexure D) and was then translated to IsiZulu. The interviews were recorded as permission was granted by all social workers and supervisors.

For the key informants, the interviews were held virtually via zoom. This was because of the busy schedules of the key informants due to the positions they hold. Interviews with the key informants also ranged from 50 to 60 minutes. These interviews took place after all interviews were completed. At this point the researcher had already transcribed all interviews from social workers and supervisors had started the process of analysing data from primary participants. This gave the researcher the advantage of identifying gaps and direct questions to pose to key informants in specific areas that needed strengthening, being mindful of the key informants' areas of expertise.

4.9. Data Analysis

Aneshensel (2013) defines data analysis as the process of investigating data to make sense of it. Thyer (2016) states that data analysis should involve an interactive unfolding of insight as the researcher repeatedly engages with the individual participants' stories and ultimately weaves these together to tell their collective story. Data analysis does not begin on a *tabula rasa* at the end of data collection, rather the analysis plan is formulated during the design of the study when the theory guiding the research is translated into a set of research questions and hypotheses and into a set of procedures that eventually generate the data to be analysed (Aneshensel, 2013).

The process of data analysis was informed by thematic data analyses. Liamputtong (2011) explains that thematic data analysis is referred to as a process for identifying,

analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. He also mentions that thematic data analysis is perceived as the foundational method for qualitative analysis. The researcher analysed data following the five steps that are proposed by Terreblanche *et al.* (2006). The first step is the immersion and familiarisation of data. After the researcher had collected data from the participants, the process of transcribing the data followed. While data was transcribed the researcher got a sense for the data and when the transcription was done, the researcher reread the transcripts for the purposes understanding what came out from the participants. The second step, coding, which is the key process in analysing qualitative data, is the process of classifying or categorising individual pieces of data (Babbie, 2011). The data was coded as the researcher was rereading the transcripts. The third step was inducing themes, where the researcher labelled categories by emerging themes and in keeping with the aims. The fourth step is elaboration, the researcher engaged in the refinement of themes with an intent to describe and explain the essence of each theme. The final step was the interpretation and checking of data, where the researcher interpreted the data against the literature review and theoretical framework.

4.10. Ethical Considerations

In conducting the research study, the researcher abided with the research's ethical considerations. Ethics in research are integral in ensuring the integrity of the research study. Pietilä, Nurmi, Halkoaho, and Kyngäs, (2020) mention that ethics is an integral part of research that extends throughout the entire research process, from the selection of a research topic to data collection and analysis, and, finally, the dissemination of the study results. Amongst the ethical considerations that were observed are the following:

4.10.1. Gatekeeper

The study aimed to critically analyse social work supervision through the Afrocentric approach in the DSD. The KZN DSD was the main gatekeeper for this study. Wagner (2012) explains that gatekeepers are those people who enable researchers to gain entry into an organisation or community to conduct the study. Plankey-Videla (2012) asserts that to access a research site, permission is needed from an authorised individual in an institution or an organisation.

The researcher wrote a letter to the Head of Department (HoD) of the KZN provincial DSD to request permission to conduct the study in the eThekweni Cluster, under the eThekweni Metropolitan, and the Northern Cluster, under uMkhanyakude District. The researcher received a gatekeeper letter (see Annexure C) from the KZN-DSD HoD on the 15th of May 2022. After the researcher received the gatekeeper letter, the internal university application was initiated to receive the ethical clearance so that the researcher could get the clearance to commence with the data collection. The application was made to the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). The researcher was granted full approval for ethical clearance (see Annexure B) on the 21st of July 2022. The approval of the ethical clearance meant the researcher could start with the collection of data, however, the researcher had to prepare for some important research chapters that were crucial before conducting the actual data collection.

After this process the researcher contacted the district directors of the two districts where the study was to unfold. The researcher contacted the district directors to request access to services offices where approval was granted by the HoD. After this was done the researcher visited the service offices concerned where service office Managers were met and briefed about the study and communicated the research process and expectations. Data collection commenced after this entire process.

4.10.2. Informed Consent

Informed consent is one of the ethical principles that is fundamental in the research process. It involves allowing the research participants to voluntarily consent for their participation and involvement in the research study. Connelly (2014) asserts that gaining consenting participants involves giving individuals giving consent voluntarily, ensuring that the participants understand the content of the consent, and that they also understand what the researcher is asking of them as well as ensuring that the participants that are required for the study are competent to consent. Pietilä *et al.* (2020) explain that informed consent enhances the participants' right to autonomous decision-making as it grants participants an opportunity to decide whether to participate in the research study while deciding if their participation in the research

study will be compatible with their interests, values, and beliefs. Kotz, Viechtbauer, Spigt, and Crutzen (2019) explain that consent from the participants can be written or verbal, but the researcher should inform participants about the aims, processes, and benefits of the research. Valid informed consent can only be obtained if the potential study participant is accurately informed about the research and that the participant can understand the provided information and can make a voluntary decision about their participation (Pietilä *et al.* 2020).

For the study, informed consent forms (see Annexure A) were developed prior to going for data collection to service offices. The consent forms included information relating to the research, the contact information of the supervisors, the researcher, and the UKZN HSSREC the study is accountable to. The consent form explained in detail the purpose and aim of the research, assured confidentiality, and detailed the duration of the interviews, amongst other things. As the recruitment of participants unfolded, the researcher gave each participant consent forms which were returned to the researcher before the commencement of the interviews. All participants signed consent forms and none objected.

4.10.3. Confidentiality and Privacy

Confidentiality is the basic and core principle in social work practice and social work research that must be adhered to by social work researchers and practitioners. Surmiak, (2020) asserts that confidentiality represents a core principle of research ethics and forms a standard practice in social research. The principle of confidentiality is closely related to the client's right to privacy. This principle advocates for the participants to have full confidence that the data they share with the researcher will be kept confidential. Pietilä *et al.* (2020) mention that when participants share their personal information for research purposes, they trust that their information will be kept confidential and that only predefined individuals will have access to their data. Researchers have the obligation to ensure that they confirm and uphold the principle of confidentiality when collecting data from the participants and uphold the principle of respecting clients and protecting them from harm. Breaching confidentiality may expose participants to harm and demonstrates a lack of respect which may undermine

the researcher's credibility and ability to conduct research for future studies (Surmiak, 2020).

As data collection was in progress, the researcher-maintained confidentiality by first requesting an office space where individual interviews were going to be collected. Every interview with social workers and supervisors took place in a decent office where there were no distractions and where the responses of participants were not compromised. This was also to assert the right to privacy. Secondly, the researcher guaranteed confidentiality by verbally assuring participants that their responses and the date of their interview would be kept confidential. This was done to eliminate fears from the participants of being compromised as a result of the information they provided.

4.10.4. Anonymity

The anonymity of research participants is a central feature of ethical research practices and is written into the various guidelines to which social researchers work (Wiles, 2013). To ensure that the research participants are not exposed to any harm after data collection has been concluded, the researcher will conceal the actual identities of the participants. When Rubin and Babbie (2016) explain anonymity, they state that it is an arrangement that makes it impossible for a researcher or reader to link any research data with a given research participant. Wiles (2013) mentions that the primary way that researchers seek to protect research participants from the accidental breaking of confidentiality is through the process of anonymisation, which occurs through the use of pseudonyms applied to research participants, organisations, and locations.

To adhere to the anonymity ethical principle the researcher assured participants through the consent forms and verbally that their identities would be kept anonymous. In chapters five and six where the data presentation and analysis were done, participants were given pseudonyms to ensure that their identities were concealed and protected from any harm that may arise. Pseudonyms were given to social workers, supervisors, and key informants. The fifteen social workers were allocated pseudonyms, SWP 01 to SWP 15. The five supervisors were allocated pseudonyms,

SWS 01 to SWS 05. The three key informants were allocated pseudonyms, Key informant 01 to Key informant 03. The meaning of SWP is Social Work Practitioner while SWS stands for Social Work Supervisor.

4.10.5. Respect for Persons

Respect is the basic principle in the practice of social work that underpins social work as a profession. Social work researchers at all times are expected to uphold the ethical principle of respect for participants as human beings integral to the study and also respect the data provided by participants. Ketefian (2015) asserts that this concept assumes that individuals are autonomous beings and respect is due to them because of that fact. Ketefian (2015) also posits that they have self-determination and can make judgments as to what will be done to their persons. Payne and Reith-Hall (2019) assert that the principle of respect states that a person must be seen as a rational, self-determining, and being intrinsically worthy of respect simply because they are a person.

Throughout the entire research process the ethical principle was observed. The researcher had to observe this principle in relation to the study supervisors to ensure that the study's progress was not tainted by side issues. The ethical principle of respect was also applied to gatekeepers to ensure that the researcher respected that they could not go and collect data of social workers and supervisors without their knowledge and approval. The principle of respect was extended to social workers and supervisors who by their own judgment and determination agreed to participate voluntarily in the study without any form of remuneration. Lastly, the ethical principle of respect was also afforded to the key informants as they are esteemed and reputable with expert knowledge and experience that assisted the study to reach its main aim. The researcher concurs with the view shared by Vanclay *et al.* (2013), who state that a researcher should always demonstrate respect in terms of all their interactions with participants including not judging them, not discrediting them, and ensuring that their views are faithfully recorded and given due consideration in the assessment process.

Furthermore, to uphold the principle of respect in this study, the researcher ensured analysed and interpreted data reflected what the participants said. This will be done

by allowing space for participants to express their views and feelings without being judged.

4.10.6. Deception

The researcher was aware before data collection commenced that deception comes in many forms and ensured that participants are not deceived in any way as the research data collection progressed. Wagner *et al.* (2012) mention that deceit takes various forms, it may simply be covert research that takes place without the knowledge of participants. Engel and Schutt (2014) explain that the problem with deception is that potential participants are not given the information they need to make an informed decisions or give consent to participate in research that they otherwise would not have agreed to with full information. For this research, the researcher disclosed information that pertains to the research. Participants were also given a consent form that has basic information about the research. During the process of data collection, the researcher did not make promises that could have misrepresented the position of being a researcher. The researcher disclosed to participants that participation was voluntary and bears no form of remuneration.

4.10.7. Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation is important to social work research as it reinforces the basic social work principle of self-determination which promotes participants' right to choose concerning their involvement in a study. Csiernik and Birnbaum (2017) assert that a social work researcher should believe in the principle of self-determination to practically apply voluntary participation. For this study, all research participants were allowed the opportunity to decide whether they were willing to participate in this study or not. Though participants initially agreed to participate, they were also informed that they have a right to withdraw from participating at any point the deem. Therefore, no participant was coerced to participate in the study. Vanclay *et al.*, (2013) assert that as implied by the principle of informed consent, participation must be voluntary and not subject to any coercion or threat of harm for non-participation. The written consent form informed participants that their participation in the study should be voluntary and not based on any form of coercion.

4.11. Trustworthiness of the Study

The researcher in this section discusses the study's trustworthiness to signify that the study was afforded sufficient attention and that it could be trusted. In this section, the researcher will discuss the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and transferability.

4.11.1. Credibility

Thyer (2016) asserts that credibility is concerned with the accuracy of findings which is the truthfulness of the study findings. Babbie and Mouton (2017) reinforce what the previous author states, that credibility refers to the confidence of the researcher about the accuracy of the results of the study. The appropriate use of the research design and methods that are used to derive findings will guarantee the accuracy of the research findings. It is the researcher's responsibility to provide a chain of evidence and use narrative accounts that are plausible and credible (Thyer, 2016). The researcher spent a considerable amount of time immersing himself in literature to ensure that the niche for the study was depicted and that the contribution to the body of knowledge is clear. To ensure credibility the researcher also ensured that the outlined research processes were properly followed to ensure that when data was collected its credibility was guaranteed as it was collected based on an ethical research process. The researcher used direct quotes from what the participants said in their attempts to answer the questions so that the interpretation of participants' responses may reflect what participants conveyed. The data was analysed and interpreted according to the participants' account.

4.11.2. Transferability

Kumar (2014) states that transferability refers to the degree to which the results of the qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. Rubin and Babbie (2016) assert that transferability could be achieved through the provision of detailed background information on the research context, setting, and participants. To fulfil the study's transferability the researcher has provided rich contextual information on the background of the study. The researcher also provided a detailed description of the participants of the study. The researcher believes that this

study could be transferable to other districts or municipalities or provinces where the DSD is in existence.

4.11.3. Dependability

Sultan (2019) mentions that dependability is a criterion of trustworthiness that speaks to how you are justifying your choice of research methodology and data collection process, as well as how your findings align and harmonise with that methodology. For this research to fulfil dependability the researcher presented a detailed chapter on methodology. The methodological chapter describes in detail how the research was conducted for the reader to adequately judge the dependability of the study. Creswell (2014) states that dependability involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation, and recommendations of the study, such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study. The researcher allowed room for interested participants who want to test the research findings to do so within professional boundaries and without compromising the integrity and trustworthiness of the study.

4.11.4. Confirmability

Sultan (2019) asserts that confirmability calls for a clear identification of links between findings and interpretation as a way of verifying that the researcher is not making random assertions. This is reinforced by Kumar (2014) who defines confirmability as the degree to which research results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. To achieve this the researcher allowed the study supervisors or any interested parties to confirm the findings of the results through the use of the available collected data to check if a common conclusion could be reached.

4.12. Reflexivity and Positionality

The reflexivity and positionality of a researcher become an important factor to be discussed in this section. Dodgson (2019) asserts that reflexivity is a continuous process of reflection by researchers on their values and of recognising, examining, and understanding how their social background, location, and assumptions affects their research practice. Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio, and Kahlke (2022) view reflexivity as a set of continuous, collaborative, and multifaceted practices through

which researchers self-consciously critique, appraise, and evaluate how their subjectivity and context influence the research processes. For this study, the researcher used reflexivity and positionality to reflect his significance in relation to this study. While the researcher did this, he remained mindful that from the conceptual stage they were not a neutral researcher in his pursuit of this study. However, at the same time, the researcher had to be continuously aware of his values, principles, and thought processes as well as factors that influenced them. It is worth indicating that the researcher's interest in social work supervision has personal, practical, and academic significance. These interests in social work supervision are discussed below, respectively:

- **Personal Level**

At the personal level, as someone had previously conducted a study on supervision in one of the districts in KZN DSD, the researcher had certain expectations on how participants would describe his understanding of supervision and experiences. The researcher also had to guard against his own biases emanating from the previous findings that he had found when he conducted a Masters study on social workers' and supervisors' experiences of supervision. The researcher had to understand participants' narratives from their perspectives and not from the findings emanating from a previous study.

- **Practical Level**

At the practical level, as a social worker the researcher was aware of how social workers in the field are welcoming to other social workers and are free to share their experiences from their practice. This was important to understand because when having individual interviews, participants could have used the session to debrief on issues encountered from their practice, which did not form part of the research scope. As a social worker, the researcher had to be empathetic to participants but, at the same time, guide the data collection sessions to focus on the scope of the study.

- **Academic Level**

At the academic level, the researcher had to ensure that the research process followed the ethically appropriate and approved methods. The researcher had to apply for

ethical approval from the university, which helped to follow ethically approved research methods so that the study could not be compromised by the researcher's preferences.

4.13. Limitations of the Study

Marshal and Rossman (2011) assert that all proposed research studies have limitations, and none are perfectly designed. This section is the researcher's recognition and acknowledgement that the study was not without limitations. It also sought to demonstrate ways in which these perceived limitations used were subjugated so that they do not compromise the integrity of the study. The demonstration of the study's limitations shows that the researcher understands the reality that the researcher will make no overwhelming claims about generalisability or conclusiveness about what was learned (Marshal & Rossman, 2011).

The researcher has observed the following limitations pertaining to the study:

- The research study's location is likely to limit the research because it only involved five DSD service offices under the Northern Cluster and eThekweni Cluster under uMkhanyakude and eThekweni District municipalities, respectively.
- In as much as research participants are educated and were able to answer research questions in English, the researcher noticed from previous research experience that participants feel comfortable answering in their vernacular language (IsiZulu). Therefore, the researcher noticed a limitation that would be a result of translation as the researcher had to translate from IsiZulu to English, which was used in the research report. For the researcher to overcome this limitation, an audio recorder was used to record the interview sessions. This allowed the researcher to adequately translate the interview into English. This limitation might also present issues of accuracy in the translation as some words could be difficult to translate from IsiZulu to English.
- Studies that critique social work supervision using the Afrocentric paradigm are difficult to locate. Therefore, the researcher recognises the limitations posed by the insufficient literature on the topic being investigated.

- The sample of the study focuses on social workers and social work supervisors employed within the two districts of KZN DSD, and three key informants employed by different institutions such as tertiary institutions.

4.14. Conclusion

The chapter described in detail the methodology undertaken to critically analyse the social work supervision in the DSD utilising Afrocentric theory. The chapter explains the research approach, design, paradigm, and specific methods employed in the study. Social workers and supervisors within specific service offices of the KZN DSD were the sample of this study. The study included three key informants as the extended sample of the study. The study used semi-structured in-depth interviews as an instrument to collect data from participants. Research ethics and trustworthiness were discussed in the chapter to outline how ethics and credibility, transferability, and dependability were maintained. Lastly, the researcher discussed the study's limitations and how these were addressed to ensure that the study was not compromised.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of results. It begins by presenting the demographic of participants in the study. The demographic of participants captures the important details of participants in accordance with the inclusion criteria that was developed by the researcher prior to data collection. There were four research questions that the study sought to answer. The first question focused on social workers' and supervisors' conceptual understanding of supervision practices and the context in which supervision is implemented in the DSD. The second question focused on what social workers and supervisors regard as the Afrocentric features of the Afrocentric-based supervision practice in the DSD. The third question sought to look at the participants' views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision.

The analysis of data gathered from the participants follows thematic analysis, as proposed by Terreblanche *et al.* (2006), as detailed in the methodology chapter. In the discourse of presenting the findings, four themes and several subsequent subthemes were developed emanating from the four research questions. Hence the findings reported in this chapter seek to answer four research questions as detailed earlier in Chapter One and Three. Three key informants with various expertise in relation to the discourse of critically analysing Afrocentric-based supervision were included in the data collection. The narratives of the key informants, social workers, and social work supervisors are captured in the section of demographics participants.

5.2. Demographics of Participants

In the methodology chapter it was established that the sample for the study were social workers and supervisors in the KZN, DSD. The participants were sampled across two districts of the KZN DSD, namely the eThekweni Cluster and Northern Cluster. The demographics below depict the pseudonyms allocated to each participant, their occupation, experience, and the name of the service office where these participants work. The uMlazi and uMbumbulu service offices fall under eThekweni Cluster and KwaMsane, Mbazwana, and Hlabisa service offices fall under the Northern Cluster. A

total of twenty (20) participants who were social workers and supervisors were sampled and interviewed. The participants were given codes of SWP for social workers and SWS for supervisors. The meaning of SWP is Social Work Practitioner and SWS is Social Work Supervisor.

5.2.1 Sample 1: Social Workers

Table 5.1 below shows the demographics of social workers who participated in the study. The table depicts details about social workers and the service offices of the DSD where participants were sampled and interviewed. The table is depicted below:

Table 5.1. Table of Social Workers

Pseudonym	Occupation	Years of Experience	Gender	Service Office
SWP 1	Social Worker	11 years	Female	uMlazi
SWP 2	Social Worker	09 years	Male	uMlazi
SWP 3	Social Worker	17 years	Female	uMlazi
SWP 4	Social worker	09 years	Female	uMlazi
SWP 5	Social worker	11 years	Female	uMlazi
SWP 6	Social worker	09 years	Female	uMlazi
SWP 7	Social worker	09 years	Female	uMlazi
SWP 8	Social Worker	09 years	Female	uMbumbulu
SWP 9	Social Worker	12 years	Male	uMbumbulu
SWP 10	Social worker	11 years	Male	Msane
SWP 11	Social Worker	12 years	Female	Hlabisa
SWP 12	Social worker	05 years	Female	Hlabisa
SWP 13	Social Worker	11 years	Female	Mbazwana
SWP 14	Social Worker	11 years	Male	Mbazwana
SWP 15	Social Worker	12 years	Female	Mbazwana

Social workers are at the frontline in working with disadvantaged clients and require supervision to gain support, guidance, and education to help them provide quality services. “Social workers are at the frontline of solidarity with vulnerable groups in all

societies and international exchange of knowledge is necessary for dealing with trans-cultural problems” (Robinson, 2013:88). Hence social workers in this study that formed part of the sample were employed at the DSD working with different clients from different contexts. Evident from the demographics of social workers is that participants’ work experience, as social workers had experience ranging from five to seventeen years, and this is in line with the preestablished criteria for recruiting participants. The years of experience of social workers revealed in Table 5.1 translate to the years of experience that the social worker has been under supervision either from a designated supervisor or peer. The advantages solicited from the in-depth narratives from the participants emanating from their vast experiences and comprehension of the profession.

5.2.2. Sample 2: Social Work Supervisors

Table 5.2 below focuses on the demographic information for social work supervisors who participated in the study. The table reveals the information pertaining to participants’ years of experience, occupation, gender, and service offices where they are employed. The table reflecting the demographics of participants is depicted below:

Table 5.2. Demographics of Supervisors

Pseudonym	Occupation	Collective years of experience	Years of experience as a supervisor	Gender	Service office
SWS 1	Supervisor	13 years	06 years	Female	uMbumbulu
SWS 2	Supervisor	09 years	03 years	Female	uMbumbulu
SWS 3	Supervisor	13 years	07 years	Female	uMsane
SWS 4	Supervisor	07 years	03 years	Female	Msane
SWS 5	Supervisor	14 years	09 years	Male	Mbazwane

Social work supervisors are critical in the implementation of the supervisory process because they are the ones responsible for the execution of supervision in service offices. Supervisors are accountable for the ethical and work performances of

supervisees and manage supervisees' work by means of a supervision process containing tasks such as conducting assessments, contracting, developing and operating a personal development plan, performance management and appraisals of supervisees in accordance with organisational policies and procedures (SACSSP & DSD, 2012:18).

In the table depicting the demographics of social work supervisors, it is evident that the experiences of supervisors who participated in the study ranges from seven to fourteen years. Even with supervisors, deep and rich narratives were solicited and helped in answering research questions which is the advantage sourced from supervisors' vast experiences working with social workers from their respective service offices. The sample also included key informants.

5.2.3. Key Informants

The study also involved the key informants. The key informants were critical in the study as they presented the expert knowledge based on their experience and academic contribution to help the researcher reach the comprehensive understanding and fill the gaps identified during the collection of data from social workers and supervisors. Sukmawati, Salmia, and Sudarmin (2023) explain that the selection of key informants is based on the discretion of the researcher and is based on a key informant's level of knowledge or experience in relation to the topic under consideration. The profile of key informants is captured below:

5.2.3.1. Profiles of Key Informants

Key informant 01: is a social work professor in one a South African university. The key informant has an extensive academic reputation in the scholarship of Afrocentric social work, spirituality, social work, and how the social work profession interfaces with religion. The key informant was instrumental in this study to guide the understanding of social work supervision from the Afrocentric perspective.

Key Informant 02: is a social worker in the DSD under the Professional Compliance and Quality Assurance (PCQA) division. The key informant has worked as a social worker at the service office level and was promoted to a provincial office as a social work policy developer. The key informant's expertise as social worker and the practitioner in the PCQA division responsible for the execution of supervision added

fundamental advantage in the study. The key informant gave valuable insight on how supervision should be implemented in relation to the Supervision framework and the contemporary challenges that exists in supervision.

Key Informant 03: is a social work professor on one of the South African universities. The key informant has extensive and reputable scholarship in the field of social work supervision in South Africa and different contexts across the globe. The key informant has done extensive research in the DSD on social work supervision. The key informant has been instrumental in the formulation of the currently in place Supervision Framework developed by the SACSSP and DSD in 2012. The key informant provided valuable insight into how social work supervision should be conceptualised and implemented.

5.3. Key Findings

This section presents the key findings as they relate to themes and subthemes that emerged from the analysis of the collected data. In the methodological chapter, the researcher stated that the analysis of data will be in accordance with the five steps of thematic analysis, as proposed by Terreblanche *et al.* (2006). **Table 5.3** below details the themes and subthemes as they emerged on the collected data.

Table 5.3.: Themes and subthemes

<p>Theme 1: Participants’ conceptual understanding of supervision and its context</p> <p>Subtheme 1.1: Participants’ understanding of supervision</p> <p>Subtheme 1.2: Service office as the context in which supervision is implemented</p> <p>Subtheme 1.3: Critique on the implemented supervision’s impact on participants</p> <p>Subtheme 1.4: Description of Afrocentric-based supervision</p>
<p>Theme 2: Afrocentric features of the Afrocentric-based supervision</p> <p>Subtheme 2.1: Describing the Afrocentric features of Afrocentric-based supervision</p> <p>Subtheme 2.2: Links of Afrocentricity to the implemented supervision</p> <p>Subtheme 2.3: Things to be done to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision</p>
<p>Theme 3: Possible successes to be presented by Afrocentric-based Supervision</p> <p>Subtheme 3.1: Successes of Afrocentric-based supervision in the workplace</p>

Subtheme 3.2: Successes for clients

Subtheme 3.3: Successes for the social worker - social worker relationship.

Subtheme 3.4: Successes for the supervisory relationship.

Subtheme 3.5: Successes for the profession of social work

Theme 4: Exploring possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision

Subtheme 4.1: DSD's readiness to embrace Afrocentric-based supervision.

Subtheme 4.2: Possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

As the data was thematically analysed, themes and subthemes emerged emanating from the collected and analysed data. The detailed presentation of results is as below:

5.3.1. Theme 1: Participants' Conceptual Understanding of Supervision and its Context

Social work supervision in the DSD across the country has been standardised at a conceptual level through the Supervision Framework as developed by the SACSSP and DSD (2012). The Supervision Framework provides guidelines on how supervision should be carried out within the department and outlines the roles of supervision players, that is, social workers and supervisors. However, the context within which supervision is implemented across the DSD service offices becomes unique as these offices are located in different locations and contexts, requiring supervision to be context specific. Botha (2002) asserts that supervision in the South African context is crucial because the nature of the social work practice is primarily unpredictable, highly individualised, non-routine, and non-standardised. Therefore, the nature of social work practice in South Africa requires that social work supervision, as the core discourse of the profession, assists social workers in coping with their daily challenges and being effective in their duties.

Exploring the conceptual understanding of social workers and supervisors was crucial in this study because it enabled the researcher to appreciate how participants currently understand and experience supervision. The articulations of participants as relating to their understanding and experience of social work supervision was critical to solicit how they would conceptualise Afrocentric-based supervision, as this is the central theme of the study. To solicit the conceptual understanding of the supervision

practice in their service offices is crucial in helping to make links between how social workers experience supervision and how that received supervision helps them to deliver services to their clients. There is a direct link between supervisory practices and direct practice between social workers and people using social work services (Bostock, Patrizoa, Godfrey, & Forrester, 2019:01). Social workers tend to conceptualise supervision on the basis of how they experience it and social work supervisors tend to conceptualise supervision from what they have learned regarding supervision and the challenges that they encounter in practice.

This theme is based on the first research objective that sought to “examine social workers’ and supervisors’ conceptual understanding of supervision practice and the context in which it is implemented in the DSD.” Critical from this objective was to allow participants to share their understanding of supervision, provide their description of how supervision is implemented in their service office and its impact on their duties. The participants’ assertions allowed the researcher to gauge participants’ conceptual understanding of Afrocentric-based supervision, which is central in the study. Below are the subthemes from this objective. The subthemes that emerged include the participants’ conceptual understanding of supervision, the participants’ critique of the implementation of supervision in service offices, the participants’ critique of the impact of the implemented supervision, and the participants’ description of Afrocentric-based supervision.

5.3.1.1. Subtheme 1.1: Participants’ Conceptual Understanding of Supervision

Social workers and supervisors described their conceptual understanding of supervision as being a process that should be characterised by support. Supervision is seen as a process of social construction driven by the interaction between the social actors involved: the supervisor, the supervisee, the organization, and the beneficiaries (Unguru, 2017). Each of these actors in the social work supervisory process participates in the social construction of reality through their own values, knowledge, and ideas, placed under negotiation and from the process of obtaining an interpretative agreement, generating a specific reality, generally unitary but specific for each context in which the supervision is produced, (Sandu, 2016; Unguru, 2017). At the centre of social work supervision is the provision of support, which has been seen by

participants as critical in the supervisory process and the conceptualization of supervision. Bara (2021:85) explains that the supportive function of supervision outlines "a protective, safe and confident work environment in which supervised people can develop both professionally and personally and aims to reduce the stress of the social worker at work to increase their performance and success." These were the accounts of social workers as they described supervision in terms of support:

"Well, I understand supervision in terms of support that one receives from the allocated supervisor so that you can be able to perform in work." – **SWP 06.**

"...my understanding of supervision is that supervision must be about the support that is given to a social worker, and the framework states the roles of both the supervisor and the social worker... I have to state that is not happening practically because of many reasons that make working difficult for both social workers and supervisors." – **SWP 01.**

"I would say supervision is between the supervisor and the supervisee or between the colleagues.... in most cases supervision happens so that the supervisor can supervise and support the supervisee so that the supervisee can be able to deliver on the work that has been allocated... basically I think it is like that..." – **SWP 03.**

"...supervision is about providing guidance and support to the person you are supervising, but you have to consider the experience the person has and also the knowledge the person possesses while you are supervising him or her so that you will be able to see how much support a person needs..." – **SWS 02.**

Notable from the participants' responses is that the supportive function of supervision is the most used in the participants' description of social work supervision. This conceptualisation and description of supervision in terms of the supportive function aligns with the assertion of Davys and Beddoe (2020) that the supportive function of supervision is understood in terms of a supervisor's ability to provide comfort, encouragement, recognition, and approval. Participants understand that providing support to supervisees is necessary for the purposes of delivering work.

Supervision has also been conceptualised by participants in terms of guidance. The element of guidance that has been mentioned by the participants falls within the

supportive function. Avortri, Nabukalu, and Nabyonga-Orem (2019) explain that the supportive function can also be understood in the context of the provision of guidance and feedback on matters pertaining to professional development. However, participants emphasised guidance as an independent important feature that must characterise supervision. To participants, supervision is the platform wherein guidance should be solicited for the purposes of achieving work-related goals. The need for guidance arises from the reflective practice that social work practitioners constantly engage in, which allows them to understand the need for supervision and what they need from it (Wilkins & Boahen, 2013). Participants gave the following accounts in relation to guidance:

“... my understanding is that the supervisor is there to guide you; at the same time, you will find that there is a lot of work which makes the supervisor fail to implement supervision roles of giving guidance...” – SWP 05.

“...supervision should be characterised by giving guidance as the supervisor is normally more experienced to provide necessary guidance to the supervisee, but while providing that guidance, the supervisor should also allow the supervisee to participate in the process.” – SWP 02.

“... it is all about guiding them on all cases they face... giving them guidance so that when they lack understanding you can come in and give them your own understanding of their case or the experience or knowledge that you have...” – SWS 04.

Deduced from participants' responses is that guidance is deemed an important element in the process of social work supervision, where supervisors provide social workers with the necessary tools as they pertain to their delegated work. The main task for the execution of social work supervision is guidance (Merdekawaty & Andriani, 2023). Though this element of supportive supervision has been highlighted by the participants, it is still a lacking element in the implemented supervision in the DSD. The lack of guidance caused social workers to lose the required ethical and professional morale to undertake their roles. Tsui (2021) asserts that the supportive function of supervision provides social workers with the necessary guidance to undertake their jobs and boost their morale while encouraging them to attain the

necessary motivation and job satisfaction. Participants in this subtheme also described social work supervision as a work-driven process of managing accountability.

Participants also described their conceptualisation of social work supervision as a process characterised by accountability and compliance-driven. In the participants' accounts, supervision is there to ensure accountability for the allocated work. The DSD has put in place the Non-Financial Data (NFD) system that is used to do monitoring and evaluation where social workers and supervisors are allocated targets to reach on a monthly basis for all rendered programs of the department and be reported on a quarterly basis. This system put in place by the department has shaped how social workers respond to the research questions and also relates to the profession. Hence, some participants repeatedly mentioned issues of producing work and reaching NFD targets. The assertion was that participants view supervision mainly as an instrument for ensuring the production of work. Hence, this contradicts Beddoe's (2010) assertion that the social work profession focuses on delivering services to the service users who are most vulnerable, at risk, and marginalised, hence, constantly engaged in risk management. However, when participants described supervision as a work-oriented process, much of it meant supervision as an accountability tool for getting work done and mostly applied the managerial approach. The managerial approach to supervision allows social workers to comply with the organisation's policies and procedures effectively (Tsui, 2004). In the context of the DSD, work-oriented supervision meant adherence to the NFD targets the participants should meet so that they can report to their supervisors and department. The participants' accounts were as follows:

"... okay, my understanding with regard to social work supervision definitely it has to concentrate on the work... I think it has to concentrate mostly on work on how I deliver my work as a social worker... it manages one to obviously to ensure that you have to produce the work and reach targets..." – SWP 07.

"So, it ends up being a kind of supervision where the supervisor focuses on checking your work whether you've done reports, write your report on time, you have to go to court... it is all about work, work, work... it is all about giving you activities and correcting your work where it is needed, but the emotional support part of it doesn't happen, and the education part of it also does not happen as prescribed in the document..." – SWP 04.

"Supervision is there to monitor your work progress and your allocated cases and your ability to meet targets... for the supervisee, I think it depends on your age on your experience because there is a period where you cannot be under strict supervision because of your many years of experience, and you only have to consult, but that depends on the number of years you have on the field.... But in the end, in practice supervision is about making sure that social workers meet their targets so that the office can be seen as compliant to the superiors...." – SWP 10.

"In supervision, it is where you oversee the work of social workers within the office and monitor that entire work engagement of social workers within the office including their cases..." – SWS 05.

Supervision has been characterised by the participants as the process of ensuring accountability in the DSD. The meaning derived from participants' responses is that supervision is viewed as a tool to "monitor" and "make sure" that social workers meet their targets. Therefore, accountability, which falls within the administrative function of supervision, takes centre stage. Consequently, the conceptualisation of supervision by participants leans towards social workers' and supervisors' requirements to primarily perform administrative duties. Tsui (2021) asserts that through the administrative function of supervision, social workers are monitored to fulfill the managerial policies and regulations, administrative procedures, and requirements of the social service agency with its mandate. However, the overreliance on the administrative function has been found to result from the managerial function (Engelbrecht, 2013; Sithole & Shokane, 2023). Therefore, though supervision has an administrative component, the balanced execution of the administrative, supportive, and educational functions has been characterised by scholars such as Engelbrecht (2013), Shokane et al. (2017), and Makoka (2016) professional supervision. The purpose of professional work supervision is to enhance the social workers' level of knowledge, professional skills, and competence in delivering social services to clients (Hughes, 2010; Sewell, 2018).

The overall responses on this subtheme reveal that social workers and supervisors reveal that there are enormous gaps in their conceptualisation of social work supervision. The subtheme sought to provide participants understanding of social work

supervision as it relates to the Supervision Framework. The SACSSP and DSD (2012:10) conceptualises supervision as an "interactional and interminable process within the context of a positive, anti-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models, and perspectives on supervision whereby a social work supervisor supervises a social work practitioner by performing educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services". Evidently, the responses of participants describe supervision as an instrument to ensure accountability and compliance and voice out frustration that should be characterised by support and guidance, which is not the case.

Key informant 2, an experienced social worker who is a social work policy developer with extensive experience in the PCQA division within the DSD, was interviewed. This informant is responsible for the implementation of the supervision framework in the DSD and also provides workshops and training to social workers and supervisors across the KZN DSD. When commenting on how social work supervision should be conceptualised, the following response was given:

"If I am asked to conceptualise supervision, I would say supervision is a process where you provide growth and development for a social worker to attain the independence stage..." – Key informant 02.

The response of this key informant captures supervision as should be characterised by its ability to stimulate professional autonomy through the constant provision of growth and development, which falls within the educational function of supervision. This articulation is in line with the assertion of Karvinen-Niinikoski, Beddoe, Ruch, and Tsui (2017:91), who state that in the profession of social work, "supervision has a long tradition as a process employed to safeguard professional autonomy and expertise and, further, to resist threats to its professional jurisdiction." In addition, social work supervision has been conceptualised in terms of providing support and guidance. This conceptualisation of key Informant 01 aligns with what social workers and supervisors have described when conceptualising social work supervision. However, the response had unexpected gaps as the expectation would be that the key informant would be well-capacitated to narrate the conceptual understanding of supervision closely related to the articulations of the Supervision Framework, such as supervision being

characterised by distinct theories, models, functions, and perspectives. This gave the researcher an understanding of gaps that arose from social workers and supervisors.

Key informant 01 is a professor with reputable scholarship in Afrocentric social work and spirituality and social work contributing towards conceptualising social work supervision. According to Key informant 01, supervision should encompass a balance of social work function. The importance of the balanced application of functions of social work supervision has been explained in Chapter Two. The balanced application of social work supervision functions helps to ensure that "risks are effectively managed; that interventions are based on accumulated knowledge (evidence-based practice) and that social workers are supported to enable them to carry out their work effectively, (Spolander, Engelbrecht, Martin, Strydom, Pervova, Marjanen, Tani, Sicora & Adaikalam, 2014:308). The Key informant 01 explains that a supervisor must possess the necessary knowledge and experience to provide guidance and support to supervisees. The account of Key Informant 01 is as follows:

"Okay, from my perspective, I believe it is the process of providing support, administrative support, and emotional support to supervisees. Yes, the process should be done by someone senior to the supervisees. So maybe it is usually in terms of experience; if we look at most of our systems, the authority comes from the experience of somebody because if you look at most of our supervisors, they are people with a certain number of years of experiences within the organisation. So, it is believed that such a person has gained knowledge and expertise in a particular organisation through experience and, as a result, should provide support and guidance to supervisees. These supervisees are usually juniors to that person, and in most scenarios, these are people who have joined the organisation or the profession later than the supervisor. So, as a result, they are deemed suitable to guide recent recruits within that organisation. So basically, it is the process of providing guidance and support to the supervisees." – Key informant 01.

This key informant's response broadens the sentiments of the social workers and supervisors, where support and guidance became prominent in their responses. Social workers have deemed support and guidance as factors that should explicitly

characterise effective social work supervision. However, a key informant that has been acclaimed in the field of social work supervision emphasised that social work supervision should always be conceptualised within its context as the context influences the practice and implementation of supervision. The account of key informant 03 is provided below:

"Okay. I suppose you consulted the latest textbook I edited, where I defined supervision. If you look at the chapter that I wrote about South Africa, this will be my point of departure... What people sometimes forget is that supervision is context-based. Now, this is also in that definition, the context... I think that context is what people are forgetting... you need to be really context-specific because supervision does not take place in isolation; supervision takes place within an organisation that is governed by policies and legislation... When I look at supervision, I look at supervision as very context-specific, on a macro level, mezzo level, and micro level, and I do not think that we should forget the ecology of supervision. So, in a nutshell, what I can answer is that we need to see supervision through an ecological perspective - very context-specific, but also then I have an accessible vision in two parts, in terms of structural component, what should be the functions, etc., but also the clinical part..." – Key informant 03.

Key informant 03 helped the researcher recognise the influence of the context within which supervision is implemented. Tsui (2005:49) explains the context of social work supervision as the "environment - physical, interpersonal, cultural and psychological - in which the session of social work supervision occurs." However, the key informant expands the described conceptualisation of context to the influence of organisational policies and legislation that influences the supervision practice. Therefore, the implications of insufficiently understanding the context within which social work supervision occurs creates a situation where supervision contradicts the assertions of Karvinen-Niinikoski *et al.* (2017), where supervision has been described as a key factor in the promotion of practice excellence, productivity, and practitioner retention. Beyond this, the key informant explains supervision from an ecological perspective. The ecology of supervision explains the interlinks that exist between the client, social workers, supervisors, and the social service organisation, which is the DSD in this case (Engelbrecht, 2019). The next subtheme that emerged pertains to how the

participants critique the implementation of supervision in their respective service offices.

5.3.1.2. Subtheme 1.2: Service office as the context in which supervision is implemented

This subtheme focuses on the research question that seeks to explore how participants describe the implementation of supervision at a service office level. Karvinen-Niinikoski (2016) asserts that supervision may be the forum in which social workers critically reflect on the experiences gained from professional practice; hence, they need to be more critical and analytical. The ultimate goal of supervision in social work is to help social workers to maximise their ability to do their job more efficiently and effectively in the service of their clients while helping the workers feel good about their job (Hensley, 2003). To determine the nature of the implemented social work supervision in the DSD, social workers and social work supervisors were asked to describe how supervision is implemented in their respective service offices.

Participants described the implementation of supervision as predominantly preoccupied with administrative issues. In the historical overview of supervision in social work provided in Chapter Two, it was articulated that social work supervision has a long history of being administrative; however, over time, it incorporated support and education as other functions of supervision. The administrative function of supervision is important as it allows for the clients to receive services of quality standard as purposed by the organisation while eliminating risks of inadequate answers from the social worker regarding not delivering services (Unguru & Sandu, 2017). A problem in social work begins when social work supervision is only characterised by its administrative function and neglects the other functions of supervision. Participants' descriptions of social work supervision in administrative terms has only contributed to decreased work morale as support is lacking. The responses of participants are recorded as follows:

“Alright... well, I can say supervision in this office is all about paperwork and meeting targets, and then after you have achieved another quarter's targets and then you have to focus on the next quarter, so I really think it does not

help that much the people we are providing services to because after you are done using them for targets, then you leave them like that and focus on the next set of targets. So even in the supervision, targets are the main issue, not actual people.” – SWP 06.

The prioritisation of the administrative component of supervisors creates a professional crisis in other areas integral to social work supervision, such as education and support, when neglected. O'Donoghue (2015) asserts that the administrative function focuses on improvements in the performance evaluation processes, which includes innovations such as the establishment of job descriptions and performance standards. The responses of social workers reveal that supervision in the department does not have sufficient time due to account for different factors. However, the impact it is having on social workers is that they focus on the quantity of their work rather than the quality. The social workers' opportunity for growth, skills development, and support is then compromised, which then compromises the way they interact with clients and deliver services. Evidently, the work of social work supervisors becomes to ensure compliance and meeting of targets and other administrative obligations. This is evident in the report given by the social work supervisors, who stated:

"...my supervision style is to ensure that I assess all the work related to social workers and check if it is in order and according to the way which is the required and prescribed... I also approve reports that need to be approved for social workers and approve the workload that should be submitted, whatever it needs to be submitted... I read and approve her work, and if there are changes that the social worker needs to make, I recommend for those changes to be done, but I do that with the discretion that I cannot, as a supervisor, go against that investigation that led to that discretion of a social worker ... I have to read the report and have the understanding of what it is happening and what the social worker is talking about in that report..." – SWS 13.

"...I find myself very busy with the administrative stuff..... you end up being concerned that social workers produce work, reports, meet targets, attend

workshops and so on... but at the end, we call it is for guiding and supporting only to find that you don't find time to do it..." – SWS 10.

Deduced from the supervisors' responses is that the execution of supervision is rarely nonmanagerial, hence, it impedes social workers from experiencing growth and develop effective skills. Adamson (2012) asserts that when supervision is adopted for nonmanagerial purposes, it has the potential to stimulate growth and understanding in supervision, which then enhances quality, opportunities for growth, reflective practices, effective skills for best practice, and positive therapeutic outcomes for clients. Therefore, for social work supervision, to be effective, should also encompass other functions of supervision, as described in Chapter Two, and should also be characterised by the Afrocentric features discussed in Chapter Three.

In describing the implemented social work supervision at the service office level, participants described the implementation of supervision as being characterised by commanding, authoritative, and unhealthy relationships. Kim and Danforth (2012) explain that a supervisory practice that is non-authoritative is critical for the creation and development of positive and good supervisory relationships, which is fundamental for successful supervision. Hair (2013) suggests that the realisation of a healthy supervisory relationship between social workers and supervisors depends on how supervisors perceive power and truth and how preferred knowledge and meaning is created. The reports on participants' accounts are recorded as follows:

"So, to describe what supervision is like... I would say it is top-down, whereby it is instructive... I have to take instructions... for example, you must go to meet this family... let us say it is a supervision session; yesterday, you were supposed to visit the Mkhize family; did you go there? Okay, these are the families you have to attend, and these are the nature of cases you have to attend, and by the end of the day, I need 1-2-3-4 reports.... they called it supervision..." – SWP 09.

"Okay, well, I think I can best answer by saying I feel like the supervisor and social worker relationship can be best described as similar to the 'master-and-slave relationship'... I feel like social workers work for supervisors and not

communities... at times they normally say to us when we are unhappy about something, we must comply and complain later..." – SWP 01.

"...the supervision practice of this office... yes the supervisor does set a date that we are going to have supervision on this day like so, like so, like so... and we will address those issue that needs to be addressed but uhhhh... it is not helpful... it is not helpful at all... because I think the manager and supervisor lack managerial skills too much... to the point that in this office we can disagree pertaining the work but also realise that it is no longer about work it is now personal... we would disagree on very logical and simple things where you say you cannot say I must do such a thing ... once you disagree with a supervisor that is seen as retaliation or picking a fight..." - SWP 07.

The implemented social work supervision described by participants seems not only to have a negative impact on them as individuals but also on their professional maturity, supervisory relationships, and interactions with their clients. The accounts of participants reveal that supervision in their service offices lacks proper and professional communication. Warwick, Beddoe, Disney, Ferguson, and Cooner, (2022) mention that good communication that is relationship-based and supportive is crucial for good and professional supervision practices. Unhealthy supervisory relationships are not solely the fault of supervisors or social workers but may happen as a result of external factors such as organisational demands. Hair (2013) encourages supervisors to resist the pressures exerted on them by their organisations but encourages a critically reflective, cocreating relationship with social workers.

Other participants also characterised the implementation of social work supervision as consultative. The Supervision Framework does not recognise consultations as one of the methods of social work supervision. However, it does explain that consultations should be implemented as part of the supervision process and are not focused on administrative control as it is mostly advisory in nature and conducted based on a social worker's request (SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Social workers and supervisors seem to confuse consultations as one of the methods of social work supervision recognised by the Supervision Framework. Notable from the participants' responses is that without consultations, social workers would not be receiving any form of supervision. The participants' accounts are as follows:

"Currently, I would say supervision in this office is at the average stage. It is just in those instances where they have to consult, and then there will be those supervision sessions of checking whether everything is still on track and check the challenges that are faced by social workers to find a way to address them." – **SWP 02.**

"...in this office, we do not have supervision. Well, when I say supervision, I mean individual and group supervision. We only go to a supervisor when we have to consult on a specific need or want a supervisor to sign a report or request for clearance to go for home visits or work outside the office..." – **SWP 10.**

"I am not sure if I will answer you well but supervision in this office does take place because there are supervisors available and where supervisees need consultation, supervisors are there for them to find guidance that they would be requiring... we mostly do consultations which is individual supervision..." – **SWS 01.**

Participants view consultations as one of the methods within which supervision is implemented in their service offices. Supervision in social work is crucial to all social workers. Social workers and supervisors seem to believe that through much experience in the profession, one becomes exempt from supervision. Social work supervision offers social workers a lifelong opportunity for learning, growth, and development. Nissen, Pendell, Jivanjee, and Goodluck (2014:386) mention that lifelong learning "relates to a set of values and principles regarding the role of ongoing acquisition, integration, and application of new knowledge throughout one's lifetime, and also includes the practices and structures that position professionals to be relevant, effective, and engaged in their career." The supervision practice, when reduced to consultations, reduces the opportunities for a social worker to achieve lifelong learning and development.

Deduced from the participants' responses from this subtheme is that the implementation of social work supervision at the office level is confronted with major challenges. Hence, little value is derived by social workers and supervisors from engaging in a supervisory process. Parker (2017) places the onus on supervisors to

ensure the balanced implementation of all methods of supervision. However, this task proves to be difficult for supervisors in the current climate where there are systemic and institutional challenges that prevent such from unfolding. Africanising social work supervision is deemed by the researcher as integral and fundamental to overcoming challenges confronted by social workers and supervisors in the service office. This is because the Afrocentric-based supervision would be characterised by indigenised understandings of the functions of supervision, which would make easier for them to be equally applied across the supervisory process.

Key informant 02 was brought into the discussion to assist with a possible explanation of the reasons why social work supervision is deemed by social workers and supervisors to be hardly implementable. Key informant 02 is an experienced social worker in the PCQA division in the DSD and also contributed to the subtheme. Key informant 02 believes the implementation of supervision in the DSD is a challenge because formal supervision is relatively new within the department. The response of the key informant is captured below:

“It is still a challenge to implement the supervision framework as it is still the challenge to implement supervision. For me as the custodian of supervision and the supervision framework at the DSD, I say it is still a challenge to implement it. It is a challenge because of the system we got where we found social workers having never been supervised before... Besides this challenge, I think we still need to interrogate our Supervision Framework document because it seems like it is still difficult to implement it countrywide. Maybe there are issues that we are missing because I find it difficult that majority of our service offices struggle to work with this framework” – Key informant 02.

The key informant's response points to the inherited challenges of the DSD from the country's history of apartheid that influenced the supervision practice within the department, as detailed in Chapter Two. Though supervision in South Africa has existed for decades (Engelbrecht, 2010), it was unformalised and was characterised by what Botha (2002) describes as faulty and weak, which necessitated the formation of the Supervision Framework by SACSSP and DSD (2012). Engelbrecht (2013:464) explains that the “South African supervision framework may be viewed as playing to

managerial measures, based on the notion that this framework can be the ultimate answer to 'faulty or weak' supervision." The responses from key informant 02 and social workers and supervisors justify the critical analysis of social work supervision through the Afrocentric perspective. This will give an opportunity to "interrogate our Supervision Framework document," as key informant 02 stated, and propose for Afrocentric-based supervision. The next subtheme pertained to the exploration of the impact of the implemented supervision on participants.

5.3.1.3. Subtheme 1.3: Critique of Supervision's Impact on Participants

This subtheme sought to critique the impact of the implemented social work supervision in the DSD on social workers and supervisors. Social workers and supervisors were requested to reflect on the impact of the described implemented social work supervision. When supervision is not well administered or implemented, it causes social workers to be unable to effectively perform in their jobs and deliver services to their clients. "Supervision provides essential support and professional development for social workers whose work involves anxiety-laden decision-making and can offer containment of emotion and anxiety" (Warwick *et al.* 2022:03). Therefore, when there is a lack of supervision, the best interests of clients are impacted negatively as the supervisory relationship between the supervisor and supervisee often reflects the relationship social workers have with their clients. At the core of the supervisory relationship between the supervisor and supervisee are respect, cooperation, and open dialogue (Bostock *et al.*, 2022). The responses of social workers and supervisors are detailed below:

"I have been saying it ends up making you very disorganised because now you cannot make your plans because you may plan that you are going to do one-two-and-three, but every time I plan, my plans will get disturbed because now there is a directive from superiors that I must stop everything and do this or that... so you end up not knowing what you are doing actually... you end up being discouraged and not passionate about your job because the passion that you come with when you are still fresh from university gets crushed by all these things... so when we are still at the university studying, you tell yourself that when you go to work in the actual practice, you are going to deal with actual clients that you want to do or see a change in their lives..." – SWP 05.

"...the first one is that it makes me lazy... the second one is that it makes me hate my job... the third one is that it makes me not care - I do not care... I am honest to you as if I am sitting before God... and the last one, the brutal one, makes you wish that if ever you are going to be allocated a supervision position, whomever I will be supervising, I will treat them the same way because this is the way it must be done... the future social workers will inherit the system whether they like it or not..." – SWP 09.

"It has a bad impact on my duties because as a result of this supervision that is happening in this office... in a nutshell, it makes you feel like whether the client has received help or not, it really does not affect you in any way.... You just turn a blind eye because even the way you get treated in the office, nobody cares whether you are all right or not... there is no spirit of Ubuntu or empathy... so it is very easy to rub off things and have an I-do-not-care kind of attitude... yes because we also have our own problems, so if nobody cares about our own problems, why should we care about other people's problems. So, there is that. The passion of seeing people receiving genuine help and being uplifted from their problems and also witnessing them being reintegrated with their spirituality, humanness, ability to think logically and be effective in terms of doing well in life, we just do not care about that..." – SWP 04.

"...well I would say that it does not have a good impact, but also I would not say that I have a problem with it because in this department it is everyone for himself... nobody cares about you and your work, so you learn not to care in return... the only people who suffer are just clients who are innocent and desperate for help... but the conditions we work under do not allow us to be empathetic, caring and loving as we should... we have this issue of targets in this department that reduces our clients to just numbers... we rush for numbers in all four quarters of the year, and we have little reflection on the impact we have on our clients so I would say it has a bad impact..." - SWP 12.

Notable from the participants' accounts is that the participants chose to use the opportunity to answer this question not only to reflect on their experiences but also to

use it as a debriefing session. When participants were narrating their experiences on supervision's impact, you could see the level of frustration on their faces. Effective, supportive supervision promotes the development of a healthy workplace and ensures that social workers are productive and satisfied in the work that they do (Schmidt & Kariuki, 2019). The dominating views of participants revealed there is a lack of effective and high-quality social work supervision, which impacts negatively on their duties. Participants, particularly social workers, mentioned that as a result of their negative experiences in supervision, they felt discouraged, lacked passion for their profession, and lacked the work morale that is needed for effective and efficient social work practice. Bostock, Patrizio, Godfrey and Forrester (2022) assert that social work supervision is situated in the context of a relationship whereby supervisors and supervisees come together with a common purpose to provide the best possible support to service users in accordance with the organisation's responsibilities and accountable professional standards. It was clear to the researcher that the currently implemented supervision practices are not worker-centered but work-centered, thereby justifying the need for the main aim of this study, which is to search for possible ways through which Afrocentric-based supervision could be realised. "In the Afrocentric paradigm, affect (feelings or emotions) is viewed as a valid source of knowing and considered essential" (Schiele, 1996:287). Therefore, Afrocentric-based supervision not only considers the person's productivity but also recognises a worker as being with certain needs that transcend the work environment.

Some participants described that the impact of the supervision they receive is inconsistent. The inconsistent application of supervision practices in the service offices has been described as a lack of balanced implementation of social work supervision functions. These responses relating to this supervision's impact were deduced from the responses of supervisors. The diversity of these accounts confirms the non-uniformity of the implemented supervision and the adverse effects that this has on social workers who are recipients of the administered supervision and clients who are at the center of supervisory outcomes. The accounts also demonstrate that though the Supervision Framework is in place in the DSD, supervision in practice still relies on individual discretion, experience, and attitudes, which makes it different within the same service office with different supervisors and different across different service offices of the department.

To demonstrate what has been asserted above, **SWS 02** and **SWS 01** are experienced supervisors of the same service office. They both have different groups of social workers that they supervise from the same service office. Their accounts of the impact of the supervision they administer to social workers are clearly unique and incomparable. These accounts are as follows:

“The one where you will see a person on an individual basis works very well because when there are too many, it ends up being many ideas and opinions, which ends up driving you away from something you were addressing to a particular person. Hmmm but when you are employing a one-on-one supervision method, you are now able to discipline a person that he or she didn't do well in this particular activity or thing; they will be able to see their mistakes... but when it is a group, and there are two main one would say this, and one would say that... so the one-on-one individual supervision works perfectly well...” – SWS 02.

“It does help because we give them the support... so sometimes our work is very demanding... we have a lot of work... our work is too much, and sometimes it affects the person emotionally... so to have that somebody who is your supervisor whom you can talk to receive sort of the psychosocial support that the social worker would require... even to critical cases that require maybe a second opinion on how to handle that case, so supervision becomes very helpful...” – SWS 01.

These accounts demonstrate supervisors of the same service office with different supervision methods and styles, which in turn produces different supervision outcomes. The first supervisor's approach to supervision reveals the question of the authority of the supervisor as the individual supervision method is used for disciplining social workers and holding them accountable. The other supervisor's approach to supervision is to provide psychosocial support, which is a different approach that is characterised by a unique supervisory relationship and style, supervisor authority, and supervision outcomes. As asserted earlier, supervision implemented in the DSD services differs from supervisor to supervisor and service office to service office. This

is demonstrated by the following account from a different service office from the supervisors mentioned above. This account is as follows:

“Okay, when I look at it, I see my supervision style as one where I avoid a situation where my supervisees feel like they are being suppressed by me or have them get a sense where now they do not enjoy being at work because of me... or if when they submit something that has been rushed because of our environment so I should not be a stumbling block to him or her regarding her progress or his progress... For example, when a social worker is cases that also need to be tabled before the court, I should not be a stumbling block and make them be seen as unprofessional because of how long it took to release their reports because maybe I am trying to punish them because uh this social worker does not respect my authority as a supervisor... Yes, the social worker has to have some respect towards me, but I should not be a stumbling block to her progress because of that... when I critique it, I see it as one with an average impact on my supervisees... I would not say it is the best or the worst...it just helped them be able to undertake their tasks, that's all...” – SWS 03.

The inconsistency of social work supervisors' accounts from within the same service office and from different service offices reveals that supervision is still a challenge in the DSD. Social work supervisors are kept abreast through training on supervision by the department, but it still appears to be difficult for social work supervisors to uniformly administer supervision to social workers. Is it possible that the problem does not lie with the supervisors themselves but with the supervision model and knowledge adopted in the supervision framework? There is a need for more culturally relevant and context-specific supervision that is Afrocentric.

Despite challenges narrated by some participants, other social workers regard the impact of the currently implemented supervision as offering support, growth, and guidance. Participants recognise that supervision in their services offices is not what they would describe as ideal and perfect. They did note the challenges they experience when supervision is implemented. However, they believe that social work supervision has its importance and does contribute to them receiving guidance and support. Other participants linked the impact of the supervision that is currently

implemented as one that also enables them to gain new knowledge that enables them to grow and make informed decisions. Below are the accounts of some social workers who describe the impact of supervision giving them support, growth, and guidance.

“...it has a big impact; I do not want to play with you... you know there are times when you feel you have exhausted all the ideas you have in trying to help in certain cases and realise that you have run out of ideas... but the supervision becomes a cushion and gives you the support and feel that you are not alone in this case whether you are going to your supervisor or colleagues... but it does give you that cushion...” – SWP 08.

“I would say that supervision is good, especially to people all come from varsity... because what you get more from varsity is more of theory because even the practical side of things in varsity I would not say is enough because at that time we are still new and we are still operating in fear and do not know a lot of things... but now if you are working and you are in the field and have to engage with the community that is where you actually need the supervisor who will guide you on how you should do your work and I think it is the right thing... without supervision things might go a wrong way... even if you are now a senior social worker you will find some cases that are so difficult and critical where you feel like you need guidance... but I would say that you will have a situation where in this organisation supervision happens but have a situation where a supervisor has got a high workload and have to attend a lot of meetings which impact on his or her ability to give supervision...” – SWP 03.

“It assists in the sense that it allows me to provide services to my clients because I have that opportunity to be in a supervision session where I get an opportunity to strengthen my knowledge and also get a supervisor's opinion when I am faced with problems so that when I provide services, I can guarantee quality.” – SWP 02.

The above responses of participants reveal that social work supervision is still regarded as crucial and important in the field of social work supervision. Social workers can derive much value from it if it is effectively executed. Support and guidance are among the core characteristics of effective supervision in social work practice and

have the potential to solve many problems faced by the supervisees. The guidance and support of an effective supervisor can contribute to staff retention, even for very experienced practitioners (Crisp, 2012). Beyond this assertion, the researcher argues that Afrocentric-based supervision would be more beneficial to supervisors, social workers, clients, and the social service organisation, which is the DSD in this instance.

While this subtheme was explored, the key informant who is an experienced supervision practitioner within the PCQA division of the DSD explained some of the challenges that supervision is confronted with in the DSD at the service level. The explanation provided by Key informant 02 made it easier for the researcher to understand the challenges of social workers and supervisors at the service office level. Amongst the challenges stated by Key informant 02 was that, in the DSD, supervision of social workers is relatively new as the Supervision Framework was formulated in 2012, and having social workers who were employed and have no formal supervision structure struggle to operate under supervision or as supervisors was natural. The response of key informant 02 is captured below:

"I came to the Department in 2006, and no social worker was supervised, and I was never supervised. Let us say today I am now an office manager or a senior social worker or supervisor, and now I have to implement something that was never implemented on me. We have never been supervised but have to implement supervision because of the Supervision Framework. The Supervision Framework perse is simple and doable; maybe it is because I work with it every day, but it challenges those social workers who have been in the field before it; that is the challenge of supervision. Another challenge I can tell you about is that though we talk about supervision in social work, I sometimes ask myself whether it works for the people we call our clients. I think we have never taken time to understand supervision from the angle of being African. We just know that supervision is necessary for social workers, but when you talk about African-centered supervision, I really ask myself whether ours is African. It is something I have never thought about, but I doubt that it is from the look of things because we don't even consult our communities when we formulate or review frameworks such as the supervision framework." – Key informant 02.

The key informant's response justifies the voices of social workers and supervisors who believe that supervision is marked by challenges and inconsistencies in its implementation. The significance of this response from the Key informant 02 is that those tasked with the responsibility of upholding the supervision framework have not interrogated the relevance of theories, knowledge, and epistemologies that underpin the supervision in the South African context. Hence, the inability to recognise other forms of knowledge and models that could be used to strengthen the supervision practice in South Africa. The overall responses and accounts of participants in this subtheme provide a rationale for the aim of the study, which is to explore the possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision to Africanise the supervision discourse in the profession of social work. The next subtheme dealt with exploring how participants describe Afrocentric-based supervision.

5.3.1.4. Subtheme 1.4: Description of Afrocentric-based Supervision

This subtheme aims to explore what participants understand about the concept of Afrocentric-based supervision. Participants were asked to describe what they believe an Afrocentric-based supervision is or should be. As participants were given an opportunity to provide their responses in relation to the Afrocentric-based social work supervision, similarities in their responses were noted. Observable from the participants is that the majority of them were unfamiliar with the term Afrocentric-based supervision, and some stated that it was their first time hearing it. However, in their accounts, participants described Afrocentric-based supervision as one that is culturally based, community-centered, holistic, and *Ubuntu*-centered.

Most participants described the Afrocentric-based supervision in social work as one that should be culturally relevant and take into consideration African spirituality. Developing a conceptualisation of the supervision relationship that can successfully encourage cultural relevancy and the pursuit of social justice is a challenge facing social workers today (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). Participants view recognition of their cultures and religion as an important dimension that should be recognised in social work supervision, as these factors may indirectly or directly affect the supervision process. The participants detailed the following accounts:

“Firstly, African supervision must take into consideration our culture... when I talk about the culture, I mean to say as we are African people, our ways of

living and doing things are different from those who are from the West...” -
SWP 05.

“I think it must be the one that takes into consideration our cultures and African people, and our religion as valid.... when I am talking about religion, I am not only talking about Christianity, but African religions based on African spirituality... I think also it must be the one that takes African people and their problems in a manner that our African client feels valued...” – SWP 10.

"Think maybe just... it will be the one that recognises the culture of people that you are dealing with; let me say it like that... obviously, we have different beliefs and different cultures, and all of those need to be recognised. I think that is lacking in our department because we are rooted mostly in the Children's Act... The Children's Act has the tendency to ignore different cultures, beliefs, and spirituality... so we end up losing those cultural and traditional things... especially if you believe in those cultural things because once you come to us, we will listen and record it, but it doesn't apply anywhere...” – SWP 07.

"The one that is Afrocentric or African-centered, even though I do not have a full idea of what it is or what it should be like, but I think it should focus more on African cultures and focus on what kind of people our clients are and what kind of life they live... I think it should be based on that because if I can compare it with the Western lifestyle, those are two different cultures, and it will be difficult for us to adopt it on this other end of the world and have it work effectively and efficiently for us....” – SWP 03.

South Africa is a diverse country with different cultures and traditions, hence, the need for social work supervisors to be able to support social workers to engage in a practice that accommodates different African cultures, traditions, and spiritualities. Ross (2007) asserts that social workers in South Africa are expected to engage in culturally sensitive practices and render appropriate services while being aware of the different beliefs and practices of traditional healers when it comes to addressing the questions of health, disability, and ways of restoring wellbeing and illness. However, the perspective of social work supervisors, when describing Afrocentric-based supervision emerged as follows:

"I think it has to consider if I, as a supervisor, am respectful of the belief system of the supervisee or when we are planning because supervision must be planned... when we are planning to have supervision, we have to accept each other even spiritually or in whatever way... I must not be judgmental to the supervisee... I must not be judgmental to the supervisee; for example, be like this supervisee now coming with his 'isiphandla' (goat or cow skin bracelet) that he is wearing in his arms because I am a Christian... so his values must be accepted as is and must not affect me in any way... even if we may have a planned session but are doubtful to meet the supervisee because of the deep-seated stereotypes and bias against his culture, beliefs or whatever... so now when it comes to having Afrocentric-based supervision it will mean there must be a shift in my mentality as the supervisor and be able to value and accepts individual supervisee belief systems and diversity of human beings... it must be a principle that I must uphold beyond traditional social work principles such as of respect and others... but also this is one must be incorporated because we end up sarcastically laughing at each other such as saying here comes 'isangoma' (traditional healer)... so all those things that end up creating stigmas... - SWS 04.

The social work supervisor's response detailed above reveals that the Afrocentric-based supervision should be characterised by reciprocity, holistic acceptance, and non-judgmental attitudes. These values and principles are core to social work practice and the Afrocentric-based supervision is believed to strengthen these in a supervisory relationship and yield positive supervisory outcomes. The failure for supervision practice to incorporate the African values is viewed by some social work supervisors as caused by the over reliance on Western knowledge which controls and dictates how organisational systems get to be structured. This could be supported by the narrative of the supervisor below:

"...I will say that we have adopted much from the West in our supervision and then we became very less on what is African... I will make an example that we usually face where a social worker will have issues regarding his/her own health and then have to come to approach me as a supervisor and narrate or tell her story that she's having health issues... maybe the social worker went

to consult African traditional healers and then they diagnosed that she has to perform certain rituals of a particular kind so that she can be healed which needs her to be away from work... at that point you find that traditional healers they cannot produce written evidence of their diagnosis which is what is required at work so that she can be eligible for a particular leave... traditional healer do not give these required documents, even if they did who would have recognised them?... but according to the employer you will need that supporting attachment which in most of the cases does not happen... so let us say for instance you are filling for your leave forms you will not have anything that that says you would have went to seek African traditional assistance for your own state of health... so you will find that a person who goes the African route because it is not accommodated in our system you they won't be eligible for leave and then end up get a leave without pay and in so doing the African methods that an employee prefers to attain will be affected and then before list to use the western ways of doing things..." –

SWS 3.

This account demonstrates that preferences are sometimes confronted by social work supervisors in practice when working with social workers who subscribe to their own religious, traditional, or cultural preferences. Social workers work with clients from different cultural backgrounds, religions, and beliefs, and they too have to be accepted as diverse. It is on these bases that Ross (2010:49) asserts that: "Afro-centric social work educational curricula need to include theoretical modules and practice opportunities that foster respect, cultural competence, and cultural understanding regarding the issues that embody the African worldview – even though such beliefs and practices run counter to social workers' personal value systems". This would assist supervisory relationships between social workers and social work supervisors to be first grounded on proper knowledge, which allows both social workers and social work supervisors to accommodate and advocate for systematic and organisational challenges that suppress their pursuit of diversity.

The below assertions from three participants describe Afrocentric-based supervision in social work as a practice that must utilise indigenous community knowledge in providing the communities with services and when decisions about communities have to be made. Social work supervision should assist social workers in engaging in

reflective practice and gaining an understanding of themselves in the profession through the creation of a partnership in reflection and knowledge production with the working community and clients (Karvinen-Niinikoski, 2016). Participants provided the following responses:

“...the supervision should resemble the bottom-up approach and not be something that will be imposed in a way that someone will just come. I am required to perform this and that because most of the time we use targets... The supervision we use does not talk to the people we are working with, so it is mostly top-down, not bottom-up. It must focus on the needs of the people which we aim to serve...” – SWP 6.

"I think Afrocentric-based supervision must be based on the knowledge of the community. The supervisor and the social worker must supervise each other, have the proper knowledge of the community they serve, and be relevant to their needs. Here in the Department, we have intake forms where we write everything about the client's information, but you find that when it comes to our assessments of the client's problem, we depend on the knowledge we learned from the university. The intake forms do not have sections where we ask the client about their cultural backgrounds, including their families. In as much as the social worker generally understands the community they work within, there must be a section in the intake forms where clients can share with their family cultural backgrounds so that a social worker will align the interventions in a way coherent with their culture...” – SWP 01.

*“It means it has to be relevant to the community... in this office and community, we are Africans... we work mostly with a community of African people, so it has to be relevant to the community we work for... even though we are the Zulu’s here but contexts differ according to different reserves (*izigodi*), so I think we need to have the analysis of the community that we are servicing and align our work according to the needs of the community...” – SWS 01.*

Social work, as a profession centered on providing services to individuals, groups, and communities, has to be community-centered and utilise community-based knowledge to create professional and strong partnerships with communities. The responses of the participants above demonstrates that there is still much to be done to ensure that social work and supervision is community-centred and not alienated from the experiences and worldviews of African people. Spitzer (2014) mentions that social workers in the African context should focus their attention on people's capabilities, strengths, competencies, resources, and resilience in the way African people lead their lives, survive, and cope with their immediate challenges. This would entail being cognisant of their cultures and indigenous knowledge within communities. Social work supervision, as the core discourse in social work, has to reflect these ideals and characterise the supervisory relationship between social workers and supervisors.

Other participants describe Afrocentric-based supervision as a practice that must be characterised by holisticness and humaneness (*Ubuntu*). Humaneness (*Ubuntu*) and the holistic approach to social work supervision have been key in some of the responses that have been recorded as participants described their understanding of what Afrocentric-based supervision would entail. Chigangaidze (2021) asserts that humaneness is an African worldview that promotes values of respect, caring, community, sharing, and the spirit of family. Participants believe that Afrocentric-based supervision should be characterised by humaneness, which also becomes a foundation for a holistic approach for social work supervisors, to engage social workers in a supervisory relationship. The following are the accounts of the participants:

“According to my own understanding, Afrocentric social work supervision, I think, is the kind that should maybe incorporate old ways of how African people lived... so the Afrocentric-based supervision, I think it is where your supervisor will now be able to understand where you are coming from, your roots, the way you do things even at home and then with the manner that you carry yourselves out in the community, the religion that you believe in and your belief system and everything... the supervisor must understand all these factors and how they affect you as a person other than the traditional way of just supervising work and neglect other things such as where you are coming from as a person... yeah I think Afrocentric-based supervision will really incorporate you as an important component in supervision...” – SWP 4.

"I would say that it is the type of supervision that is guided by the principle of Ubuntu, which we call humanity because, in humanity, we believe that we are equal. We also believe that whatever you do must not oppress or harm another person. I would put it like that... If it can be more African, it should be like that and portray values such as respect, but although somewhere somehow it can also sell us short when it comes to it being more African as firstly you cannot tell an old person what to do but having the elder being the one who gives instructions. So, when it comes to supervision being more participatory, it can be challenged in that sense as in African context a minor is a minor and should be instructed by an elder, and that is it..." – SWP 2.

Participants believe that Afrocentric-based supervision has the potential to allow supervision to adopt a holistic approach to clients' issues while at the same time being characterised by humanness (*Ubuntu*). These are fundamental revelations that should characterise Afrocentric-based supervision. Furthermore, the conceptual understanding of supervision by the participants reveals how they experience supervision and its challenges. It also allowed the researcher to understand how participants conceptualise Afrocentric-based supervision.

The responses of social workers and supervisors in relation to this subtheme reveal alignment with some of the Afrocentric-based features that were discussed in Chapter 3. Other Afrocentric-based features in Chapter Three include *Ubuntu*, interconnectedness, spirituality, and cultural competence. Key informant 01, who is an expert in the field of Afrocentricity in social work, believed that Afrocentric-based supervision should not alienate itself completely from Western/Eurocentric approaches but should consider these approaches, models, and epistemologies for making amends so that they fit the African context. The account of Key informant 01 is captured below:

"So, for me, Afrocentric-based supervision will not completely detach itself or depart from the Eurocentric approach to supervision. We can adopt the Eurocentric approaches to supervision and amend them or, let me say, indigenised them to suit the African context. And by indigenising them, we

must also consider issues like Ubuntu; we must also consider issues like the Afrocentric principles that I once discussed. I mentioned we must also discuss issues of the communal nature in general of African life. Yes, in the sense that even the supervisors, the Social Work supervisors, when they get training themselves on how to supervise their subordinates, they must be trained on these things: they must be trained on Ubuntu/Botho, they must be trained on Afrocentricity, they must be trained on the communal nature of African life and social justice but basically, I do not think completely detaching ourselves from Eurocentric supervision models would help us because all these approaches they emanated from Europe, but basically, in terms of maybe adapting it or indigenising it to suit African context. When I talk of the African context, Africa is a very large continent. The cultural practices and beliefs in South Africa may differ from cultural practices and beliefs in Lesotho or Nigeria or in maybe Zambia or so and so as you develop, this may be a model- in the South African model, you must also consider the diversity within South Africa. For example, KZN is dominated by the Zulu culture, right? If you come to the northwest province, it is dominated by Tswana culture. If you go to Limpopo province, it is dominated by the Pedi, Tsonga, and Venda cultures. So, cultural sensitivity should also be taken into consideration. Even if you are to develop a supervision model for South Africa, it must leave room for those culturally specific issues because South Africa is a country of diversity, a rainbow society with so many tribal groups, with so many cultural groups, with so many religious groups. Also, though we talk of Afrocentricity and belief in ancestors and the like, we must not forget that Christianity has penetrated our African countries. I am sure you are aware that more than 80% or so of South Africans. They claim that they subscribe to Christianity. Yes, so in as much as, we want to indigenise, in as much as we want to decolonise, we must leave room for those foreign religions like Christianity because they could have a big and serious influence among our African people." – Key informant 01.

The submissions made by this keyinformant call for the conceptualisation of Afrocentric-based supervision to take into cognisance the current temporary society that has evolved from the rubbles of imperialism and colonialism. The key informant's

submission emphasise that in the process of Africanising, social work supervision should take into consideration cultural diversity and inherited colonial legacies, such as religion and knowledge. The next theme that emerged in the study pertains to the Afrocentric-based elements of Afrocentric-based supervision.

5.3.2. Theme 2: Afrocentric Features or Elements of Afrocentric-based Supervision

Social work supervision plays a crucial role in determining the level of competence of social workers and the quality of social services to clients. Most of the body of knowledge, theories, and epistemologies on social work supervision were adopted from the West, so there is a need to critically analyse social work supervision implemented in Africa from an Afrocentric perspective. The need to create an Afrocentric perspective that takes Africa as a point of departure for African studies stems from the nature of the Eurocentric paradigm, which has been used in many previous African studies (Oyebade, 1990:234). The benefit to be solicited from the exercise of analysing social work supervision through the Afrocentric perspective is to develop a more culturally relevant, context-specific, and African-centered social work supervision practice. Afrocentric research is carried out from the standpoint of African people being grounded in their history, experiences, cultures, and knowledge and seeks to advocate agency in every given place where examination, critique, or analysis of African people happens (Davis, Williams, & Akinyela, 2010; Mabvurira, 2020).

The overall aim of the study is to specify a need for social work supervision in place in the DSD through an Afrocentric perspective. This theme focuses on the second objective of the study, which aimed to explore what social workers and supervisors regard as the Afrocentric features or elements of Afrocentric-based supervision practice. In this chapter, the researcher reports findings from the research participants in an attempt to answer the research question based on this objective. The theme tables the analysis of data brought about through the presentation of various subthemes. These subthemes include participants' descriptions of the Afrocentric features of Afrocentric-based supervision, the exploration of existing links to the currently in place supervision practice, participants' understanding of key Afrocentric

features to be incorporated in supervision, and things to be done to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

5.3.2.1. Subtheme 2.1: Describing the Afrocentric Features of Afrocentric-based Supervision

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, social work in Africa has its roots in North America and Europe and has been severely criticised by the Afrocentrists and Pan-Africanists as it largely adopts Western cultures, values, and knowledge. Lateef (2021) explains that as a consequence of African slavery and colonialism that undermined African knowledge, particularly within social work, there has been a concerted effort to shift from the adaptive and modifying Eurocentric theories to accommodate the majority of African people. At the center of this shift has been attempts to include people of African descent in generating knowledge and practicing models that draw on their own communities' intellectual heritage, values, beliefs, and customs (Lateef, 2021). Therefore, the examination of the Afrocentric-based supervision's features is a direct attempt to shift the supervision practice in the DSD from Eurocentrism to models and knowledge drawn from African cultures, traditions, values, and customs. In explaining the Afrocentric features, critical is the understanding that Afrocentricity seeks to locate African people in their rightful historical and cultural place. Oyebade (1990) asserts that when analysing the Afrocentric perspective of history, emphasis is placed on the foundation that it is valid to identify Africa as a contextual and cultural starting point in the examination of African people.

It is worth noting when interrogating this subtheme that participants were not well acquainted with the Afrocentric theory, with some participants explicitly stating that it was their first-time hearing of the Afrocentric theory. The researcher provided the participants with a comprehensive overview based on the available and reviewed literature on Afrocentricity. Participants were then asked questions about what they would understand to be the Afrocentric elements or features of Afrocentric-based supervision. Dominating from the participants' responses in relation to the Afrocentric features is that participants described the African cultures and traditions, spirituality, humanity (*Ubuntu*), and interconnectedness as Afrocentric features or elements that should characterise Afrocentric-based supervision. Culture and tradition are critical

components of any nation and influence that nation's outlook and experience of life while setting it apart from others. South Africa is a culturally rich and diverse country. Social workers in South Africa come from different cultural and traditional orientations and work with clients from culturally diverse backgrounds, hence, the need for culturally relevant practices. Awoniyi (2015) asserts that African people, like those in other areas of the world, have always had different cultural and traditional values that were meant to regulate interpersonal relationship and the entire community through the use of certain standards and norms meant to build social cohesion and smooth functioning of the community. Social workers and supervisors themselves are a part of these communities and work with these communities. Therefore, there is an expectation that these cultural and traditional values, norms, standards, and practices that characterise interpersonal relations should be translated into the supervisory relationship. For participants, African cultures and traditions should characterise Afrocentric-based supervision. These were the accounts of the participants:

"I am not too sure, but I think we need to be taught about African culture so that we can be able to apply it well... so that you may know how our specific cultures deal with certain issues, but we have to make sure that at the end of the day, our culture is to not conflict with the law of the country..." – SWS 2.

"I think because it is more of an African supervision that is based on African knowledge and culture, I think it can foster the understanding because, at that moment, most of the things we will be doing would be the things that you already know, and those that we were raised with even from home... so I think it should be very easy because now I think the focus will not be on a person as an individual who is isolated maybe but also as a human being which will make it easy for a student who has graduated university to really fit into the work environment and be in a better position to convert the theory into practice... so if we the concept of Afrocentric-based supervision to a new social worker will not carry much weight because it will be relatable to what a social worker already knows..." – SWP 3.

*"...as I have explained, we cannot put aside African people's cultures, values, and beliefs... African people believe so much in ancestors, in such a way when you talk about **ukuthwasa** (traditional initiation), a person really*

*believes and knows as **abantu abadala** (ancestors) who are upon him/her. Others believe that they are African Christians, so we need to acknowledge all those things with African people because they are very important not only for us to intervene...*” – **SWP 8.**

Evident from the responses of the participants is that African cultures and traditions are believed to be an integral feature of Afrocentric-based supervision in the sense that in its design it has to acknowledge cultural issues that may impact the smooth flow of the supervisory relationship and process. "Culturally competent supervision necessitates an understanding of the client's cultural values and traditions and understands the intersectional differences of race, gender identity, education, class, income, status, and privilege" (Lusk, Terrazas, & Salcido, 2017:464). Alibertyn (2009:171) explains that the "South African Constitution recognises the importance of culture by protecting the right of individuals to participate in cultural life, to the collective enjoyment of culture, and to be free from unfair discrimination based on culture." The researcher argues that though the South African Constitution makes provisions for the protection of the diversity of cultures in legislations and policies that regulate how social workers work in their organisations, there are clear provisions that protect those workers who subscribe to cultural practices or traditions that may affect work.

Schiele (1997:36) asserts that the "policy based on Afrocentric principles is an additional avenue through which human needs can be adequately met, and human possibility maximised". Policies and legislations that recognise African cultures and traditions in reality and not only in rhetoric would put the interests of the social workers and clients first. Noticeable from the responses of participants is that the participants' characterisations of the need to incorporate African cultures and traditions into supervision leans greatly toward better solving client issues than social workers. There is a need for more culturally relevant social work and supervision practices. The lack of a more culturally relevant practice prevents social workers from being able to view their clients' cases through the lenses of their cultures and find a way of properly intervening in such cases. In relation to this argument, the participants provided these accounts:

"The Acts that we work under must be revised because everything starts there because in our Acts there are zero to none of African cultures that are represented there... maybe for example, there are custom meeting or cultural negotiations that take place around a child when there is marriage or something... some of the cultural parts of it will not go the court... so now there must be provisions that accommodate such cultural practices that are hardly documented by African people that will be recognised by the law. There must be a revision of Acts and policies that should include the recognition of the cultures of African people, even though our cultures may not be the same... I think it is something to be included to have the leaves that take into consideration cultural ceremonies or custom in as much as the employer would not allow you to be away from work for more than three months..." –

SWP 7.

*"I had a case where there was child who was extremely ill but unfortunately for the child the parents were in separation but the mother was staying with the child and the father was staying somewhere else... so they took the child and went to western doctors but the child did not recover and they then concluded that the child needed to be cured through traditional methods... the child was very young to understand to undergo a process of being initiated to be **isangoma** (traditional healer)... the child was is under 12 years maybe at 8 year to be exact... the biological mother wanted a child to be removed from the entire process but the father and his family refused... the mother came to us for help because she felt like the child was being abused and overworked... but the father wanted the child to complete the process... we had to intervene and we conducted a visit to the initiation school where the child was being prepared we found that the situation was terrible for the child considering her age... and then we wanted to remove her and that caused a big conflict between us as the department and the family members... the family prevented us to do the removal and wanted an official letter of us taking responsibility of the child's death... they believed that the child will die if we remove her... they even said that this child's issue had to do with spiritualities because there was an incident with lots of unnatural incidents explained by family members... we had the greatest challenge... I cannot recall how many*

meetings we had with the family... we ended up neglecting the case because we had no back in terms of law since the family wanted us to take responsibility through the letter... so in that instance, I felt like if we had something that guided us on what to do when we confront cases that involve traditions and spiritualities it was going to be easy..." – SWS 1.

The cases shared by participants represent many of the actual cases that social workers and supervisors experience in practice. Cases such as this experienced by social workers and supervisors create a situation of practical dilemma where social workers and supervisors are never certain how to approach such complicated matters that are not provided for by the law. Oshewolo (2021) explains that pursuing an Afrocentric policy advances the interest and well-being of the people of certain African geographic contexts while restoring the power, dignity, and status of African people. As admitted by the participant, a big part of policies that currently inform the social work profession and supervision practices are silent on cultural and traditional matters that may be integral in an African context and, thus, cause uncertainties and dilemmas even in the supervisory relationship and processes.

Other participants viewed the importance of the incorporation of African traditions and cultures into Afrocentric-based supervision as a factor that will also assist social workers as individuals and as a collective within the organisation at the same time, ensuring the relevance of social work practice to clients. Participants mentioned that Afrocentric-based supervision would allow room for understanding within the service office that is based on respect for each person's cultural preferences and knowledge. The participants emphasise that Afrocentric-based supervision that is culturally- and tradition-specific should be introduced at the level where social workers are still trained. The responses of participants are in line with the assertion made by Mathebane and Sekudu (2018), they assert that social workers need to seek to have a critical and deeper analysis of the implications in their practice and challenge the status quo having been empowered by an Afrocentric social work education that allows for alternative epistemologies to emerge. The participants also describe spirituality as one of the Afrocentric features that may characterise Afrocentric-based supervision.

Gaston-Johansson, Haisfield-Wolfe, Reddick, Goldstein, and Lawal (2013) explain that spirituality includes those beliefs that provide an individual with meaning or purpose in life; belief in a higher power; and a sense of connectedness with self, others, nature, and a higher being. Participants describe spirituality as one of the core Afrocentric-based supervision characteristics. Participants describe that the understanding of African spirituality and its incorporation is one of the features lacking in the social work and supervision practice. The participants' responses are reported below:

"...to make supervision African, it must be based on fundamental principles of African spirituality... number two, the way to connect through spirituality and in mind with the work I do makes me be attached to the community I am working in or a place I am working in... so I think one of the ways that that can help in terms of doing African supervision through spirituality- the spirit of Ubuntu... you see, even this top-down approach is not from us as Africans because in our culture, when you speak, I keep quiet and listen up until you have finished and then talk back to you, and also when I am talking, you become quiet, it goes like that... in other words, it is an engagement that is characterised by respect... so, in other words, there must be a way that we develop as Africans of supervising each other that is characterised by our own feelings attitudes and thoughts..." - SWP 9.

"...well, for me, I think the important features of African supervision should be about the acceptance of African spirituality in the social work profession and also in supervision. You see, for me, I think being an African is just reduced to being black, but I think people are missing the point because being an African is deep and requires that it is adequately understood in social work or supervision... For now, I think social work entirely takes African spirituality for granted. We still look at it as being barbaric and uncivilised... I am African, and I believe in African spirituality. and I do not know what would happen to me being in this profession when my ancestors call me to do certain work and maybe require me to be out of work for some time... actually, I have been ignoring their calling for so long because I know what will happen to me and my work... I think when you are an African who believes in African cultures

and traditions and sometimes African religion, it becomes difficult for you to fit in in the workplace because it is a place of civilised people....” – SWP 3.

When participants were asked to explain how it was going to be of benefit to them if spirituality was considered as an important feature of Afrocentric-based supervision, the below responses were shared:

It will help me because I think most of the time, I feel like I am not accepted for who I am and not regarded as one person who is civilised because of the way I choose to live my life and believe... I think African supervision will be easy for us to understand... I think the manner in which we are treated in supervision might be different because we would have been accepted and treated as people who are mature, professionals and adults...” – SWP 13.

*“So now, when it considers, for example, a case of a Zulu client or supervisee, one must understand how they are total functionality is like and what encompasses that functionality of a person from the Zulu nation... if a person then points out that they want to go for **ukuthwasa (traditional initiation)** to me, that must not be a new discovery to a point where I even make it sounds a person still lives in the past because one talk of **ukuthwasa** in this current day and age... I think it still has elements of discriminating that were inherited from the past...” – SWS 5.*

Spirituality for social workers and supervisors is not just a ‘by-the-way’ feature that is aimed only at assisting clients when they approach them for help. It is not only an Afrocentric feature that is being described for the purposes of understanding the communities and clients that social workers work with, but also a personal and professional issue that affects their practice and lives within the department. Evident from the responses of social workers above, spirituality is linked to the values of connectedness, respect, acceptance, humaneness, and identity. When the supervisory relationship is spiritually sensitive or sensitive to the spirituality of both the social worker and the supervisor, it becomes easier to provide the supportive function that was described as missing by the social workers. Canda, Furman, and Canda (2019) explain that spirituality is at the heart of helping, empathy, and care, is the pulse of compassion, the vital flow of practice wisdom, and the driving energy of service. When the practice of social work and supervision side-lines spirituality as a core

element of any successful helping relationship, the practice itself becomes tiresome and unfavorable for practitioners engaged in it. Without spirituality in social work, the profession's roles, theories, and skills become empty, rote, tiresome, and lifeless (Canda *et al.*, 2019).

On the other hand, culturally sensitive social work supervision, according to participants, allows them to connect with their work and the communities that they work for. Supervision, being the core process of ensuring that clients receive the best services in the organisation, should then incorporate an element of spirituality. Hodge (2011) asserts that cultural competency is another dimension of cultural competence and is required when dealing with clients and should focus on solving clients' problems and issues. Therefore, the incorporation of spirituality in social work supervision will alienate issues associated with discrimination, the biased and unfair judgment of others, and ineffective relationships. It will ensure and help social workers accept each other as they are and also acquire an in-depth understanding of each person holistically. Interconnectedness was one of the features that was described by participants as one that should characterise Afrocentric-based supervision. Interconnectedness is the element that was described as characterising African societies and lifestyles and is closely linked with the values of humaneness (*Ubuntu*). Cree (2011) mentions that interconnectedness is linked to spirituality and *Ubuntu* and can be easily translated; because we are and because we are, therefore, I am. Nzira (2011) mentions that the spirit of interconnectedness makes African people feel like they are part of the natural environment they occupy and the interdependency they have with others. The service office in which the participants work becomes their environment, hence, their articulation of interconnectedness implied the need to belong and experience unity and acceptance. The responses of participants are as follows:

"Mmmm, the one we use focuses on you as the person. It is very nuclear... it does not understand that people are not living in isolation as a mushroom but even a mushroom does not just appear alone because you will always find other mushrooms around it... so the current supervision that we are using and implementing it does not really take into consideration your interconnectedness with other factors and people but only focus on you as an

*individual... everything that is required of you as an individual it just your output that is not related to your work... but let us say there is an Afrocentric kind of supervision, I think it will have elements or characteristics of Ubuntu, focusing on a person and where the person come from... and let us take for instance if you are a social worker it is not easy to come to work as **isangoma** (traditional healer) or maybe you are from **ukuthwasa** (traditional initiation), **ukumuliswa** (traditional ceremony to transition a girl to womanhood) and so on... it does not have the understanding of saying this is part of my culture and this is my family's belief and you cannot separate it from me because it reveals that this is me... it does not understand that what I am here to do and that what I have been trained to do has nothing to do with how I am dressed up..." – SWP 4.*

"Maybe I could go back to the point I made earlier of that African-centered supervision would need to be reciprocal and be two-way because if we can critique this one, we have which is not African, what they normally do is to give a supervisor too much power... Therefore, it must be two-way influenced such that the supervisor and supervisee must be able to participate in the process accordingly. I think it would constitute a more African kind of supervision if it is characterised by that... I think a supervisor and a supervisee must feel that they are connected by something and for something... maybe their connection must also be informed by the way they live, believe, and relate with other employees and clients... I think it must acknowledge that we are within the system of things..." – SWP 2.

"For me, I think this kind of supervision must be able to create unity between social workers and supervisors in the organisation. It is very important to build that unity between the two to make supervision very successful." – SWS 5.

The responses of participants capture two fundamental points that explain the feature of the interconnectedness of the employee, with the one in relation to their whole being as spiritual, cultural, and professional. This is congruent with what Cree (2011) explains when stating that the interconnectedness of all things sees no separation between the material and the spiritual reality, they are one and inseparably spiritual and material as all reality begins from a single principle.

The other point evident from the participants' responses is that the social worker and the supervisor within the supervisory relationship have to understand themselves as a unit that is also interconnected with other forces and factors outside their supervisory relationship, such as other employees, organisations, clients, and communities. Hong, Kim, Hong, Lewis, and Park (2020) assert that interconnectedness is like a web where each person is an interdependent fiber of a collective identity where each member is considered part of a collective group that cares for another whom they consider a part of their collective self. Afrocentric-based supervision should encompass the interconnectedness of all things as this will harmonise relationships and also foster genuine understanding, caring, and commitment to each other.

Furthermore, key informants provided overarching responses in relation to this subtheme as it related to the description of a feature of Afrocentric-based supervision. Amongst their responses, different values were identified as critical to the description of Afrocentric-based supervision. The key informants believe that Afrocentric-based supervision should be characterised by the incorporation of African indigenous knowledge, culture, truth, justice, peacefulness and calmness, and commitment. The responses to the key informant's accounts are reported below:

"I do not know what I can say about the culture. There is something missing with our culture and supervision. I don't know what to say because I feel like I am failing to explain it. For example, take a social worker and place him/her in the rural area; I do not like finding a social worker being overwhelmed by culture because they lack knowledge of it. That is what happens with our social workers. So, social workers in the DSD work using the ward-based approach. So, the social worker has to know the dominant culture of the ward and other cultures in that ward. You have to understand the positives and negatives of this culture. It is one of the things that I have observed that it really challenges us and undermines our ethical value of being non-judgmental. We end up doing judgmental things but without realising. I think we have to include the culture not only in supervision but also in the profession itself because we have all these ethics, but how do we respect culture I wouldn't be able to deal with people without understanding their culture well... Another thing is the use the indigenous knowledge systems that exist in our communities. There are so many things that we can use that can

be helpful in our interventions, but we are using none. Sometimes, we blame our communities for not recognising us, but we do not recognise them because we chose to learn nothing from them... It will be good to have our supervision sessions adopting some of the indigenous knowledge from the communities” – Key informant 02.

*“I’m also glad that you are using the Afrocentric or you are tackling everything from an Afrocentric perspective. I am not sure if you know the principles or canons of Afrocentricity. For example, we have got **ukweli** which means the **truth**; we have got **kujitolea**, which means the **commitment**; we have got to **utulivu** which means **calmness** and **peacefulness**; we have got **uhaki**, which means **justice** and lastly, we have got **ujamaa**, which means **community**. I certainly believe that these canons of Afrocentricity should also apply to social work supervision. For example, the **truth (ukweli)**, a social work supervisor in the social work supervisee should tell the truth throughout the supervision process. We also have the second one, **kujitolea**, which means commitment; the supervisor should be committed to providing supervision throughout the whole process, and the supervisee should be committed as well. We also have calmness and peacefulness, which I believe is also very important; when it comes to social work supervision, the working environment for supervision to be effective should be calm and peaceful. You know, there are always work-related conflicts that we come across in our work environments; those should be eliminated as much as possible, and then we also have justice, and I think justice is clear. We also have **ujamaa**, which means communities. I believe sometimes group supervision can also be helpful because the work environment is a community in itself. So, group supervision where, for example, some supervisees can provide peer support among themselves, apart from the support that comes from the supervisor himself but also provide peer support among each other. Then we must also include spirituality and critique the relevance of the models that we have right now in our African context.” – Key informant 01.*

The above accounts of the key informants are in congruence with the views of the social workers and supervisors. Social workers and supervisors believe that Afrocentric-based supervision should be characterised by the recognition of African

cultures and traditions, interconnectedness, and spirituality. The features of Afrocentricity detailed by the key informants explain in detail the significance of the features detailed by social workers and supervisors. Key informant 01 details five canons as formulated by Reviere (2001), which include *ukweli*, *utulivu*, *uhaki*, *ujamaa*, and *kujitoa*. Reviere (2002:06) explains that the “application of my five Afrocentric canons, therefore, mandates that both learners and facilitators consider the political, ideological, social, and cultural beliefs and motivations of participants.” In the context of this study, these canons should allow the supervisor and supervisee to take into consideration the political, social, ideological, and cultural beliefs that influence the supervision. The next subtheme pertains to critiquing the implemented supervision’s linkage to Afrocentric discourse.

5.3.2.2. Subtheme 2.2: Links of Afrocentricity to the Implemented Supervision

This subtheme aims at exploring participants' views and perspectives on whether the supervision they currently implement and receive within their service offices in the DSD has some Afrocentric elements. The reason to gauge participants on this subtheme was to determine the extent to which social workers and supervisors examine the efforts and modifications to be employed to reach a completely Afrocentric supervisory practice in social work. Schiele (1996) attributes Afrocentric social work as an approach to the practice of social work rooted in traditional African philosophical assumptions that are used to explain and solve human societal problems. Therefore, Afrocentric-based social work supervision should empower Afrocentric social work practitioners in effectively analysing, responding, explaining, and intervening in African social problems in a manner that is congruent with African cultures, values, spirituality, and indigenous knowledge. Hence, the subtheme seeks to explore where, in practice, there are any elements of Afrocentric already adopted by social workers and supervisors to solve the problems of their clients.

Social workers and supervisors were requested to provide their views on whether the currently implemented supervision is linked to Afrocentricity. Participants described social work supervision currently implemented as Western. The reason participants describe the currently implemented social work supervision in this way is because they held views that supervision still depends largely on Western knowledge bases and

models and there is a lack of recognition of African ways of living and African indigenous knowledge. The assertions of participants came through when critically reflecting on the ideals of Afrocentricity and what happens in practice. The responses of social workers are reported below:

"Well, I think the supervision we have here is mostly Western because most of what we know about supervision is from other countries. I think we took social work that was implemented in other countries and just tried to implement it as if it were ours, but now it is difficult to implement... it is the same as what we have in the Supervision Framework that we have taken from the same books and university education that was taken by the other countries which is very much difficult. I think it is my first time hearing you talking about African supervision..." – SWP 1.

"I think it is more Western because who are being guided by the Children's Act, which we mostly use... I think it focuses more on Western cultures even though, at times, we do listen to our clients when they explain their culture, but at times, we do not take culture into consideration, especially if it will not benefit our client at that particular time... but we do listen to our clients when they explain their cultures..." - SWS 2.

"I would say most of the African traditions and indigenous ways are very much neglected and are not documented... which made those from the West take advantage of it by documenting their own ways of doing things... so we do not have anything to refer to as Africans even when it comes to the cases maybe of children you will not have anything to guide you in an African way on what to do... I would say most of the things that we do align themselves more with the Western parties or Western people... most of the African things are not documented... so you will find that in the social welfare department, the emphasis is on what is written down..." – SWS 5.

"No, I am saying the context where most of the things right now are under Western theories, knowledge and everything... because we are still continuing with rules that we found here... even those who came before us even used those rules they also inherited here... nothing has changed much,

no.... and to further mention, it is becoming much worse than for it to getting better... they keep on introducing new things, but I do not think we are aligned to Afrocentricity because we continue the old way..." – SWP 8.

"It is mostly Western, and even if we might deny it, we still believe that African ways of doing things are not working... I have talked about being civilised in the workplace; I think we still believe in being civilised in terms of how the West defines civilisation... if a client comes dressed in full African attire, that client runs a risk of being called names by social workers in when they're in private and also runs a risk of being famous and his/her issue or problem known by the entire office because when social workers are alone and talk among themselves, they will always find it easy to isolate and make examples of that particular client... when I say social workers I also mean social work supervisors because even themselves are social workers and sometimes even them do gossip about other employees and about clients... so I think it is not African supervision..." - SWP 10.

"It is western... as I have said that our ways of doing things as Africans are not recognised... not even our knowledge is recognised most of the times... yes, you do have people in the department saying that our profession must stick with core values of Africans... but those values are never applied..." – SWP 13.

Participants believe the currently implemented supervision to be linked with the Western ways of knowing and doing because of its lack of consideration of African ways of knowing and doing as valid and important. The participants' responses highlight a notable observation that the social work profession exhibit a lack of relevance to African practices and cultures, as it has not yet to integrated African indigenous knowledge and practices into its overall practice and curriculum. Common responses of social work supervisors in this theme was that they regard social work supervision as mostly Western simply because they believe that the policies and legislations that underpin the social work practice still advocate for Western culture rather than African cultures. Social workers recognise the lack of transformation from the knowledge and education they received and in the practice policies that regulate the social work profession. The social workers' views are supported by Bent-Goodley

et al. (2017), who explains that social work students often exit the curriculum without being exposed to African perspectives and the contributions of African scholars.

Social work supervisors recognise that the policies and legislations do not reflect African cultures and proper procedure and guidance on how to efficiently practice within the African setting. Social work legislation and policies are still marked by significant gaps regarding advocating for Afrocentric practice. Pawar (2019) asserts that the inadequacy and inappropriateness of the current social work practice and social policy practice of social work practitioners fills a significant gap in the social work and social development agenda. This gap promotes a situation where the current social policies in place do not adequately deal with the social problems in communities because of a lack of relevance. At the core of social policy lies an evaluation of societal responses to social problems, and without a clear social policy relevant to social work goals and values, they will remain as documented as ineffective (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2012; Pawar, 2019). A truly Afrocentric practice reflects and reinforces the traditional outlook of African ways of living and ways of understanding and interpreting realities founded upon African ideas, values, beliefs, customs, languages, practices, etc. (Fairfax, 2017).

When answering this subtheme, participants also reported that the currently in-place social work supervision practices are not linked with the tenets of Afrocentricity. Hence, they described it as not Afrocentric but also not Western. In describing the linkage of the currently implemented supervision, social workers and supervisors used their first-hand knowledge in explaining their understanding of how an African person should be and how African perspectives must be embraced. Hence, the participants' responses were based on their practice experiences as opposed to historical knowledge of social work and supervision. Underpinning the answers of social workers was their self-reflection on their practice alongside the ideals of Afrocentricity that should give them an insight into working with Afrocentric clients through cultural competence (Pellebon, 2007). The participants' responses were recorded as follows:

It is not linked to Afrocentricity in any way... I think the first thing we must understand is the meaning of what it means to be an African that is working for the nation.... That is the first thing... when you are an 'induna' (traditional

supervisor under the king); what does that mean? If you are a king, what does that mean? It is important to define the meaning of that and focus on it because when it comes to someone being a supervisor and one a supervisee, the question will be what you would do with a person whose mindset already has been conditioned to the current status of power of being a supervisor... I think the first thing is to define social work in an African way... the word management must be defined in an African way on what it actually means... someone must coin a new mindset of terminology in an African way, and that African way of defining management be taught in a new social work curriculum and be incorporated to a new approach of African supervision... – SWP 9.

"I do not think the supervision we practice in this department is African because it comes through as a top-down approach... as the department would in all instances say, for example, they want you to implement this number of programs and how many children you must reach per program. And there is no time afforded to a social worker to revisit the clients he/she has been working with follow-ups on their progress as now you are chasing other targets... it must be people-centered..." – SWP 6.

"It does not link with African ways of doing things.... It does not... in this office, we are judgmental... in this office, we have different people who believe in different things as some are 'amathwasa' (traditional initiates), some 'izinyanga' (traditional healers), some religious, but you will find that when we are in our groups because we have been divided into different groups... so now were divided, gossiping each other and sometimes hating each other in the same office... because even our supervisors you will find them gossiping about employees with other employees and then that is where you see that they do not have an understanding of Afrocentric-based supervision because they still believe that you must still come through to work wearing your high heels and you must not reveal you identify about who you really are from where you come from..." – SWP 4.

Social workers used their lived experiences in their respective service offices to describe what happens in practice so that they could justify that the current supervision model in place has no link with Afrocentricity or its core features. The accounts of social workers reveal that the Afrocentric approach to supervision would yield an understanding of cooperation, unity, selflessness, and concern for others and strengthen social workers commitment to social justice and fights against inequalities. To make the social work practice and supervision practice amicable to social workers, it must incorporate Afrocentrism and its tenets. Similarly, social work supervisors shared similar sentiments, as detailed in the account below:

"We cannot link it with Afrocentricity in any way. We are still following the guide from the framework as it is... we just follow the Supervision Framework formed in 2012, which I think is more clinical... it just educates supports... this one is not Afrocentric that is all I think of..." – SWS 4.

As with some social workers, the social work supervisors' accounts reinforce the sentiments of participants in relation to the currently implemented supervision. For participants, policies and legislations do not reflect African cultures or the proper procedures and guidance regarding how to efficiently practice within the African setting. The significance of these policies and legislation is that they regulate the profession and practice of social work, even at the service office level. Social work legislation and policies are still marked by significant gaps regarding advocating for Afrocentric practice. Pawar (2019) asserts that the inadequacy and inappropriateness of the current social work practice and social policy practice of social work practitioners fills a significant gap in the social work and social development agenda.

This gap promotes a situation where the current social policies in place do not adequately deal with the social problems in communities because of a lack of relevance. At the core of social policies lies an evaluation of societal responses to social problems, and without a clear social policy relevant to social work goals and values, they will remain documented but ineffective (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2012; Pawar, 2019). Therefore, there is a need for legislation and policies to reflect Afrocentrism as they dictate the social work practice and the provision of services to

clients. Emerging among the responses was that currently implemented social work supervision is a combination of both Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism.

The minority view that was held by participants was that implemented social work supervision encompassed both elements of Afrocentric and Western values, knowledge, cultures, and models. They explicitly explained that though social work supervision is largely Western, there are still elements that make it lean on Afrocentricity. The participants believed that it is because of the place where they are located that forces them to incorporate some of the Afrocentric elements to better accommodate their clients. The accounts of the participants are reported below:

"...I can say it is related because in our context, it is only Africans, so the way we do things resembles an African supervision because we are able to use our own languages when discussing our matters..." – SWP 2.

*"...well, there is an element of it being Afrocentric, but it relies more on the western supervision methods. We do have areas for white people like Manzimtoti, but a supervisor must understand when a social worker comes with a caseload with cases from rural areas and must put on a coat that understands an African person and also put a coat that understands a white person when dealing with cases from white people... when we are approaching these cases in supervision, we cannot treat them the same way because our backgrounds are not the same... so when a person comes, and he/she is a **sangoma** (traditional healer), but besides being a **sangoma** (traditional healer) he/she is a person who believes in ancestors so as an African I have to respect that and the meaning of it in shaping his reality... so it does not matter what my belief system is as an individual but the supervision we have in paper, does not allow one to be culturally relevant... it is totally not... so I think it, for now, it has few elements of being Afrocentric that we put on informally to accommodate our clients..." – SWP 9.*

Another account from a social work supervisor categorised the linkage to Afrocentric-based supervision as one that is implemented 'off-the-books'. The significance of this account is that it attempts to answer the question of how a certain extent of Afrocentric-

based supervision gets to be implemented in the DSD services. The described 'off-the-books' supervision seems to take place as a way of mitigating challenges encountered in practice. The account of the supervisors is as follows:

“Mm, maybe partly it is African because we mostly work with African people so, it becomes it is mostly off-the-books... yes, I can put it that way. So that we can accommodate the community, we try to make it more African even though in official legislations and frameworks that guide us, it is not... Also, when a social worker needs to take a long leave because of cultural and traditional issues not accounted for in law, we do help each other, but in most cases, we do it off the books because that is where we have to make a decision as supervisors of how we can help this social worker, but in doing so, we have to make sure that that service delivery to clients is not compromised in a big way... so it is off the books because we also look at how also the social worker can as can meet us halfway while we try to support him or her to undergo that process... so now it depends on which office they are located in and the understanding of your supervisors concerning African traditions and customs or even spirituality.” – SWS 1.

The above account highlights the challenges faced by supervisors who work with mostly cultural and traditional social workers and clients. This encourages them to put it upon themselves to ensure that in their practice, they are culturally relevant to the needs of their supervisees and clients. As stated by Fickling, Tangen, Graden, and Grays (2019), supervisors also need to consider the complexity of their own identities as well as their supervisees' identities and strive to grow as cultural beings and advocates for social justice. Therefore, social work supervisors themselves, as employees belonging to the same cultural and traditional context as their supervisees and clients, use their indigenous knowledge to put up a practice of supervision that accommodates their supervisees and clients to supplement the gaps that exist in the supervision framework and the official legislations and policies of the government.

Notable from the overall participants' responses is the justification of their experience of supervision as encompassing both Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism. At the center of these justifications is the use of language and the practitioner's ability to be culturally

relevant. The use of African languages is key to the Afrocentric-based supervision practice. Pellerin (2012) asserts that African languages play a key role in the process of transforming the status quo as Afrocentricity seeks to connote that the language used in a text is based upon the idea of Africans as subjects. This means that the person who creates the text must have some understanding of the nature of African reality (Pellerin, 2012). Therefore, the proper sanctioning of African languages for utilisation in practical and official documents, communication, and different facets of the department is crucial for the embracement of Afrocentric-based supervision. This view was also echoed by Key informant 02, who is an experienced practitioner within the PCQA division of the DSD. The key informant provided this assertion:

"I do not think we have reached the stage where our supervision to be African because even our documentation is written in the English language, which is not well understood by the communities we represent. You will find the simple documents written in English. So, when we develop documents, in my mind, I have that I am a representative of KZN and would want to see the document fitting into all contexts of KZN, including areas that are mostly rural. I will go to these rural areas with a document written in English only to find that it is hard for even the family members to read and translate it for the illiterate grandmother. The second thing is that we do not have documents that are informed by people- our communities. You will agree with me that we still do have that tendency of imposing ourselves to them and thinking for them that which is mainly thought in terms of western..." – Key informant 02.

The key informant emphasises and validates what the social workers and supervisors asserted when mentioning that the documentation that regulates social work practice and supervision does not include African language, which is an important feature of Afrocentrism. Another element that participants in this section described is that, in practice, the social work supervision process is marked by the continuous efforts of social workers and supervisors attempting to accommodate clients through the lenses of their cultures, traditions, beliefs, and values. It is through these efforts that participants believe that the state of being Afrocentric is realised in as much as they do not have official guidelines for such. The participants believe that they put in these efforts to accommodate their clients and better serve them. This aligns with the view stated by Mutisya and Ross

(2005) that a critical component of Afrocentricity is ensuring that African people are socialised and rally toward their cultural pride. Manning, Cornelius, and Okundaye (2004) explain that Afrocentric social workers need to support the clients' spiritual beliefs and orientations, assess how these beliefs have positively influenced African clients' development, and determine how to build on this foundation. The full endorsement of Afrocentricity in social work supervision will pave awareness for social workers and supervisors to consolidate their practice and better work with their clients, particularly African clients. The next subtheme pertains to the participants' descriptions of what they believed could be done to attain Afrocentric-based supervision.

5.3.2.3. Subtheme 2.3: Things to be Done to Achieve Afrocentric-based Supervision

Afrocentric-based supervision in the profession of social work is a necessity in South Africa as it will ensure that the profession is people-centered, community-based, and culturally relevant. It will help the profession to successfully achieve community development through the eradication of poverty and high inequality by utilising already available community-based resources, knowledge, values, and systems. Daniels (2001) explains that the profession of social work in Africa has to build upon community development based on the characteristics and features of Afrocentricity. Therefore, social workers and supervisors, when utilising Afrocentric-based social work supervision, will be empowered to utilise the strengths of their communities, clients, and groups to foster meaningful change.

When social work practitioners utilise African-centered perspectives on their clients, they are better placed to assess the needs of their clients holistically and identify strengths and areas in need of support (Lateef, 2021). Afrocentric-based supervision empowers social workers to realise what Fairfax (2017) asserted when they stated that social workers, when dealing with African communities, should understand that the realisation of human societal goals is only possible through the collective strengths of that community. Social workers and supervisors were asked to provide their responses on what they believe should be done to utilise Afrocentric-based supervision in the DSD. The participants believed that to achieve Afrocentric-based social work supervision, there must be a transformation of social work education and

its curriculum, extensive research on Afrocentric-based supervision needs to be undertaken, and proper officiation and documentation of Afrocentric-based supervision should be achieved.

Social work education and curriculum transformation were recognised by the majority of participants as key to achieving Afrocentricity and Afrocentric-based supervision. Supervision as the core of social work practice becomes inseparable from social work practices. Beddoe (2017) acknowledges supervision has been the center of the professional activity of social work. Proper education relies on proper research. Through massive engagement in research, education will be able to utilise proper African concepts, ideas, values, solutions, and ways of living as part of the professional curriculum. Akua (2020) explains that Afrocentric education is founded upon the foundation of traditional African concepts of education, where these traditions are modified to fit current issues and concerns. African-centered social work education is also critical for students to develop a critical perspective (Bent-Goodley *et al.*, 2017). Participants recognise that Afrocentric social work education should be introduced in social work training institutions to allow social work students to acquire practice through this holistic and empowering approach to training. Participants' responses are reported below:

"...I think education will help us go there... If we get proper education on African supervision, we can understand it, know what it stands for, and be able to implement it in the department... It must start from the universities; we social workers are trained so that when they come to the field, they already know what it is and can implement it well... It must act from universities..." – SWP 10.

"...we have to start by learning about it... pull people who can capacitate on it before it gets implemented so that we can know whether its positives and negative sides... So definitely we must start by introducing it and have that one person or group of people who are tasked with presenting the whole package of this kind of supervision..." – SWP 7.

"I think maybe it must be about providing more and continuous Education to social workers and supervisors who are already at work about the importance of accepting a person as he/she is... and maybe explain to them the impact because I think the reason why we might fall short in implementing the Afrocentric-based supervision so that people now are very self-centered... people mind their own business, and they do not care about anything else outside themselves... I think we must also cultivate the culture that was once a feature in the department; as much as I am not sure if the department had them before, I think we need more activities, such as activities for team building, to cultivate the spirit of unity and also diversity amongst us.... In that way, we will eliminate the idea of having to adopt other ways of living as superior to others..." – SWP 4.

"Everyone must be educated on it, even starting from their training to the social workers in the field... I think we can share together and open those platforms and educate people that previously we've been doing like this and now we are going to do like this... we have to create those platforms to share information, and then you take it from there and then implement it..." – SWS 4.

As participants engaged, they also emphasised that the curriculum of social work is central to ensuring the successful implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision. The participants believed that consultation should include traditional authorities, healers, and experts as part of ensuring the proper dispensation of knowledge regarding the Afrocentric-based knowledge of supervision. The responses align with the view Mthembu (2021), who puts forward that Afrocentrism forms part of the indigenous knowledge systems that incorporates the historical background and cultural value systems and all related experiences of the participants in this regard. The participants' responses are reported below:

"It must start from university so that when you graduate, you have a basic understanding of at least one African culture or their diversity... in as much as it will not be able to cover all aspects of the lives of African people, the other aspect of it will one will find it when one is already practicing in the field... but you must have that basic understanding of cultures and what in those

cultures can be used and how it can be used in practice... maybe we will need uh to incorporate it with what we have from the West and see how it gets to work in practice... but I think all must start from the university when a social worker is being trained..." – SWS 2.

"I think the universities and the department of higher learning and all the relevant stakeholders that are responsible for people at a grassroots level for people with indigenous knowledge; for example, according to the Xhosa nation, there were people called abo 'Hhinsa' of which we need to know how did they two supervision because they were doing it... how it was happening from them... how the Zulu kings supervised their 'izinduna' (traditional supervisors under the king) and how it was called..., and how did it happen... the same goes for the Swazis, Vendas, Shangaans, etc..... and then we take all the information we have gathered and analyse it to form some rich theoretical knowledge which we can teach in our universities with an aim to introduce a new African curriculum based on Africanness.... these must be understood by also, but the minister does what operating at a higher level..." – SWP 12.

Participants are calling for social work institutions to transform their curriculum to allow for Afrocentric education to take place. Akua (2020) explains that Afrocentric education allows students to acknowledge the structural inequalities but still see tremendous opportunities to take advantage of and transform the inequality. Training social workers through Afrocentric education will allow social workers to be true agents of community change and be at the center of driving African liberation. African-centered education centers around African beings and processes that support student wholeness, agency, and liberation (Warren-Grice & Thomas, 2021). Social workers, through being trained on Afrocentric perspectives, are better positioned to drive the social and economic development of themselves, their clients, and their communities. According to Akua (2020), Afrocentric education equips social workers to find their personal and collective power that will enable them to find innovative solutions for empowering themselves, their families, clients, and communities.

Challenging the dominance of Eurocentricity in the social work curriculum through accommodating other worldviews is essential in ensuring that the profession is diversified. Akinyela and Aldridge (2003) believe that social work training institutions have a responsibility to overcome the dominance of the Eurocentric educational approach in the social work curriculum. This will allow the reinforcement of Afrocentricity in the practice of supervision and the epistemologies and models it adopts towards supervision. This move will affirm the views expressed by social work supervisors on the aspect of ensuring that Afrocentric-based supervision is first received by social work practitioners at training institutions. Extensive research on Afrocentric-based supervision was viewed as central to expansion of the knowledge base of Afrocentric-based supervision.

Research plays a critical role in the generation of scientific and evidence-based practical knowledge. Through social work research, we become better positioned to challenge perceptions and popular narratives and sentiments about issues that affect practitioners, clients, professions, and organisations (Engel & Schutt, 2016). Participants believe that one of the things to be done to ensure that social work supervision is Afrocentric is deliberate and intentional engagement in research concerning it. Through research on how Afrocentric-based supervision could be implemented in practice, dominant narratives that seek to nullify and marginalise Afrocentricity as a worldview in social work will be challenged. The responses of participants on this theme were as follows:

“I think what is important is that we have to start by doing research... we have to use that feedback on research to determine the possibilities for having an Afrocentric-based supervision...” – SWP 3.

“We have to start by doing petitions to get people involved and also do studies that talk to black people. We can even do studies in and about black people and then develop a tentative model and try it to figure out whether it works or not. Most of the time, I feel like things that concern black people get blocked as not implementable before they are practically tested...” – SWP 2.

"It will cost us a lot of change from what we have learned from the West, and then maybe through research, we can get to understand of what of means to have African supervision... I think proper research is key..." – SWP 6.

"Actually, you are on the right track as you are doing research... Doing the research and getting as much information as we can and analysing it and not only just stopping there but also putting into practice... I think this really needs to be documented, and people need to learn about it because it sets us apart from other countries because of our context as the things we do here cannot be generally applied in another context such as Australia..." – SWP 8.

Participants recognise research as the key to moving towards Afrocentric social work supervision being implemented in the department. The participants believe that the research on Afrocentric-based supervision must be targeted at understanding African communities, what Afrocentric-based supervision should be like in practice, and how social work practitioners themselves can accommodate Afrocentric-based supervision. These responses give a holistic imagination of knowledge production that must be undergone so that Afrocentric-based supervision can be realised. Another small segment of participants also believes that there must be proper officiation and documentation of Afrocentric-based supervision.

The official recognition and documentation for Afrocentric-based supervision is one of the steps that the participants saw fit to be considered. Participants understand that the department is governed by policies and legislation that underpin the practice and profession. Hence, their view outlining that if the Afrocentric-based supervision were to be officially documented and legislated, it would be the first step to ensure that, in practice, it is implemented. Their responses were as follows:

"...there is nothing we can do that is extraordinary except for having a well-documented African supervision model... because, for instance, in this department, you cannot do anything without being backed by something that has been written down... it has to be written down... because you must always remember that our department deals mostly with the law what so you cannot just be involve anything in your report that comes from your general

knowledge everything must be well documented even supervision models..."

– **SWS 3.**

"I think we do have the staff or the resources; we just need to amend laws in order to accommodate the Afrocentric-based supervision to officially take course... since we are already doing a bit of it unofficially, so it needs to be made official... I think so..." – **SWS 1.**

"I can say that maybe the times these policies were implemented were during the period of apartheid where a black person was viewed as insignificant or maybe they were influenced by that thinking... I think we have to revise these laws because I think the way they were put together did not involve much consultation from the people to whom these laws apply..." – **SWP 12.**

The participants' strong views on the officiation of Afrocentric-based supervision could be an acknowledgment that the current social work legislation and policies mostly adopt the Eurocentric worldview. The officiation of Afrocentric-based supervision will impact the social welfare philosophy and policies and the manner in which services to clients are delivered. As Schiele (1996:21) asserts, "applying the cultural values of people of color as a conceptual base to advance and diversify views on social welfare philosophy and policy." Therefore, it is of great importance for the profession of social work to accommodate Afrocentric-based supervision for the benefit of clients and social work practitioners.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the introduction and implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision would be an intentional indigenisation of social work supervision practiced in South Africa. This recognises that the current discourse of social work education and social work supervision has been influenced by the country's history of colonialism, imperialism, and apartheid, as discussed in Chapter Two. This has been explained by the key informant who has contributed immensely to the academic scholarship of social work supervision. Key informant 03 explains this point as follows:

"...the influences of colonisation and imperialism on us... and that influence supervision, and I can tell you that this is influencing supervision quite a lot in Africa because we struggle to see supervision on a horizontal level, because

of those influences, and this is just my opinion because of our colonial heritage in most countries in Africa, where social work was installed in specific countries than with this European flavor, and we struggle really to get to the clinical part of supervision... we struggle with the clinical elements to really support supervisors..." – Key informant 03.

The influences of colonialism, imperialism, and apartheid in South Africa necessitate the Afrocentric-based models, epistemologies, and paradigms. Mamphiswa and Noyoo (2000:30) explain that "social work is a Western concept and, at times, has found itself conflicting with the social terrains of Africa... for social work to be relevant and potent, there must be deliberate attempts to both indigenise it and mold it along the lines of the predominant ethos of South African society". "Unless there is critical engagement with the start past and present realities of structural and social relations of power, privilege, inequality and oppression, social workers in south Africa will deserve the past label of being upholders of the status quo" (Smith, 2008:374). Therefore, it is crucial for social work supervision to be conscious of these issues and then be deliberate in ensuring that the discourse of social work supervision is Africanised and indigenised. The subtheme that emerged pertains to participants exploring and describing the benefits that Afrocentric-based supervision would entail at various levels.

5.3.3. Theme 3: Possible Successes to be Presented by Afrocentric-based Supervision

Afrocentricity in social work codifies and affirms the cultural practices and values of traditional Africa into a model for positive human transformation and possibility (Schiele, 1997). Social work supervision cannot be separated from social work practice. Hence the incorporation of Afrocentricity in social work supervision will enhance the integrity and status of the social work profession. Through Afrocentric-based supervision, social work practitioners are better placed to pursue Afrocentric social work and be meaningful and effective agents of change to the unique conditions, challenges, and problems confronting African clients. However, for social work supervision to be Afrocentric certain elements has to be depicted. These Afrocentric

elements have been described in the previous theme and literature review chapter and include interconnectedness, self-knowledge, and spirituality, amongst others.

Supervision is the resemblance of a helping relationship as certain virtues and values have to define the supervisory relationship in order to realise a successful supervisory relationship. “Through professional supervision, practitioners engage in a relationship with a supervisor enabling both a place and space to refine and develop professional identity, knowledge and skills and for reflectively examining the challenges faced in everyday practice” (Karvinen-Niinikoski *et al.*, 2017:93). Social work supervision mirrors the helping relationship in that the supervisory relationship, like the helping relationship, is built on a trusting, confidential, caring, supportive, and empathic experience, which sets the atmosphere for the professional work to be undertaken (Noble & Irwin, 2009). Therefore, the successes of Afrocentric-based supervision must be explicitly known before the complete evacuation to it. This theme focuses on the third objective of the study which is to identify the participants’ views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision. Hence the participants were asked what they perceived would be the possible successes of Afrocentric-based supervision regarding the benefits to the workplace, clients, supervisory relationships, employee relations, and the profession of social work. Several subthemes emerged from the participants data and included these subthemes include successes to be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision to the workplace, clients, supervisory relationships, and social worker to social worker relationships.

5.3.3.1. Subtheme 3.1: Successes for the Workplace

A workplace is an important place for social work practitioners as most participants define it as their second home because they spend most of their time at work. Hence, social workers and supervisors have consistently described the role of social work supervision should mainly be centered around support and guidance as these are the basic characteristics for a well-functioning African home and community. Aju and Beddewela (2020:769) assert that “Afrocentric employees might be more disposed to working in an environment that espouses a sense of community to the extent that the workplace will be like ‘a home away from home’”. Social workers and supervisors have a particular connection to their workplace, and how they experience their workplace is crucial in determining the rate at which they can be productive and effective in doing

their work. Hence, the Afrocentric approach to social work supervision lays the foundation within which social work practitioners can build upon its tenets to develop knowledge, values, and understanding for creating a better work environment that is accommodative and inclusive. Schiele (1997) explains that the Afrocentric approach affirms and codifies the values and cultural practices of traditional Africa into a model for positive human transformation and possibility.

When social workers and supervisors were asked to relate their description of the possible successes of the Afrocentric social work supervision when implemented in the DSD service office, amongst the prominent accounts of the participants' responses were the assertions that Afrocentric-based supervision in the DSD as a social service organisation would be in place where it can deliver quality and effective services. Social workers have a mandate given to them by their organisations to be the stewards of delivering social services to clients according to organisational policies and legislation. The organisation within which social workers and supervisors are employed becomes an important instrument that connects supervisors to social workers and also connects social workers with their clients in the community. It enables social workers to play a meaningful role in mobilising communities towards the elimination of social ills and advocating for policies and legislation that empower communities to participate meaningfully in social and economic development. Dominelli (2017) explains that social workers play a meaningful role in mobilising civil society organisations in power-sharing initiatives and mount a critique that highlights the casualties of neo-liberalism and advocating on their behalf in both national and international policy-making forums. The ability for the DSD services offices to deliver effective and quality services to the clients. The researcher presents the accounts of participants relating to this discussion:

"It can help the workplace to be reliable because it will be providing services that are necessary and that the people need in the community. Also, we will be delivering the services as the workplace that which we know that is needed by people which will increase our work morale..." – SWP 6.

"I think the work that we do in communities can have a better impact because we would be helping a person properly in quality and not help them while

passing... really we are not doing justice to our clients and communities because we are chasing after numbers..." – SWP 14.

"Mm, I think maybe services can be easily accessible to the to the community we are servicing... maybe also for the fact that we are also Africans who are servicing..." – SWS 1.

"I think we can have a lot of benefits because there are things that I know normally think we are wasting time when we do them... I think we can work better and also reduce the wasteful expenditure that we normally do... we might be able to focus on real problems that have an impact on people's lives..." – SWS 5.

"I think it will make it possible for certain cases to be solved easily if we were going to consider with the African way of living and how people from Africa perceive different things... maybe it can help us to achieve successful solving of cases and also have the community we work with feel that we understand them from their perspectives, way of life end things they believe in... I think so..." – SWS 2.

Participants believe that Afrocentric-based social work supervision can be beneficial for the DSD to be able to deliver efficient and effective services that are based on understanding of African people and how they lead their lives. Social work supervision is in place for the best interest of the clients and to ensure that clients receive the best services from the DSD. O'Donoghue and Engelbrecht (2022) assert that supervision that focuses on clients' problems results in improved general contentment and client satisfaction with their goal attainment. Notable from the participants' responses is the assertion that Afrocentric-based supervision's benefit in the DSD will be to strengthen the delivery of social services to clients. Participants regard the effective and quality delivery of service to clients as the key role of their workplace. The responses of the participants are in line with the core mandate of the DSD, which is to "provide social protection services and lead government efforts to forge partnerships through which vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities become capable and self-reliant participants in their own development," (DSD, 2022:20). Moreover, one participant pointed out that if Afrocentric-based supervision is implemented and officiated, social workers would be better positioned to ensure that social work practice at a macro level

are able to respond with community issues that are complex and demand for a community-centered approach. The participant's response is reported as follows:

“I think it can help in decreasing high levels of crime in our communities... I also think that it can decrease the levels of teenage pregnancy when social workers do their campaigns... even on the cases of witchcraft, I think they can decrease because we will have a way of approaching such cases and finding means of talking around them... we will avoid the situation where a person finds out who did witchcraft on him or her and take a decision to kill that person.... So, I think if we can have such a program, these things can decrease...” – SWP 13.

The participant's response reveals that African communities are confronted with different challenges that require context-based understanding for social work services to be effective and relevant. As Mini-Pradeep and Sathyamurthi (2017) state, social workers, when engaging in community work practices, need to have a comprehensive understanding of these community and understand how a particular community's influence can affect individual outlook of life. Hence, the participant addresses issues of witchcraft which is central to understating Africa life as it forms part of what Thabede (2008:236) categorises it amongst spirit mediumship and divination as “an important aspect of African epistemology that differentiates it from the West epistemology”. The understanding of this critical aspect of African life is crucial in helping social workers to be effective in delivering services in the communities. The implications that could occur as a result of a lack of appreciation of these factors is that of frustrating the supervision process as ethical dilemmas would be prominent and there would be temptation to address unique African problems through Western means. Amplifying this view was Key informant 01, who is an expert in the field of Afrocentric social work scholarship and provided the following account:

“A person may have problems, because in Africa, we have communal approach to life. If your grandma, or a niece or someone who is going through problems, as an individual, it can also affect you at the workplace. Though it is not somebody who is not directly into your life. For example, if you look at the Western approach to life, if they look at relatives, they look at immediate relatives. For you to say my aunt is not feeling well, so I am depressed at the

workplace, or my cousin from my grandfather's brother, you know, the system does not tolerate that. It only looks at the immediate family members of which employees at the workplace may face problems when the ecosystem is affected and by the ecosystem, I even refer to those distant relatives. So, I think it is something that we need to Africanise, our approach to social work in general, in social supervision in particular, also bringing in the concept of Ubuntu. A person might have a problem at the workplace or might fail to perform, because a neighbor is having problems or there is a funeral of a neighbor or so... So, this western approach to supervision does not recognise such problems. Yes, they only concentrate on individual immediate problems that a person might have. So, I believe this is a very important study, where we are trying to decolonise the process of social work supervision by bringing in these Afrocentric lenses to everything..." – Key informant 01.

The key informant's assertions recognise the current limitation of the currently in place supervision, in that it leans largely on the Western approaches. Therefore, believing that Afrocentric-based supervision would allow the recognition of communal life, which is central to African life and in which could provide space for the organisation to be amicable with African approaches, another subtheme that emerged related to possible successes that could be reaped by the clients.

5.3.3.2. Subtheme 3.2: Successes for Clients

Supervision in the field of social work should ensure that the best interests of the client are realised. Krushkova (2014) explains that the primary goal of supervision is to guarantee clients that their interests are protected and to enhance the services that social workers provide to their clients. Hence, clients become the fundamental basic unit within which supervision exists and the basis of the existence of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. In this subtheme, the researcher interrogates the participants on what could be the positive successes of Afrocentric-based supervision once implemented in the DSD and in their respective service offices.

Social workers are at the forefront of the organisational hierarchy and interact with clients and ensure that the clients receive services from the organisations. Social workers have to operate under the supervision of supervisors and within the authority and mandates of the organisation and their profession to ensure that their interventions are in line with policies. Social workers and supervisors believe that Afrocentric-based supervision has the potential to contribute positively to their work and, at the same time, guarantee clients that their best interests are represented, characterised by holism, and with the provided room to deliver quality services.

Social workers, even supervisors as social workers themselves, are guided by the principles of equality, equity, and social justice and have a responsibility to provide services to their clients. Social workers should always ensure that the distribution of resources and services to clients recognises the true realities of the society they live in and prioritise the advancement of the poor, vulnerable, and marginalised. Forte (2014) explains that social workers, as mandated to serve clients and other social systems, should mobilise resources from the organisation and outside systems to ensure the provision of quality services. Participants asserted that Afrocentric-based supervision would advance the delivery of quality services to clients. The responses of participants were as follows:

"As I have said before, we will be providing that which clients need at the grassroot level. It will enable us to prioritise our client's needs over the department's needs." – **SWP 6.**

"Clients will then get these quality services because when the supervisor is happy, the productivity increases... So, what is the benefit for the client is that they will get the best services because you are free from stress and because you do not feel unsatisfied because of the way things are done... you are just happy, and then your productivity will increase..." – **SWP 5.**

"umhhh I think that the client could receive the best service and get comprehensive healing, even emotionally, and it will be a holistic intervention. The client would leave the office being satisfied..." – **SWP 1.**

"The client will benefit when because if this supervision is well developed, it has to be client-centered... it has to talk on how on how to treat clients and how to render services to clients... so that will be very clear and benefit the client... so even a new social worker will better understand on what is his/her purpose and how to implement his/her job and better deliver services to clients... it will also guide social workers on how to be efficient in their work and how to deal with difficult clients..." – SWP 3.

"I think clients can gain a lot because I think the way social workers relate to clients will improve and maybe the services to clients will improve and have clients feeling that they are being serviced is very well..." – SWS 2.

"Clients can benefit a lot because the social workers can do the real job even clients would be satisfied, and they will know that you can only bring issues that are real issues and needs social workers' intervention... clients would work well with social workers, and they will respect what social workers do and not bring petty issues that have no substance but just using social workers services selfishly... we can also help to bring real education that aligns with our cultures..." – SWS 5.

According to participants, the need to deliver quality services to their clients is the basic mandate for any social worker. Participants believe that Afrocentric-based supervision has the ability to align the delivery of services with the context and culture of clients in such a way that strengthens the social worker's ability to work with clients in a holistic and effective manner. Social workers, through the Afrocentric approach to practice, are reminded of their commitment to address human problems and conditions and commitment to the holistic development of people in spite of race, gender, culture, etc. (Bent-Goodley *et al.*, 2017). Notable from social work supervisors' responses was that they hold a view that the delivery of quality services to clients is possible when the way they work with and supervise each other in a way that accommodates for the way of life of Africans and when the practice is centered around African values and knowledge. This, according to supervisors, will have an impact on social workers who are at the center of the provision of social services to clients to be effective. By doing so, service users or clients will have trust in the organisation that

provides these services. Participants also believe that Afrocentric-based supervision would foster a holistic approach when approaching clients matters.

The profession of social work has been advocating for a holistic approach to social work. Crisp (2011) asserts that social work has long prided itself on being a holistic profession interested in both the person and their environment and considers a range of individual and contextual factors as contributing to well-being. A holistic understanding involves practitioners engaging with both rational and emotional or irrational behaviors and recognises that when considered holistically, individuals are complex, multifaceted, and more than the sum of their parts (Ruch, 2005).

However, the profession of social work has been criticised as being mostly particularistic to the West as it adopts more of the Western models, theories, and knowledge. Hence, its commitment to being holistic remains disputed in the African context as it has excluded African cultures, knowledge, and models in its practice and education. As a result, the participants believe that the adoption and implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision would bring about the truest embracement of the holistic approach to social work practice. Below are the accounts of participants as they believe it is one of the benefits to be gained by clients when the Afrocentric-based supervision is in place:

"It can bring a lot of benefits because we will not then be looking at the case with the shallow lenses because this is the case that has been reported... but we will also be forced to look at the background of the problem and of the client's... because African people really come from really disadvantaged background..." – SWP 8.

"Oooh, definitely, it will be something that gives you an advantage as a social worker and even allows the client to feel listened to from his or her angle, perspective, and background... I think clients would feel understood and valued.... I think people might like the idea..." – SWP 7.

"The client will benefit a great deal because the client would be confident that when approaching social workers... they will know that they can talk anything and there will be confident that the social worker also understands the cultural component of things.... so a social worker can also be in a position to give their own personal views on that which is culturally appropriate or should be

done traditionally regarding their problem... so the client can benefit because they can have that holistic overview and interventions of the social worker... yes this kind of supervision can help a lot in addressing human conditions because the way social worker works will be holistic... so now you will find you find that our African clients who are our main clients in this office strongly believe in traditional and African ways of doing things..." – SWS 3.

"The tension between culture and government processes will be eliminated, for instance, in a situation where a child has to leave school to be initiated for 'ukuthwasa' (initiation) for the remainder of a particular year, so when the child must be readmitted for school, lots of documents would be needed which are not available in that traditional African setting... so, clients can be accommodated in ways that their cultures will be in some way legitimised... so there are times where there would be requirements to produce a child's school form but when you explain that the child is at 'ekuthwaseni' (traditional initiation school) and have that explanation not accepted... it most of the times that result to a situation where this culture would be greatly labelled as violating the rights of the child." – SWS 4.

Afrocentric-based supervision, according to participants, will engage social workers with diverse forms of knowledge that also include African knowledge and be able to utilise it in the helping relationship with their clients. Engaging with a diverse range of knowledge, practitioners develop a holistic understanding of clients and consequently develop into reflective, rather than technically, competent professionals (Ruch, 2005). Therefore, this will enable social workers to constantly engage in a reflective practice, which is crucial in the profession of social work. Participants also describe that the easiness with the adoption of African traditional methods as alternative ways of helping clients will be the main benefit to be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision.

Participants believe that Afrocentric-based supervision will enable them to utilise traditional African methods to intervene in clients' matters and issues. This comes through the recognition of social workers themselves as belonging to the same communities as clients and subscribing to the same cultural, traditional, and religious beliefs. Participants believe that this would be one of the benefits that clients would have through the implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision. The researcher below provides the accounts of participants as they emerged from the collected data:

“As we are talking about the introduction of policies that recognise African traditions, it will be easy for clients when they come, and we see that the problem requires African methods of intervention, then I can be able to refer the client to a particular traditional healer expert... though I may not be an expert but as an African I know some of the things... so it can also accommodate traditional healers whom client consult before they come to us... so we must help clients to help themselves, so we do not dictate to clients, but our policies make us dictate to clients on what they should do... they make us neglect an important aspect of clients lives and end up dictating our own ways of doing things so it can be helpful because we are hungry to see our clients happy... this will bring confidence to clients that their problems will be solved which is the first step towards successful intervention...” – SWP 14.

“Well, I think whatever clients approach the service office for, even if they did not get that preferred solution, but they will be able to get an alternative help as we would understand where the client comes from... sometimes it is difficult to help a person while you are not in their shoes and haven't walked and understood the path that they walked.... So, I think we can do much better, and helping our clients might be very, very easy...” – SWP 12.

“The first thing that clients will benefit from is that social workers will become active... secondly it will not take a long time for a social worker to finalise the case... so this will also affect the working material that we use, such as the forms that will need to be changed to adhere to the African thought and way of doing things because it must make the life of a social worker much easier and also be transparent enough for a client to see and have trust that their problem will be solved in that department by the social worker...” – SWP 9.

The participants' accounts above demonstrate the need for African methods to be incorporated as possible interventions to specific cases that clients face. Mathebane and Sekudu (2018) mention that Afrocentric social work is based on the belief that African epistemologies, ideals, and values must be at the center of any analysis involving black African people. Participants explain the adoption of Afrocentric-based

supervision would empower them to use African epistemologies and cultural beliefs for professional use with clients, which might benefit clients. Furthermore, participants held the view that the benefits of Afrocentric-based supervision would be that it would enable clients to feel holistically accepted.

Acceptance is one of the basic principles in the profession of social work and cannot be done away with, even in the social worker-client relationship or supervisory relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. The need for holistic acceptance in clients remains an issue in practice with Africans who, for the longest time, have suffered displacement in terms of their culture, linguistics, traditions, or otherwise. Acceptance in the profession of social work should be understood as being more than an attitude but having goodwill towards the client, a lack of hostility and condemnation irrespective of the feeling that the worker has about the client and their problem (Timms, 2018; Heround, 2000). Hence the Afrocentric understanding of acceptance transcends the general acceptance of the client as an individual but holistically accepts the client as an individual that is within the collective of a particular context. The participants believe that through Afrocentric-based supervision, clients would feel more included, understood, and accommodated. The accounts of the participants are recorded below:

"...clients will look at us as people who are for them... they will never feel like outsiders when they approach our offices for help... it will be like going to their own neighborhood or going to their own facility that they own and confident that in times of difficulties, they will always receive help in that facility.... they will sense our genuineness our commitment and love for them... so it will be easy working with our clients... I think it will be a very empowering experience to clients and to us as well because we have dedicated our lives in this profession for them..." – SWP 10.

*"I think they will benefit highly as well because we have an African saying which state: **"Izandla Ziyagezana"** (hands cleanse each other)... so when the Afrocentric-based supervision is available, it will make that change fosters that unity, support, non-judgmental attitude and be able to accept people and being able to care enough and assist them genuinely... so it will be easy and they will benefit highly..." – SWP 4.*

“Sometimes it is difficult to help a person while you are not in their shoes and have not walked and understood the path that they walked. So, I think we can do much better and helping our clients might be very, very easy...” – SWP 12.

The participants’ accounts above reveal that their understanding of acceptance in clients is embedded in the culture and way of life of Africans, which is characterisable by African values and traditions. Hence, Afrocentric-based supervision benefits African clients in that they will receive services in a way that coincides with their way of life and also receive care of the best quality from social work practitioners and their organisations. Furthermore, an key informant, who is a practitioner in the DSD under the PCQA division, believes that the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision would add a significant shift in the profession as it would allow social workers to deal with real community issues as determined by communities rather than imposed. The key informant further describes that the supervisory process would be easy as a sense of purpose in being a social worker would be restored and the process of supervision would be given meaning. The key informant’s account is captured below:

“For a change our work as social workers, we can truly be informed by the challenges that the African people face in their communities without us imposing what we think on them. As I said before even when we develop policies, we hardly inform and consult them. So, this whole idea that African people have no say about their lives is the one that makes us not to be able to work with them well. I think we can also learn from our communities and clients on how best to work with them so even supervising social workers will be easy because it will be driven by purpose that aligns with the passion of each social worker of being a force for change...” – Key informant 02.

Deducing from the key informant’s response is that Afrocentric-based supervision is key in aligning social workers’ commitment to change and societal effective interventions in partnership with communities. Supervision is key in ensuring that social workers deliver services effectively and, at the same time, it allows for workers to be empowered, supported, and to develop. “Quality supervision of social workers has long been heralded for promoting positive worker and client outcomes through developing ongoing professional knowledge and skill, as well

as providing support” (Sewell, Kao & Asakura, 2021:283). In this subtheme, social work supervisors also produced their own perspectives as it relates to the benefits to be gained by clients through Afrocentric-based supervision.

5.3.3.3. Subtheme 3.3: Successes for the Social Worker - Social Worker Relationship

Social worker-to-social worker relationships become important for the functioning of the organisation and can affect the supervisory relationship and process directly or indirectly. In the DSD, supervisees are divided into groups depending on the number of supervisors available. Each supervisor oversees and supervises a group of supervisees who have to work together professionally. The conflict and misunderstandings that exist between the supervisees can affect the supervisor and the execution of supervision within the service office.

The positive outcomes of supervision that should benefit the clients can be sabotaged by the unprofessional manner within which social workers organise themselves. Conflicts amongst social workers can create an inconducive environment for the rendering of services to clients. Social workers believe that Afrocentric-based supervision could be advantageous in improving worker-to-worker relationships. Social workers and supervisors believe that the implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision in worker-to-worker conflicts will foster a spirit of unity. Participants believe that the success to be granted by Afrocentric-based supervision to the relationships amongst social workers includes a sense of family, teamwork, and ease of conflict resolution.

Family is an integral component of Afrocentricity. Family is not an isolated institution in the African context but is interconnected to the entire community and other systems. Mugumbate and Chereni (2019) explain that in the African context, the individual becomes part of a family, which is part of the larger community that exists in a certain environment that is part of a larger spiritual world. Therefore, in a workplace, participants believe that their relationships should exhibit that of a family because of the connection they already share with each other. Hence, they believe that Afrocentric-based supervision will bring forth foundations within which their relationship would be influenced by family values which will help them overcome lots of conflicts. The responses of participants are reported as follows:

“yes, for example, I am the only male social worker in this office with more than twenty social workers who are females... it is very hard to work with women, very hard... you have to be very careful even if you play or even when you are deliberating on something that pertains to work you have to be very careful because to them everything tends to be personal... so I think it will help to bring the sisterly and brotherly relationship...” – SWP 9.

“I think it can have a great impact... I do not know whether I would say fortunately or unfortunately at the DSD, social workers become congested in one place, and as we are here, we come from different backgrounds, homes, and environments... And we spend a lot of time together here because we start work at 8:00 to 16:30, so it means this is also my family... if we had that understanding, harmony, and friendship within us, we would have a good relationship, it would make things much easier... we would be united even if there is a critical case that has been reported, I would know that I have the support of the team and I can approach anyone...” – SWP 12.

“Yes, as colleagues, we spend most of the time together. Most of the time, we are inside the office, not in the communities, so in the end, we must see each other as family and have that level of respect and attitude towards each other... we are connected in a special way as we work together...” – SWP 11.

“We do not have social workers that fight with each other and help major, major, major conflict amongst them... I know many think that it is because they are of the same age group... most of our social workers here are young and of the same age group... so that communication amongst them is simple and easy that characterised by respect in this office we always emphasise respect to each other and to our clients... so I think it might strengthen their sense of family and unity.” - SWS 5.

At the center of the participants' responses is the belief that social workers share a particular connection that is familial in nature. According to participants, this connection should be nurtured as it has the potential to bring forth harmony, unity, and respect within the department. Afrocentric-based supervision is then viewed as the vehicle that could nurture that connection and help resolve social worker-to-social

worker issues. Evidently, from their responses participants do not eliminate the possibility of having disagreements or conflicts in a scenario where Afrocentric-based supervision is in place, but they believe that the conflicts would be better managed and resolved. Participants also believe that Afrocentric-based supervision would enable ease in conflict resolution.

Conflict in the workplace can sometimes be unavoidable and, thus, requires leadership and expertise to resolve it for the progress of the organisation and the creation of a conducive environment. Sureda, Mancho, and Sesé (2019) assert that effective conflict management improves teamwork, productivity, and the satisfaction of employees and helps to achieve good outcomes for clients or service users. The researcher decoded from participants' data that they do have challenges with regard to resolving conflict that happens amongst themselves. This has contributed to service offices having divided social workers because of personality, cultural, and religious clashes, amongst other factors. Social workers expressed that Afrocentric-based supervision will enable them to better manage and resolve these conflicts. The accounts of the participants are reported below:

"...so, this African supervision will be like an easy to comply with as social workers working for the same department and office... so now we will be able to understand how to handle our differences emanating work and be in a better position to solve them.... we will be respecting each other first as human beings and as people with the same vision and purpose... so now this Afrocentric-based supervision will be a guide on how would resolve these differences because it would be fostering understanding of how we should accept each other as different people as we are..." – SWP 3.

"I think when we have something that brings us together and emphasises our Africanness, it will be much better because we will be able to understand each other... sometimes our relationships can be very unprofessional, but we will be able to manage them in a way that is respectful and do not go overboard where we feel like we have to hate each other..." – SWP 10.

“I think the relationship with other employees will be enhanced... I think it would be good if I could put it that way... I believe that conflict will be minimised when we do have uniform Afrocentric-based supervision...” – SWP

5.

Managing and minimising conflict that sometimes exists amongst social workers is what participants emphasised. The ease of resolving conflict is believed by social workers to foster understanding, professionalism, and respect within the social worker-to-social worker relationship.

Participants also held a view that the introduction and implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision would contribute to the improvement of relationships amongst social workers. This view was dominant amongst social work supervisors. The relationships of employees seemed to be characterised by issues of discrimination emanating from religion, culture, and a lack of respect, according to supervisors. Hence, their belief is that the relationships between employees will be improved. Below are the accounts of supervisors:

“I think it can help then staff members to improve their relations within the organisation, but it would be more beneficial if it would be something that they will come to the field having been taught in the university.... So now, when they come to their field, we will also strengthen it, but it will be easier if it's something they already received from the university... I think it can also help improve the way services will be delivered to clients...” – SWS 2.

*“So the main benefit that we will have is that there will not be anyone who will be able or feel empowered to discriminate one another... the main source of discrimination comes from different beliefs; for example, if another social worker is a Christian while another maybe believes in ancestors and will come to the office wearing ‘**isiphandla**’ (goat or cow skin bracelet)... and then maybe that cause social workers to discriminate each other based on what they chose to believe in...” – SWS 3.*

“I think it would be that sense of family that would be fostered, which is currently not existing... at this point in time, you spend your entire day alone and close up your office because you do not want people to come and tell you their stories... there is no sense of family... I think if we adopt this approach

to supervision, the tensions that exist amongst workers can decrease.... the tension can be seen but can depend on whether people are knowledgeable enough because it starts from there as Afrocentric education can shift their thinking perspectives...” – SWS 4.

Based on the three responses of social work supervisors, the implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision is likely to resolve most of the issues that exist in the service offices of social workers. These issues impact how the services are delivered to clients and how the service offices operate. The impact of supervision that the social worker-to-social worker conflicts experience is enormous as they weigh pressures on social work supervisors. To supervisors, Afrocentric-based supervision will assist in resolving many of the problems encountered in social workers' relationships. Teamwork was deemed as one benefits to be gained from Afrocentric-based supervision once incorporated.

Teamwork is important for the success of any organisation. Riebe, Girardi, and Whitsed (2016) view teamwork as a working relationship between people influenced by nature, intensity, and depth of interactions, alongside psychological, communicative, and organisational factors. Participants believe that teamwork is eminent when Afrocentric-based supervision is in place as it will usher in an ease in resolving conflict, foster a sense of family amongst employees, and also bring forth necessary African values to achieve much-needed teamwork. The responses of participants are reported below:

“It can help us as workers to work as a team because at that point we will realise that we have one goal and one mission which is to help the disadvantaged people...” – SWP 6.

“I think it will make it easy for us to see each other as part of the bigger team, and we will have unity in the place of work... that will make us get used to each other and understand each other...” – SWP 13.

The responses of participants reiterate the need to team up for the purpose of ensuring effective work outcomes. This is in line with the assertion that Martono, Khoiruddin, Wijayanto, Ridloah, Wulansari and Udin (2020) made when stating that teamwork in an organisation is possible when it consists of people who are mutually dependent, motivated, and committed to achieving mutually agreed objectives. The participants

believe that Afrocentric-based supervision will enable a teamwork spirit to be realised in the DSD and within the service offices. Another subtheme that was canvassed in this theme was of the benefits to be gained in the supervisory relationship.

5.3.3.4. Subtheme 3.4: Successes for the Supervisory Relationship

The supervisory relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee is very critical in the development and sustenance of effective supervision. Beinart (2014) asserts that effective supervision is a result of the maintenance and growth of the supervisory relationship. In this subtheme, the researcher aims to understand participants' views on what they consider to be the benefits of Afrocentric-based supervision in relation to the supervisory relationship. At the center of the subtheme was the need to explore the impact that this kind of supervision might have between the supervisor and supervisee. A strong supervisory relationship predicts a range of positive outcomes, including increased supervisee disclosure and stronger supervision (Tangen & Borders, 2016). Both social workers and supervisors believe that Afrocentric-based supervision will benefit the supervisory relationship between the supervisors and supervisees.

Beinart (2014) explains that good supervision is founded upon the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee, who mostly bring into their relationship a set of different assumptions and attitudes based on their personalities, experience, socio-cultural backgrounds, and worldviews, as well as their hopes and fears of the supervisory process itself. Common amongst the social workers' and supervisors' responses was the assertion that Afrocentric-based supervision would improve the levels of understanding, cooperation, and respect in the supervisory relationship.

Understanding and cooperation have been viewed by participants as one of the most beneficial outcomes to be ushered in by Afrocentric-based supervision in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Participants believe that the supervisory relationship gets tainted by personality and cultural clashes and differences in belief preferences. Supervisory relationships are built on trust and respect (Mo & Chan, 2023). The respect and trust within which the supervisory relationship is built to foster understanding, which is important for successful supervision. The researcher below reports on the accounts of participants:

“The supervisor and supervisees can start to have a better understanding of each other because we will be grounded by our cultural values on how to relate with each other...” – SWP 7.

“It will be good because there will be no point where you fundamentally disagree because of personalities simply because the supervisor insists that on paper the procedure should be like this while I insist that no, according to my perspective as an African, things should be done this way... there won't be any personality and cultural clashes because we will be complementing each other...” – SWP 5.

“I think from that point I will be able to understand myself and my beliefs and my supervisors believes... but at the end of the day, what makes us come together this work and to ensure that the community we are serving receives best services, so I think if the supervisor understands me, and I understand him or her that can bring forth good results...” – SWP 13.

“There can be cooperation and understanding. Togetherness is very important, and it can be strengthened... This will make it to be a relationship characterised by togetherness and support as well. Perhaps you might find that you find it difficult for you as a social worker to conduct the group but now have your supervisor coming in to guide and support you through the process...” – SWP 1.

“I think it can assist social workers and supervisors in having a better understanding of each other and having that kind of relationship that is supervisory to improve... I think it will also make a social worker to be more flexible and freer in the presence of the supervisor because we have got that common understanding of each other because, at the end of the day, all the social workers we have here and supervisors are Africans...” – SWS 2.

“I think it can also assist in enhancing the relationship of the supervisee and the supervisor because it will be giving an opportunity for them to have more

understanding of the values... so it will make that relationship flow and reduce misunderstandings because of our differences in cultures...” – SWS 1.

“I think it can promote and develop an element which will make them be able to both participate in the process and not have that situation where a supervisor becomes a boss, and a supervisee has to take instructions from the boss... so if it has elements of being African it can then be able to grow the reciprocity while fostering appropriate respect...” – SWP 2.

Supervision is an important discourse in the profession of social work that has to bring forth positive outcomes for clients, organisations, and supervisees. Leung (2012) explains that supervision is critical for determining the quality of social services rendered to clients, the job satisfaction of social workers, and the professional growth social workers achieve. Therefore, there is a need for the supervisory relationship to be strengthened, and participants hold the view that Afrocentric-based supervision will be advantageous to the supervisory relationship by building a foundation of understanding to make the supervisory relationship cooperative. The participants also discussed the creation of harmonious relationships as one of the benefits of Afrocentric-based supervision.

Harmony is one of the fundamental features of Afrocentricity and is linked to interconnectedness, as discussed in Chapter Three. In a supervisory relationship, the creation of harmony is paramount for the successful supervisory process. Mo, Leung, and Tsui (2019) explain that to create a harmonious relationship, a supervisor needs to ensure a balance between authority and kindness to cope with different situations and the needs of supervisees. Supervisors believe that Afrocentric-based supervision will produce a harmonious relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. The researcher below reports the participants' accounts:

“Yes, yes because in the long run, we as supervisors tend to have our own preferences amongst social workers so that in the long run put us in a difficult position... you will find that over this social worker, I would prefer that social worker because that social worker is not strong headed but I think if we have this understanding of Afrocentric-based supervision things can be better... things will be harmonious including the entire system...” – SWS 4.

“I will say that it can bring a positive impact between the relationship of the supervisor and the supervisee... I would say it would be positive... you will find that social worker will bring something new to the people and also will receive something new from the people... yes so, the main benefit will be that the social worker and the supervisor learn from each other so that they can pave the way forward every time...” – SWS 3.

“I believe that the relationship between supervisor and social worker will be very much enhanced because being in this office for a long time, there are things that I have observed from the community and our context which younger social workers do and when you tell them not to without explaining to them why you might have a problem of having a conflict...” – SWS 5.

Participants believe that the harmonious relationship to be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision will enable social work supervisors to be empowered to overcome having preferences over the worker and be willing to learn from their supervisees. The harmonious relationship will create a supportive environment. The building of a positive supervisory relationship can support a supervisee to face challenges arising in their daily work (Mo & Chan, 2023). This would guarantee the effective delivery of social work services to clients in a manner that is empowering and context specific. Participants also held views that when Afrocentric-based supervision is executed it would be characterised by respect. Respect is one of the most traditional values of African societies, hence, it is personal for an African person. In Africa, respect means to “respect the other is to respect oneself” (Kanu, 2021:293). The profession is one of the basic values and ethical standards guiding social work practitioners toward clients and the provision of social services. Social workers believe that in the supervisory relationship, when influenced by Afrocentric values, respect will be reinforced, which will make supervision successful. The accounts of the participants are recorded below:

“I think it will create more respect for each other because there is nothing you can do with people who cannot respect you and people whom you do not respect... so respect is the foundation of everything...” – SWP 9.

“I normally say some other things you grow with them, and if you have not been taught respect from home, you will not be able to apply it to the streets or at work.... I think it can happen or may not happen depending on a person

whether they decide to apply what they have learned or not... I think respect is one of those values it can emphasise between a supervisor and supervisee.” – SWP 12.

“I think currently the relationships between our supervisors and as well as the social workers very much toxic difficult end unprofessional... I think when we adopt this kind of supervision, our relationships will improve and at least be better if there will be at a level of professionalism and respect... we say anything we like to our supervisors, and they say anything they like to us, and it is not helping because it causes strains in our relationships... we do not respect them, and they do not respect us we just do as we want because we need nothing from them except for their signatures in our reports, for them to sign our lives forms, and maybe clearance to work outside the office but we do not need anything much from them so we don't care and they do not care...” – SWP 10.

The general impression deduced from the participants is that the supervision experience is one characterised by a lack of respect between the supervisor and supervisee relationship. These levels of disrespect in the supervisory relationship destabilise supervision and affect the positive outcomes of supervision. Participants have a view that Afrocentric-based supervision will ground the supervision upon the foundation's respect as the basic value of Africans.

Similarly, the key informants were given the opportunity to comment on the overall subtheme. The key informant who is an experienced practitioner in the PCQA division of DSD, explains that the benefit of the Afrocentric-based supervision will encourage open and honest engagements and create space for supervisors and supervisees to constantly make reflections. The response of Key informant 02 is captured below:

“The relationship can be good. Remember the supervision we are talking about do not only need the supervisor to access the supervisee but it also needs that I should assess myself as a supervisor. The more I assess myself as a supervisor, I am able to allow the supervisee to do reflections on the supervision process we are part of and on me as a supervisor. So once the supervisee is empowered to make honest reflections on the supervisor and

the supervision process it will be a good. Supervision will be good. It will be good and well-implemented.” – Key informant 02.

The key informant’s response captures that Afrocentric-based supervision will allow for critical reflections to be done for the conducted supervision and for the role players in supervision (supervisor and supervisee). Karvinen-Niinikoski (2016:31) mentions that “supervision as a forum for reflection allows social workers to reflect their experiences and emotions and through critical reflection to understand them in the wider context of work and thus to look for alternative methods of reaction, action and agency”. The key informant’s response indicates that Afrocentric-based supervision will not only empower social workers to reflect on their experiences and emotions as they relate to their work but also on the supervision process and the supervisor who administers supervision. The next subtheme pertains to exploring the successes for the social work profession to be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision.

5.3.3.5. Subtheme 3.5: Successes for the Social Work Profession

As discussed in Chapter Two, social work supervision cannot be separated from the profession of social work. Hence, the profession of social work would directly solicit benefits from the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision as it would be suitable for the African context within which the social work is practiced. The profession of social work would, therefore, gain a much-needed shift from the utilisation of Western knowledge bases and models to Afrocentric models and knowledge bases. Schiele (1997) asserts that the profession of social work has been viewed as Eurocentric and precludes social workers from using traditional African philosophical assumptions as a foundation to consider new approaches to the social work practice. Embedded in Eurocentrism are deep-seated systems of oppression, racism, and denigration of African cultures and indigenous knowledge.

Through Afrocentric-based supervision, the general view of participants has been the same as the thoughts expressed by Manning *et al.* (2004), that social work practitioners can be emancipated to fight against oppression and racism and address human conditions. Participants were asked to provide their perspectives on what the benefits would be for the profession of social work if Afrocentric-based supervision was put in place in their department and service offices. Emerging from participants’ responses was that participants believed that the profession of social work could gain

the benefit of being a more African-centered profession, people-centered profession, and a profession that addresses human conditions.

Participants believe that the introduction of Afrocentric-based supervision in their service offices and the department will contribute to ensuring that the social work profession becomes more of an African profession. The accounts of social workers and supervisors demonstrates the implications of the current practice on the profession and the need for the profession to be made relevant in the African context. “Key elements of African-centered thought include promoting the fundamental goodness of people, recognising the importance of family and community, encouraging individual and collective functioning, understanding the role and significance of spirituality, and acknowledging the critical ways that people are interdependent” (Bent-Goodley *et al.*, 2017:03). Participants provided the following accounts:

“Eiy, that one is very deep... I do not have a direct answer because, if we can be honest, even social work is a profession adopted from the west and is not an African profession... Africans did practice social work because they were able to maintain and provide social welfare services to each other and for the benefit of the entire community... Well, I think it would in some way help the profession to be more African and maybe challenge it to be more African...”

– SWP 2.

“It can help a lot, especially because we have so many joint family discussions because it can help us a lot to reorient ourselves as Africans first and then be able to deal with African families more effectively... you will be able to listen and understand them from their cultural perspective which is recognised in law as well... so it will definitely help the clients...” – **SWP 8.**

“I think we can be able to work well as social workers... and I think the individualistic mindset where people are concerned about themselves and their possessions can decrease because according to the Ubuntu principle and Africanness, we emphasise collectiveness, togetherness and unity in purpose... it also an emphasis on cooperation and everything that serves as the basis for people to come together for good... yes we may have Ubuntu

as a whole can be incorporated in the profession which might be able to spread to communities...” – SWP 12.

“Eish social work will benefit us a great deal, I think... you know social work is not yet African as I said before we get our education from westernised universities... so I think having African-centered supervision recognised will create a shift in our social work profession in this country, I think so...” – SWS 1.

“The benefit will be to understand first what is indigenous to us rather than, for example, fighting to understand what has been taken in the United Kingdom and was brought to our context here... you see, we do not live the life lived in the United Kingdom we only live the life we live here... so now I think it will better because the social work theory and practice will be based upon what you know from your own context and country...” – SWP 3.

Noticeable from the participants’ responses is that participants opted to answer this question by aligning their responses with the historical developments of the profession of social work internationally and locally. This is depicted by the fact social workers revealed the effects of having a profession that has been adopted from the west and has not been transformed to fit the African context. Social workers, therefore, believe that the introduction of Afrocentric-based supervision will contribute to ensuring the Africanisation of the profession of social work and ensure that it fits the African context. Bent-Goodley *et al.*, (2017) explains that the Afrocentric approach to the profession of social work gives forth a fundamental organising principle for the development of social work knowledge on individual, community, societal, and global levels. The profession has been described as gaining the ability of being a truly people-centered profession.

Social work is a profession that aims to promote social justice and human rights by advocating for poor, marginalised, and vulnerable people. At the center of the profession is its commitment to serve the people regardless of their race, gender, religion, geographical area, and so on. Cox, Tice, and Long (2017) explain that social work’s unique purpose is to infuse change into the lives of individuals and into the community to reduce or eradicate the ill effects of personal distress and social inequality. This justifies the participants’ accounts of explaining the benefits of Afrocentric-based supervision in relation to its perceived contribution to the creation of

a more people-center profession. The following are the accounts that emerged from the collected data from participants:

“I think it will be a profession amongst the people...” – SWP 11.

“Yes, I think our dignity as a profession can come back. People take the social work profession for granted because they do not understand it. People will then understand social work for what it is because of how we present it to communities. As things stand, people take social work for granted, and people really do not care about how they treat us because they do not understand our profession...” – SWP 1.

“Yes, yes, there will be enormous benefits... people will trust us... people will trust our services and the profession... it will be easy to implement the social work we learned from university, which is at least about helping people rather than keeping on implementing things coming from the top. It is very fulfilling to see the client happy because they received the exact help they needed...” – SWP 6.

The social work practice that is trusted and embraced by communities and clients creates room for effective and efficient interventive relationships. When the profession is accepted by people because of its relevance to their needs and ways of life, it stands a chance to achieve much and drastically reduce the social ills that haunt African communities. Social workers will then become African-centered practitioners who are innovative and significant community cadres of change. Bent-Goodley *et al.*, (2017) asserts that African-centered practitioners understand how to utilise these ideas to inform innovative practices and programs and these practitioners will create best practices that highlight the significance and potential contribution of the individual, family, community, and group unit. Another view that emerged in this subtheme was the participants’ assertions of a profession that will encapsulate humanness (*Ubuntu*) centred.

As discussed at length in Chapter Three, *Ubuntu* is the fundamental value and principle that has guided the way how African people have led their lives for decades, if not centuries. The profession of social work that is centered around this principle depicts a commitment of the profession to accommodate the way of life of Africans.

Mugumbate and Nyanguru (2013) assert that *Ubuntu*, when applied to social work, stands for humane social work and using humane methods to achieve human goals; therefore, social workers have a twin responsibility of embracing *Ubuntu* and using the values of *Ubuntu* to influence their peers and clients. Participants provided the following responses:

“Social work profession is going to gain a lot... social work as a profession will be now be based on ‘Ubuntu’ (humanness)... social work will instill in itself the real definition of Ubuntu to itself and to the people... it will also help in ensuring that the profession fosters that sense of humanity and interdependence between human beings... ‘umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’ (a person is a person through other people)... so it will be easier for communities to share and to leave with each other if the profession is deeply rooted on Ubuntu...” – SWS 3.

“Yes, because I believe it will now rejuvenate that spirit of ‘Ubuntu’ (humanness)... currently the spirit of humanity in the profession is very low... but an African thought to supervision can revive the spirit of humaneness in such a way that it would be difficult to even pass a grandmother who seated outside the office who came to consult for a particular problem without even greeting her... so it will revive those things that have been faded away by the current system we function under at the moment... you will find that this client came to me, but I do not care if the end of the day... so it will make me able to have genuine caring for another person and able to respect human beings, and able to serve the people with genuineness...” – SWS 4.

Participants view *Ubuntu* (humanness) as an Afrocentric value that should underpin practice the practice and discourse of social work supervision to make it more African-centred. The DSD, through the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), declared *Ubuntu* as one of the guiding principles for the country’s social development agenda. Hence, participants explain that *Ubuntu* will be reinforced in the profession, which could make it easier for social work practitioners to relate well with their clients and communities. Moreover, social work practitioners may strategically utilise this African principle and value to bring communities together and join the collective fight against social ills. Participants also describe cultural relevance as one of the benefits in social

work profession that would be gained through the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Afrocentricity seeks to advocate for the recognition of African cultures as integral part of African life that needs to be acknowledged and be persevered. Participants believe that the social work profession would be more culturally relevant once Afrocentric-based supervision is in place. The accounts of participants are provided as follows:

“yes, I think the social profession can benefit a great deal because teaching African cultures is very important... you know, when students come to practice in this place, I normally go with them to do home visits, and the first thing I teach them is the local culture because one of the things that students have, when they come here, is these people and they know nothing about how to navigate to rural communities... we teach them on how to dress in communities, how to talk and how to relate with clients in their homes...” –
SWS 5.

“In terms of social work, I think it can help us to understand better the communities that we provide services to, and through that, social workers will understand community members when they come to us on how they function within their cultural contexts... and also we will be able to take what we have received from the university and also take from their cultural beliefs on how we can best intervene into their problems while at the same time being mindful of the law...we can look ourselves too as part of the communities that we serve...” –
SWS 2.

The participants' accounts reveal the extent to which culture becomes an important factor when working with clients and communities. Participants believe that more culturally relevant social work will be able to form a basic understanding and trust between social work practitioners and communities or clients. Another supervisor explained the need for African cultures to be taught in the social work curriculum since, even in practice, social work students are orientated to African cultures before they go to communities. The last emerging view that surfaced in this subtheme is that participants believe that the profession would better address human conditions.

Social work remains committed to resolving and preventing various problems (Williams, Prior, & Wegner, 2013). Social work, as a profession that advocates for social justice and emancipation of the voiceless and marginalised people and communities, has a duty to address human conditions. The Afrocentric approach to social work makes the profession less tolerant of social problems and promotes urgent and long-lasting solutions to these problems. Schiele (2017) asserts that a major implication of the Afrocentric approach to social work is that social problems are deemed intolerable, and people should sincerely endeavor to prevent, diminish, and eliminate them. Participants, as they were providing their perspective, asserted that some of the benefits that could be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision are the ability of the profession to address human conditions. Below are the accounts of participants:

“I think now social work has to adapt to today's lifestyles and ways of doing things in our communities, so I think there can be a positive change in social work when the African idea is incorporated..., and it can have an impact because in our communities when there is a crisis, and social workers have to be called in the community will brush us with a brush of people who are useless who spend time in their offices... we would shift from social work that is office based and administrative... we need to be on the ground where people are... social work can be transformed a great deal... even universities must transform and ensure that they train social workers to be community champions, not office administrators...” – SWP 15.

“I think there is less time to focus on the interventions we make and their effectiveness... I think we need to get back to what we entered social work to do... we were very passionate, understanding, and full of the love of our profession and people... but in the long run, our love for the profession got destroyed by circumstances that we never thought existed in the field... but we need to get back there and be genuine with the services we provide.... I do not know, but I think maybe this kind of supervision will enable us to create space for being effective in our work and be concerned with addressing people's problems where they are... we really enjoy seeing people getting help from us... it is very nice to have a client saying thank you to you for being

able to assist the client exceptionally...So I think it will help us go back there..." – SWP 10.

Participants' accounts reveal the systematic challenges they currently face in practice that prevent them from being as effective as they should be to their clients. On the other hand, social workers recognise the need for the social work profession to adapt to the context within which its African clients live. The need for the social work profession to be effective in addressing human conditions is undisputed. Hence social workers believe that Afrocentric-based supervision will be advantageous in improving the profession's ability to address human conditions. Furthermore, to the views and accounts of social workers and social work supervisors, key informants provided their input on the role in which Afrocentric-based supervision in the profession of social work once implemented will play. the Key informant 01, who is an Afrocentric scholar, believes that the deliberate use of Afrocentric thoughts, methods, and techniques is crucial to drive the profession towards decolonisation and Africanisation. The account of Key informant 01 is captured below:

"Okay. I am sure you know that social work is one of the professions which is suffering from national imperialism, in the sense that most of the methods and techniques and approaches that we use in Africa, are just a direct import from the developed countries. I am sure you are also familiar with decolonisation agenda that we have in social work where we are trying to decolonise the profession and I am also glad that you are using the Afrocentricity, or you are tackling everything from an Afrocentric perspective... I believe the most important thing there is a to call to decolonise and Africanise our mentality and our approach to social work in general. Yes, for example, we have spiritual issues in in our African continent, we have got ancestral spirits, we have got our avenging spirits from our religious systems. Supervisors also need to have an appreciation of those issues because a supervisee may indicate that they are being hounded for example, they have got an ancestral calling and you know, ancestral calling if the person being called, is resisting the calling, they can have some problems, they can, even some mental challenges..." – Key informant 01.

The key informant above believes that if supervision could be viewed on an Afrocentric lens in terms of its practice and implementation, Afrocentric-based supervision can be a driving force for the profession to move towards decolonisation and Africanisation through it being cognisant of African cultures, spirituality, and values. Thabede (2009:244) also explains that social work is a helping profession that “should understand as the basis of their intervention with African clients, consists of the following enduring and core cultural issue: openness to rational, irrational and spiritual categories of knowledge and being; belief in a Supreme Being which predates the arrival of Christianity; belief in the ancestors; belief in the spiritual nature of a person; belief in witchcraft, and culturally defined rites of passage”.

Additionally, Key informant 02 also explained that the profession of social work will gain recognition amongst African communities as it would be in a position to harness and integrate its practice from existing indigenous community knowledge and practices. The response of Key informant 02 is captured as follows:

“The social work profession can be easily marketable to the communities because the more it is African it becomes easy it allows us to talk and practice using the existing community practices and knowledge. For instance, when I am being delegated to go to explain foster care to rural grandmothers, the more I talk about ‘ukusisa’ (traditional patronage system) to them, I have already won them because I speak of something they know which they understand its significant to the concerned individual, wider family and society. So, when I do my work in an African way, I have to integrate those community practices that exist in those communities but when we talk about foster care to them and start talking about going to courts and all other processes, they completely shut us down because we are not yet relevant...”

– Key informant 02.

Key informant 02 believes that Afrocentric-based supervision would enable the profession of social work to be community-centered while allowing itself to use African indigenous knowledge to enhance its practice. For human development to be achieved, social workers have to understand that human development is interlinked with people’s cultural backgrounds and views on social problems as they are mainly caused by spiritual alienation and oppression (Thabede 2009; Schiele, 1997).

Therefore, participants' and key informants' responses reveal that Afrocentric-based supervision would play a critical role in eliminating and solving problems confronted in practice and social work education.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher presented the findings based on the first three research objectives of the study. These research objectives sought to examine social workers' and supervisors' conceptual understanding of supervision practice and the context in which it is implemented in the Department of Social Development; explore what social workers and supervisors regard as the Afrocentric elements/features of the Afrocentric-based supervision practice; and identify the participants' views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision. The data was thematically analysed and presented through themes and subthemes. Emerging from the analysed data were the three themes that includes participants' conceptual understanding of supervision and its context; Afrocentric features of Afrocentric-based supervision; and possible successes to be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision. The next chapter focuses on presenting findings based on the fourth research objective.

CHAPTER 6

POSSIBLE WAYS TO ACHIEVE AFROCENTRIC-BASED SUPERVISION

6.1. Introduction

The chapter is based on the presentation and discussion of results based on the fourth objective, which sought to “explore possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision,” which is also presented as a standalone theme. The data presented in this chapter was from the same sample that was discussed in Chapter 5, which includes social workers, supervisors, and key informants. Two subthemes emerged in this chapter and include: (1) DSD’s readiness to embrace Afrocentric-based supervision and (2) possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

6.2. Theme 4: Exploring Possible Ways to Achieve Afrocentric-based Supervision

Afrocentricity is a theory that is gaining momentum in the field of social work as it enables the profession in Africa to adapt to African realities and contexts. “At the heart of Afrocentricity is the transformative agenda and the goal of liberating African peoples from the constraints of their own thinking, which is a goal that emancipatory social work shares” (Sewpaul, Kreitzer & Raniga, 2021:283). This theme is based on the fourth objective of the study, which aims to explore possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision in the DSD. The theme aims to present the findings as they were gathered from the responses of the participants regarding what they would perceive to be possible ways to achieve the realisation of Afrocentric-based supervision practice in the DSD. Two subthemes emerged from the data collected from the participants. The first subtheme deals with participants' views based on their assessment of the DSD's readiness to embrace Afrocentric-based supervision. The second subtheme pertains to presenting participants' data on what they perceive to be possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

6.2.1. Subtheme 4.1: DSD’s Readiness to Embrace Afrocentric-based Supervision

Afrocentric-based supervision is believed to be advantageous for the DSD because of its unique features that were discussed in Chapter Three that could make the practice

of supervision in its implementation amicable to the African context and provide improved personal and professional working relationships that are crucial for effective social work supervision. Afrocentric-based supervision should model Afrocentric social in a sense that “Afrocentric social work promotes engaged social relationships that break down the boundaries of the helper and the helped, which in mainstream social work would be regarded as professional heresy or deprofessionalisation” (Mungai, 2015:69). The DSD, as an organisation in South Africa, is the custodian for the social welfare of the society and the delivery of social service and should be in a position where it can embrace the principles of diversity through the meaningful incorporation of Afrocentric values. As asserted by Booyesen (2001), truly diverse organisations should equally value Afrocentric values as they do Eurocentric values. With Africans accounting for almost 81 percent (Stats SA, 2021) of the South African population, Afrocentricity in social work supervision should be incorporated to ensure that it strengthens social workers’ efficiency and relevance in the provision of services while ensuring that they are supported when dealing with unique African problems. This subtheme presents data that emerged from participant accounts where they were asked to provide their assessment on whether they believe the DSD was ready to embrace the Afrocentric-based supervision. Most participants believed that the department was not ready, while some stated that the department was ready to implement Afrocentric-based supervision.

Amongst the dominating views of participants was that the DSD is currently not positioned to implement Afrocentric-based supervision. The participants believed so because they implicated the department as being beneficiaries of the currently in-place system. Alongside this they quoted a lack of resources and institutional and systemic issues. The accounts of the participants are presented below:

“No, they are not ready because they are benefiting from using and these are rhetoric western theories... I think those who love these theories to be done away with are its victims, but those who stand to benefit from them will defend them... it is only those who are victims and want to be treated equally who will advocate for it....” – SWP 09.

“Uhhmm, when I cannot say they are ready because number one, before you implement something, you need to put in place some resources for it to be implemented, for instance, training... it will also depend on the training, which I think is the most important because if supervisors are trained, then they are in the better position to enroll it across the offices...” – SWP 03.

“No, because they are not educated about it, but I think it is something that could be much better than what we are used to currently... at the moment, they are not ready because I can even tell you that our leave forms do not accommodate anything traditional... So, if I prefer to consult traditional healers for my ill health, where must I report that? When a social worker comes and requests advice on what leave form they must fill so that they will consult a traditional healer and take days off, I still do not know what to do...” – SWS 03.

“Ohh, I would say the readiness of the department is zero to none because, in my view, as much as the department has the majority of Africans, the department uses an autocratic approach, so everything that comes from the superiors must be done as is... So, we cannot disagree with anything that comes from the top, so now, if you can see, this African supervision would give the opportunity even to me, who has no power to be able to have a voice and participate in many things... but the in the department that we are in, if you do not have the power, you have no voice currently. But according to the policies on paper, they have made us feel like we have a voice, but in actual fact, we do not... so if they say jump, you must ask how high... they normally say, comply and complain later, but that later of complaining never comes... and if you complain they interpret it is as waging war...” – SWP 02.

“Ohh well, I do not think the department is ready, that is all I can say...” – SWP 10.

“To be honest, I do not think that DSD will be ready to embrace this one because our departments are politically operated... those big “gurus” are not concerned about people; hence, they do not come to them. They are only concerned with implementing policies the way that suits them and their political agendas, so DSD is not independent of politics, so it will not be able

to implement it... though it is good, I think it can benefit future generations...

– **SWP 15.**

The participants' responses reveal their assessment of their department's readiness to embrace Afrocentric-based supervision. The assessment of participants based on the department's systemic and institutional operations is underpinned by its policies and legislations. Indirectly, participants point to the failures of the Eurocentric or Western approaches that have determined the agenda of the DSD as an organisation. Adejumo-Ayibiowu (2022:381) explains that "the ineffectiveness of Western approaches in Africa makes a case for institutional reforms based on theories that are compatible with African culture." Hence, the participants' use of words such as "gurus" and "autocratic approach" signifies power dynamics and a distortion in the conceptualisation of professional roles. Schiele (2017) asserts that the emphasis that corrupts power within any organisation undermines the collective effort and interest of that organisation and can place people at risk of not only oppressing others but also less effectively fulfilling the humanity that is within them. Hence, participants assert that the department is not currently positioned to implement researched Afrocentric-based supervision.

While the dominating views from participants articulated is that the DSD as an organisation is not ready to implement Afrocentric-based supervision, the minority view shared by participants was that the DSD is ready to implement Afrocentric-based supervision. While the dominating views of participants cited systemic, institutional issues as reasons for the unpreparedness of the department to embrace the Afrocentric-based supervision, other participants saw these challenges as opportunities within which Afrocentric-based supervision could be implemented so that these challenges could be addressed. The responses of participants are provided below as they relate to the readiness of the department to embrace Afrocentric-based supervision:

"I think it is ready... mhhhh because I think they know the challenges we face in-as-much-as I do not know whether they will implement it now... but according to me there is a need." – **SWS 05.**

"Yes, I think they are ready because, if you can see right now, there is so much confusion, and that department is directionless, so probably even if they

know that there is something wrong, I think they do not even know how to correct it... but I think they are ready because even the department is confused and frustrated... and it is not enjoyable to be at work and to work so the environment is very much depressing whether you are a supervisor or supervisee..." – SWP 04.

"I think that as long as we can have relevant training, we can be ready... I really cannot see an obstacle that may prevent us from being ready as long as we are all trained and we are on the same page on how we can incorporate this African supervision... if we can all be equipped and be trained such that social workers and supervisors are on the same page when it comes to African supervision and understand it on how they can incorporate it in working with communities..." – SWS 02.

"Yes, it is ready; I can say that only if the department can be capacitated by being trained on this new supervision model because the department really is about assisting the people... the interest of the department is to see people receiving help from suffering so whatsoever that can help African people the department must be ready to embrace it... so I can simply say that department is ready..." – SWS 03.

"Ohhhh, wow! Is it ready?... I think they need to be ready because it is not like there is something that the Afrocentric-based supervision will fundamentally disrupt. It is just there to reinforce and strengthen practice, so I think...so I do not think it can be a problem..." – SWP 07.

Participants believe that training and capacitation are key to the readiness of the department to implement Afrocentric-based supervision. This capacity should be focused on by social workers and supervisors as those responsible and at the center of acting in the best interest of clients at the service office level. The underlying belief deduced from the participants is that there is a consensus that Afrocentric-based supervision would provide harmony, guidance, and direction on how the department must function. Emphasising this point was Key informant 01, who is an experienced professor and reputable Afrocentric social work researcher who asserted:

"I strongly believe that this Afrocentric-based supervision approach will help the department in its service delivery endeavors. I want to give you an

example of the ward-based approach that is used by the department or even the family services that are provided by the social workers. I think this approach is not very far and much detached from what the department is already doing. It is just a matter of amending there and there so that it suits the Afrocentric approach, but I think it would be possible and easy for the department to implement it, and it can even improve service delivery and the relationship between the supervisors and supervisees and also issues of labor turnover and other problems that the supervisees face in the workplace. I think if they can implement this Afrocentric model of supervision, it may also be useful in addressing some of the work-related challenges that the supervisees face at the workplace - things like absenteeism, alcoholism, and gender-based violence that the social workers face at the workplace. I think some of these issues can be reduced because some social workers might end up engaging in those things as defense mechanisms. Imagine you're a social worker, and you have an ancestral calling. Your supervisor at the workplace does not understand that you've got ancestral calling. They might end up being depressed and engaging in drugs and substance abuse and other things, and generally not being effective at the workplace. So, I strongly believe that this approach will improve the service delivered by the DSD.” –

Key informant 01.

The significance of the above key informant's response strengthens the voices of social workers and supervisors who believe that the DSD is in a state where it can implement Afrocentric-based supervision. The key informant also gives an example of the ward-based approach that is currently utilised by the department when it comes to servicing communities. The ward-based approach talks about the allocation of social workers according to municipal wards that they have to service within the jurisdiction of their service office. Therefore, the social worker can be encouraged to profile the community ward they are allocated to in terms of culture, religion, social problems, traditions, and general practices and then align the interventions with the contemporary context of that community. Furthermore, the key informant's response also highlights the advantages that Afrocentric-based supervision could bring about by eliminating workplace problems that end up affecting the personal and professional

spheres of employees. The next theme that emerged relates to participants' views proposing possible ways that could be used to attain Afrocentric-based supervision.

6.2.2. Subtheme 4.2: Possible Ways to Achieve Afrocentric-based Supervision

As detailed in this theme earlier, part of the main aim of the study was to propose possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. These proposed ways are believed to usher in a more Africanised and indigenised model of supervision in the profession of social work for the purposes of upholding cultural diversity and achieving inclusiveness. Schiele (2017) explains that "social work's emphasis on cultural diversity and competence and its concern over the disproportionate representation of Africans in many social problem categories rendered it a very probable professional location for the further exploration of Afrocentric ideas." Hence, the exploration of these proposed ways serves as an important step to reimagining the discourse and practice of social work supervision within an Afrocentric lens. This subtheme presents findings emanating from participants' accounts relating to what they believe the possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision should be. Participants' responses emphasised the need for extensive research on the phenomenon of Afrocentric-based supervision, the provision of training, engaging in widespread consultation, and influencing policy transformation, amongst others.

Participants view research as key to the successful uncovering of knowledge of Afrocentric-based supervision. Mungai (2017) outlines that Afrocentric-based research should also hold the objective of addressing problems that are confronted by African people. Therefore, at the center of engaging in extensive research should be the need to address the problems faced by African people and the deliberate use of social work supervision to promote the best interests of African clients. Hence, Afrocentric research on Afrocentric-based supervision should be carried out from African peoples' perspectives by taking into consideration their culture, history, experience, and knowledge (Davis, Williams, & Akinyela, 2010). Participants believe that conducting extensive research on Afrocentric-based supervision should be the first step towards the scientific knowledge production of what Afrocentric-based supervision should entail. The responses of participants are reported below:

“Well, for me, I would say the first thing should be research. The department must do research on Afrocentric-based supervision so that they understand what it is and weigh its benefits against the current supervision framework...”

– SWP 13.

“I think the first thing is to conduct research on the needs of our communities. And then from that research, we can look at the services that we are offering and have a way of better providing them... and then have a proper way incorporating services that are at the heart of our communities with the services that we already offer...” – **SWP 06.**

“I think the only thing that must be done is to do research. Research must be about how this kind of supervision will work out in practice...” – **SWS 10.**

“Okay, number one, I think doing research should be the first step. You must make sure that you are able to sell to the national leadership of the department this new African supervision so that it can be dispersed across provinces to a point where offices can be in a position to implement it... for the department to switch to African centered supervision will require some research and mobilisation...” – **SWP 03.**

The responses of participants amplified the importance of Afrocentric-based research in uncovering the depths of Afrocentric-based supervision and its benefits. Sherr (2006) explains that Afrocentric social work research eliminates human oppression and promotes human potential, ascertains African culture through its methodology, and advocates for the holistic analysis of its participants. The research on Afrocentric-based supervision is crucial to ensure the incorporation of Afrocentric features, as previously discussed in Chapter Three. On the same note, Key informant 02, who is an experienced social worker and social work policy developer in the PCQA division in the DSD, emphasised the participants’ responses that research is crucial for the development of Afrocentric-based supervision. The key informant provided the following response:

“I am glad that for a change, I am interviewed on a study about supervision in an African context. I have never had that experience before; in fact, we don't

even have any research that deals with African supervision in our department. As a result, we do not have that conversation even when we do our consultations for the review of policies and frameworks... so if we want to develop African supervision, we need to do more research on the needs of beneficiaries using this African theory and then structure our supervision to suit the needs of our clients... I know that when we do that, we will also be gaining more understanding of social workers themselves because they are Africans in their majority... maybe we will also get an understanding on why we have been having these challenges of implementing this Framework..." –

Key informant 02.

The significance of the response of key informant 02 is that it demonstrates the gaps in the practice of the DSD's currently in place supervision, where supervision has been accepted and practiced through the Western/Eurocentric lenses rather than the Afrocentric lens. Research on Afrocentric-based supervision would benefit the profession of social work and social workers, as has been described in Chapter Five. The benefit of conducting this research is captured by Davis *et al.* (2010:340), who explains that "when the Afrocentric perspective is applied to social work research, such a perspective can help generate information on the implications of human behavior and social events in the lives of people of African descent." Therefore, engaging in extensive scientific research on Afrocentric-based supervision could help adapt social work to the needs and objectives of the African people and people of African descent, as suggested by Mungai (2015). However, other views that emerged amplified the need to engage and consult relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement and consultations were at the core of some of the views that emerged in the accounts of participants. Social work is a people-based organisation that exists amongst communities with diverse needs and groups that it seeks to serve. Carey (2014:2417) explains that social work as a profession based on communities "has always drawn upon disparate methods, theories, practices or beliefs and serves different clientele groups and needs and has in the past tended to be scattered around different sectors, from organisations within the voluntary sector to charities, private and state sector providers." Participants' findings reveal that they believe that engaging in widespread consultation with stakeholders can assist in ushering in a new

Afrocentric-based supervision model. Participants believe that consultation and stakeholder engagement should be partaken in with various partners that are relevant and key in ensuring that much knowledge is harnessed to ensure its effectiveness in implementation. These stakeholders include African communities, traditional leaders and experts, social workers, supervisors, DSD management, and political officials. The responses of participants are as follows:

“...it needs to be proposed and accepted by the top level of our department so that it can be allowed to come down to us because if our superiors are the ones who understand it first, they will appreciate the need for its implementation, impact, and outcomes in terms of assisting people as we are being directed by the mission and the vision of the department... so now it will be clear how does this Afrocentric-based supervision align with the objectives of the department...” – SWP 04.

“I think we must start at the local level and also consult with chiefs and traditional leaders because they are the ones who run your communities together with councilors... traditional leadership should be consulted so that they can produce guidance on how African thought can be pursued in practice because it is what they do every day...” – SWP 13.

“I think we should start with things such as partnering with the chiefs and traditional leadership of specific areas...” – SWS 05.

“Firstly, I think if it can be adopted by our superiors at the higher level, like our head of department, then I think it will be them who can then assist us in bringing it into full implementation in our service offices where we function because, at the end of the day, we are the ones who are dealing with communities so it has to come to our level... but it must be introduced at the higher level...” – SWS 01.

The creation of meaningful partnerships with stakeholders who will ensure sustainability and the advancement of Afrocentric-based supervision will ensure

successful and effective implementation. Participants believe that these partnerships and consultations should largely include traditional leadership, who are considered in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as the custodian of culture and tradition. Ndlovu and Dube (2012:58) mention that "traditional leaders as custodians of culture are expected to be knowledgeable of the culture of their people and leaders as custodians of culture should be able to interpret the knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, and customs of their society." Therefore, participants believe the inclusion of traditional leadership would give content and knowledge on what African supervision is supposed to be like. Furthermore, the response of Key informant 02, who is an experienced social worker and an employee at the PCQA division of the DSD, explains that the consultation that needs to unfold should be done widely and broadly to include all relevant stakeholders. The key informant's contribution is captured below:

"I have mentioned earlier that our consultations when we did this Supervision Framework were not people-centered but were internal and focused on a few elite stakeholders. It is always like we spoon-feed people on what should happen... I think this is the case with most of our policies in this country... but for this African supervision to be successful, we need to gather information from the people and communities... we need to be updated on how African life has evolved and how African people lead their lives as we speak so that we can be specific to their issues and know how social workers should be supervised in certain issues that involve more cultural and traditional orientation. Beyond this, we must not neglect our kings, queens, and traditional authorities because they possess knowledge of how certain cultural cases are dealt with... at the same time, we live in a democratic country, so we need to recognise our politicians and how they influence and formulate the policies... in short, I am trying to say we need to consult widely and broadly..." – Key informant 02.

The response of the key informant above indicates that there have been shortcomings when it comes to consultations that were made before the formulation of the supervision framework by the SACSSP and DSD (2012). The key informant also reveals that what should be unique in the formulation of Afrocentric-based supervision should be that the consultation should be broad and include African people and communities, traditional leadership, political leadership, and DSD managers and

directors. The wide and broad consultations should ensure that implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision is guided by the needs of African people and values and the features and tenets of Afrocentricity as a worldview. Therefore, when doing consultations on Afrocentric-based supervision, they must be holistic and centered around the interests of African people. Moreover, policy transformation was identified by participants as key to the successful development and implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision.

Social work as a practice-based profession is governed by policies and legislation. Policies and legislation set the tone for the mandate of social workers and the DSD on how social services should be delivered to clients and communities and this, in turn, influences the policies and frameworks based on social work supervision. Schiele (1996) explains that interventions should encourage and bring into existence socially caring policies and patterns of social behavior that economically and politically advance all people and enhance their positive potential. Therefore, when Afrocentric-based supervision is incorporated into social work, supervision places the profession in a position to advance the core principles of human rights and social justice. Bent-Goodley, Fairfax, and Carlton-LaNey (2017:04) state that "Afrocentricity is not just a practice principle or idea; it is also a way of thinking, acting, and living to advance social justice and human rights." Therefore, participants' emphasis on policy transformation and restructuring means that they are calling for a shift from policies and legislation influenced by Western/Eurocentric models and knowledge to policies and legislation centered on Afrocentricity. Hence, the participants' responses focused on the Supervision Framework. The participants shared these accounts in relation to the transformation and restriction of the current social policies and legislation:

"The department has to restructure the Supervision Framework to accommodate Afrocentricity..." – SWP 09.

"...start with the Supervision Framework... as I am saying, I have never been a supervisor, but I know that there is something called the Supervision Framework, so that is where we should start... we must change the framework so that it can also accommodate these type of supervision..." – SWP 05.

“Those in authorities must be willing to come where people are on the random days so that they may see what people are going through so that when they discuss new policies that will be in the best interest of African people...” - SWP 15.

“I think we should start with policies... There must be policy transformation in the department... it must not be unethical to advise our clients to consult African traditional healers and to recommend to them African solutions to their problems...” – SWP 10.

The responses of participants revealed that there is a need for the restructuring and transformation of the supervision policy from within the department to accommodate Afrocentricity. The supervision framework developed by the SACSSP and DSD (2012) is regarded by participants as the department’s supervision policy that guides conceptualisation and execution of supervision. To bring more context to what the participants have alluded to, Key informant 03, who is a professor in social work with a reputable scholarship in social work supervision, gave forth this assertion on the impact of legislation and policies in conceptualising and practicing social work supervision:

“... since you are talking about Afrocentric-based supervision, then you are referring to supervision that is taking place in Africa. Now, Africa is a big continent. It is like one can talk about American supervision or European supervision. I think when you are bringing concepts or environments into supervision, you need to be really context-specific because supervision does not take place in isolation; supervision takes place within an organisation that is governed by policies and legislation. So, I think that is what is very important when one is taking into consideration how I define supervision because if you define supervision in, for instance, the New Zealand context or Australian context, it is very much more clinical, but many of these countries do not have a Social Work Act as we have in South Africa. Now, if you also think of the rest of Africa, South Africa is the only country that has the Social Work Act that is regulated or may be one of the only countries I think others are still emerging; then we also have the SACSSP, we've got a Counsel that is a

governing social work. So that also contributed to the definition of how we defined supervision in South Africa...” – Key informant 03.

The significance of the response by Key informant 03 is that in the South African context, social work supervision is influenced by these policies that set the tone for how it should be defined and practiced. As mentioned in the previous chapters, these policies and legislations are centered mainly on Western/Eurocentric models, epistemologies, and paradigms that characterise the content of social work education in Africa. Hence, the call from participants for the formulation of a supervision policy that accommodates Afrocentric thoughts, ideas, and perspectives. The Afrocentric-based supervision policy is deemed by participants as one that advocates for more attention to be placed on system accommodation and system-replacement models of intervention (Schiele, 1996). Also, Bent-Goodley *et al.* (2017) describe the Afrocentric-based policy-making process as an interdependent process that intermingles by taking place between people regardless of whether or not it was specifically designed for that population. Therefore, the Afrocentric-based policy would not marginalise people outside of African descent and cultures. Beyond the policy transformation and restructuring, participants held views that the provision of training and education should be regarded as one of the integral ways towards the successful development of Afrocentric-based supervision.

Some participants believe that the successful implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision depends on the roll out of educational programs and training that is aimed at capacitating social workers and supervisors on Afrocentric-based supervision. Afrocentric-based supervision training and education will be multicultural in nature and is essential to "correct the distortions, to disseminate and formally legitimise the worldview, history, and contribution of historically oppressed groups, and to destroy the myth that white men primarily hold rights to world history, culture, philosophy and practice" (Schiele, 1997:812). Educating and training social workers and supervisors, specifically, is important as the currently in-place social work supervision is practiced at the service office level where social workers and supervisors' function is not conducive. Participants' accounts in relation to the provision of training and education are recorded below:

"I think that is the only way to see if people know about this Afrocentric-based supervision is gaining understanding through training... develop refresher courses to ensure that there is the continuous development of staff members on this kind of supervision. I think the main is how do we apply this on the work environment that we are in, clients, supervisors, and supervisees as well..." – SWP 07.

"Social workers should be trained in alignment to the Afrocentric amicable policies and their curriculum reflecting in detail Afrocentric methods..." – SWP 10.

"It is that we need to understand the cultures, and that will mean we must be educated or trained... it has to be documented, and there must also be trainings that are relevant that can also help us on how we can do it... as I think that even those at the university, they need to receive that kind of training from the curriculum so that when they come to the office or to the practice, they are aligned with what is happening in the in the field... so it must be put in some of their modules..." – SWS 02.

"The first thing is to educate supervisors and superiors about African supervision on what it is... so they need to know what we are doing and what we are talking about when you talk about an African supervision model..." – SWS 03.

The four participants above seem to understand the role of education and training in the field of social work and also how it translates to practice. The participants' understanding of education and training is in line with the understanding of social work education, and training has played a part in ensuring that people of African descent remain marginalised and disempowered. "In the past, social work training was skewed towards the maintenance of the status quo of colonial apartheid and did not provide practitioners with the relevant skills to deal with the problems of the majority African population, which was mainly disempowered and disenfranchised" (Mamphiswana & Noyoo, 2000:21). Participants recognise the role of education and training that is in line with Afrocentricity to be driving the implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision. Furthermore, Key informant 03, who is a professor and a renowned

scholar in the field of social work supervision, called for the need to decolonise the supervisors' minds. The key informant recognises the colonialism that is still prevalent in the execution of social work supervision. The key informant provided the following account:

“We need to decolonise supervision but decolonise the supervisors’ minds...This is what it is because of what I found in the workshops that I have been doing for training, then everybody is sitting and when I’m starting with the clinical social workers and say, this is what we need to do, et cetera, et cetera... give them three months, you do research, then they still continue: ‘I am the boss,’ ‘I supervise you, you should do what I am telling you to do .’You know, it is all about your salary. It’s all about your performance appraisal and things like that. So, it is still this colonial mind the moment when we are getting into power and how to handle this power struggle. I think that the biggest obstacle for us to really get to Afrocentric-based supervision is the state of mind, the power disparities, and how to use the power that is invested in you and by being a supervisor. So, for me, it is not about the supervisee, but it is about the supervisors...” – Key informant 03.

The response of the key informant above reflects the prevalence of colonialism that still exists in the minds of supervisors and still affects social work supervision, hence, the need to decolonise. These colonial traits in the minds of supervisors are evident through how they perceive and exercise the power they have over those they supervise. However, the researcher argues that decolonising the minds of social work supervisors is fundamental to decolonising and Africanising the models, epistemologies, approaches, and frameworks that underpin supervision knowledge and policies. The decolonisation and Africanisation of supervision knowledge and frameworks is crucial as it provides the foundations for which supervisors can conceptualise, understand, and execute their power effectively. Lastly, participants recognise the implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision as the final step in ensuring what is integral.

Participants believe that there should be an intentional incorporation and execution of Afrocentric-based supervision across the service offices of the DSD. Schiele (2017) explains that the incorporation of the Afrocentric paradigm in the profession of social

work marks an important development towards rendering the profession more culturally relevant. The Afrocentric-based supervision not only strengthens the profession's ability to be culturally relevant but also assures the delivery of social services in a manner that is relevant to the clients and the communities they serve. The participants share the following accounts pertaining to the implementation of incorporation and execution of the Afrocentric-based supervision:

“... incorporating this African way of supervising will be very important. It will change the way we work and relate to each other... we have implemented it here in the office...” – SWP 11.

“To implement it should be the priority once it is there... I people will be able to differentiate between exercising power unjustly and providing leadership...” – SWP 02.

“Have a proper way incorporating it to influence how we render services that are at the heart of our communities within the programs that we already offer... Incorporate Afrocentric-based supervision and then remove the targets or put targets in accordance to community needs...” – SWP 06.

Participants believe that the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision is fundamental for gaining solutions to problems already confronted in practice. Power issues, role clarity, the restructuring of internal systems for accountability, and focusing on a client-based approach are some of the issues that participants believe could be solved by the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision. Schiele (2017:24) explains that the "Afrocentric paradigm in social work is a recent attempt to affirm and codify the values and cultural practices of traditional Africa into a model for positive human transformation and possibility". The views of the participants have been supported by Key informant 01, who is in a professoriate position and has reputable scholarly contributions in the field of Afrocentric and indigenous social work. The accounts are as follows:

“Okay, for me, Afrocentric-based supervision itself should be possible to implement, but you know, given our systems in Africa, it may not be easy in the sense of how policymakers are usually made by politicians and other key stakeholders. So, for the Afrocentric approach to supervision to be adopted by the DSD, it has to begin with sensitising the directors and the like, and

there is a need for buy-in from them. Otherwise, if you do not have buy-in from policymakers and decision-makers, it will not be adopted. So, for me, that will be the starting point is to sell the idea to key stakeholders within the DSD, but it is something that is not alien to us if we are to present it in a good way to them. It is something they can easily adopt. I see it very possible to adopt it, and even the social work supervisors, the supervisees, and clients, I am sure they should be happy with it...” – Key informant 01.

The response of the key informant above demonstrates the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision for execution in the DSD. The key informant recognises that for the incorporation of Afrocentric-based supervision to be successful, several stakeholders have to be consulted and mobilised to ensure that key stakeholders endorse this kind of supervision. However, the key informant concedes that Afrocentric-based supervision would be advantageous for the DSD, and its implementation was deemed possible with benefits for social work supervisors, social workers, clients, and the department itself. Hence, the call made by participants that Afrocentric-based supervision, once available, should be implemented across all service offices.

6.3. Conclusion

The chapter focused on presenting data and providing comprehensive discussions that sought to answer the fourth theme of the study. The theme sought to explore possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. Two subthemes emerged from the main theme and were discussed as they emerged in the analysed data. The two subthemes were (1) DSD's readiness to embrace Afrocentric-based supervision and (2) possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. The next chapter provides the study's summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations as they arose from the data presented in previous chapters. The main findings, conclusions, and recommendations are informed by the objectives of the study namely: (1) *to examine social workers' and supervisors' conceptual understanding of supervision practice and the context in which supervision is implemented in the DSD*; (2) *to explore what social workers and supervisors regard as the Afrocentric features of the Afrocentric-based supervision practice*; (3) *to identify the participants' views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision*; and (4) *to explore possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision*. The chapter begins by providing a summary of the previous chapters and is followed by the conclusions and contribution of the study to the body of knowledge. After that, the chapter presents the recommendations.

7.2. Summary of the Study

From the background section, and threading throughout the study, is the notion that supervision is at the heart of the social work practice (Pecora *et al.*, 2010; Tsui, 2004). The main problem identified by the study was that there has been scholarship in Afrocentric social work but with little or none on Afrocentric-based supervision or Afrocentric-based supervision. This has been evidenced by no literature that talks directly about Afrocentric-based social work supervision, as most sources only refer to Afrocentric social work practice. The study's main aim was to use an Afrocentric perspective to critically analyse social work supervision in the DSD, with the view of proposing possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. The study had four research objectives with subsequent research questions that were answered.

The study provided an extensive literature review, as detailed in Chapter Two of the thesis. The literature review helped the study to note scholarship that has been done in the field of social work supervision. Notable was that there had been no specific literature that became a direct reference to Afrocentric-based supervision though there has been notable advancement of Afrocentric social work scholarship in South Africa

and Africa in particular. However, the literature review focused extensively on providing the historical developments of social work supervision, from an international level to the South African context. The mandate of the DSD was discussed, and the supervision within the department was extensively discussed. The Supervision Framework, as the primary document that outlines the conceptualisation and implementation of social work supervision in South Africa, particularly in the DSD, was also discussed, wherein the need for Afrocentric-based supervision was argued for.

The study noted the extensive contribution of the DSD and SACSSP by generating policies and strategic plans, including the Supervision Framework, which sought to transform the practice of social work and supervision. However, the argument that has been central in this study was that the currently in place Supervision Framework is not aligned with Afrocentricity and then contends that the incorporation of an Afrocentric perspective can add value and enhance the practice of supervision in DSD. The disjuncture of the Supervision Framework with Afrocentricity comes out clearly in the expectations articulated by the participants, such as the need to connect and engage in substantive experiences of the social workers in the field, including the need for supportive and professional growth.

The study was underpinned by the Afrocentric theory and critical social theory, as discussed in Chapter Three. The Afrocentric theory is the main theory as it translates itself to be the mode of thought and action where the researcher puts Africans' interests, perspectives, and values into the centre (Kumah-Abiwu, 2016). Afrocentricity's historical overview, features, and application in the study were detailed. Critical social theory supported Afrocentric theory. Critical social theory is a theory of reflection that interrogates social development issues from the standpoint that they become obstacles to human growth (Granter, 2002). The similarities of these theories are that they both advocate for social justice, emancipation, and advocating for oppressed, marginalised, and silenced populations. The combination of these theories helped to advance the study in critically analysing social work supervision through the lenses of Afrocentricity.

The study adopted the qualitative interpretive research approach, as described in Chapter Four. An exploratory-descriptive design was adopted in the study to solicit the in-depth understanding and experiences of participants. Twenty participants were

purposively sampled at the KZN DSD at the Northern Cluster under the uMkhanyakude District and the eThekweni Cluster under the eThekweni Metropolitan. Fifteen social workers, five social work supervisors, and three key informants were interviewed using in-depth semi-structured interviews. In the process preceding the recruitment of participants, ethical clearance was solicited from UKZN, and a gatekeeper letter was solicited from the KZN DSD. Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews where ethical standards for conducting the research, such as confidentiality, no harm, respect, and others, were maintained. Participants were enabled in an environment where they could share their experiences and perspectives in a way that allowed them to articulate in isiZulu, which helped the researcher gather information-rich narratives. The researcher later translated the interviews of the participants into English and then transcribed them.

Data was thematically analysed, as Terreblanche *et al.* (2006) proposed. Observable from the study is that the participants' narratives were at the center of the analysis. The findings emanating from the analysed data are detailed in Chapter Five. Four themes and subsequent subthemes emerged from the participants' data. Notable from the findings is that participants described Afrocentric-based supervision as culturally based, community-centered, holistic, and *Ubuntu*-centered. Beyond the participants' descriptions of Afrocentric-based supervision, findings revealed that Afrocentric features of social work supervision are characterised by African cultures and traditions, spirituality, humanity (*Ubuntu*), and interconnectedness. The need for extensive research on the phenomenon of Afrocentric-based supervision, provision of training, engaging in widespread consultation, and policy transformation were some possible ways participants proposed to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. The study's findings outlined that there is a need for Afrocentric-based supervision.

7.3. Presentation of Conclusions

The main conclusions presented in this chapter are drawn from Chapter Five, where the findings were presented. The chapters presented four themes linked to the study's objectives.

7.3.1. Objective 1: To Examine Social Workers' and Supervisors' Conceptual Understanding of Supervision Practices and the Context in Which Supervision is Implemented in the Department of Social Development

The first objective explored participants' conceptual understanding and context of the supervision practice currently implemented in the DSD. The supervision practice unfolding within the DSD across all its service offices is sanctioned by the Supervision Framework, developed by the SACSSP and DSD in 2012. The data presented showed that both social workers and supervisors had a limited understanding of supervision, as articulated in the Supervision Framework. The data presented reveals that most social workers and supervisors have not read the Supervision Framework, hence their lack of understanding of supervision. Hence, the conceptualisation of supervision is not consistent with the interplay and balanced execution of the three supervision functions, namely administration, support, and education. Hence, they conceptualise supervision as a process that should be characterised by support, guidance, and education.

The data presented reveals that the implementation of social work supervision in the DSD largely resembles managerial supervision rather than professional supervision. This finding is in line with the findings by different local scholars in the field of social work supervision, such as scholars Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015), Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016), and Shokane, Makhubele, Shokane, and Mabasa (2017). The findings reflect that supervision is preoccupied heavily with the administrative function and ultimately overlooks the supportive and educational functions. The consequence of supervision learning being characterised by managerialism is that it causes the supervision experience of social workers and supervisors to be more harmful than helpful (Chibaya & Englebrecht, 2022). Though supervision was recognised by some to have a positive impact despite its challenges, the majority of evidence presented through narratives reveals that social workers and supervisors are having negative experiences with supervision.

Furthermore, the theme also focused on exploring participants' conceptual understanding of Afrocentric-based supervision, which is the main focus of the study. The findings presented in this theme reflect that participants mainly conceptualise supervision that would be Afrocentric-based as one that is culturally relevant,

considers African spirituality and traditions, is people and community-centered, and is characterised by humanness and holistic. This conceptual understanding of participants is in line with the features of the Afrocentricity discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Notable from the participants' articulation was a limited understanding of Afrocentricity as a term and theoretical framework, which affected how they answered questions. This may be attributed to a lack of incorporation of African epistemologies and approaches in the curriculum of social work education and practices. However, the data presented by the key informants concluded that Afrocentric-based supervision should not completely detach itself from Western/Eurocentric models epistemologies of social work supervision but should indigenise and Africanise them so that they may be relevant for application in the African context.

7.3.2. Objective 2: To Explore What Social Workers and Supervisors Regard as the Afrocentric Features of the Afrocentric-based Supervision Practice

In this study, it was important to capture the views of participants on what they would consider the key features of Afrocentricity that should characterise Afrocentric-based supervision. The findings revealed that participants described the features of Afrocentric-based supervision similarly to how they conceptualised Afrocentric-based supervision. Hence, participants described the features of Afrocentric-based supervision as one that should recognise the African cultures and traditions, as well as be community-centered, holistic, and *Ubuntu*-centered. The description of the features of the Afrocentric-based supervision by participants is consistent with the key informant's description as they concluded that Afrocentric-based supervision should be informed by justice, truth, commitment, peacefulness, calmness, and community. These features are consistent with what Reviere (2001) describes as the canons of Afrocentricity. Findings reveal that issues emanating from cultural differences, spirituality, and traditions are the cause of internal conflict and ethical dilemmas within the supervisory relationships and within the organisation.

The findings reflect that social work supervision that is currently implemented in the DSD is not linked with Afrocentrism. Social workers and supervisors describe the in-place social work supervision in service offices as mostly relying upon Western approaches, models, and epistemologies. Hence, participants concluded that there is

a need for research, consultation with traditional leaders and communities, introduction of Afrocentric education in social work training institutions, and proper documentation and officiation of Afrocentric-based policies and frameworks. Participants concluded that these are critical for the realisation of Afrocentric-based supervision.

7.3.3. Objective 3: To Identify the Participants' Views of Possible Successes that May Be Presented by Afrocentric-based Supervision

The third objective sought to explore what participants and key informants believe to be the benefits of Afrocentric-based supervision once implemented at the service office level. At the DSD, as the organisation and a workplace for social workers and supervisors, findings reflect that Afrocentric-based supervision will better position the organisation to deliver effective services to African communities. In this way, social workers and supervisors revealed that DSD as an organisation would benefit from understanding the communal life of African communities and be better positioned to harness it to fight problems confronting communities.

In relation to the perceived advantages of Afrocentric-based supervision for the successes to be gained by clients, the findings reflect that there is a consensus that social workers will be better positioned to be client-centered and provide quality and holistic services. Participants also concluded that they will be empowered to use African methods to understand and intervene in clients and societal problems. Furthermore, participants alluded that principles of acceptance will be easy to practice, which is important in encouraging reciprocity, which is central to the Afrocentric-based helping process (Schiele, 1996).

The findings depict that Afrocentric-based supervision will present advantages for relationships between social workers in the organisation, which is fundamental for a healthy and productive environment. Participants mentioned that the Afrocentric-based supervision will empower and enable them to better manage and resolve conflicts that exist within the workplace because the afrocentric features discussed in Chapter Two will be practiced. Participants concluded that these successes would assist in improving relationships amongst social workers and the creation of a teamwork spirit, which is critical for personal and organisational success.

In relation to the successes to be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision in the supervisory relationship, participants revealed that the supervision would improve the understanding of cooperation in the relationship. Schiele (1997:813) mentions that "in Afrocentric social work, the emphasis is on an emotional connection between the helper and the helped that equally acknowledges the viewpoints of both in defining and understanding the problem at hand." Therefore, Afrocentric-based supervision would strengthen the emotional connection in the supervisory relationship between the social worker and supervisor. Hence, the supervisory relationship would be harmonious and characterised.

Lastly, findings reflect that Afrocentric-based supervision would be beneficial for the profession of social work. Participants mentioned that Afrocentric-based supervision would contribute to ensuring that the profession of social work is Africanised and indigenous. Bhagwan (2017) asserts that social work education in South Africa was initially predicated on Western theoretical hegemony and created problems because African clients may be compelled to adopt the Western worldview and its healing methodologies to the exclusion of their own worldviews. Hence, participants believe that the profession of social work should be people-centered, adopt the *Ubuntu* (humanness) philosophy, and recognise and incorporate African cultures.

7.3.4. Objective 4: To Explore Possible Ways to Achieve Afrocentric-based Supervision

The objective is based on the fourth objective of the study, which is centered on the main aim of the study. Critical in the exploration of the possible ways was to source from participants the state of readiness of the DSD to adopt and implement Afrocentric-based supervision. Participants concluded that the DSD is not yet ready to adopt and implement Afrocentric-based supervision. Participants cited issues relating to the systemic, policy, political, and institutional challenges that would hinder the department from implementing the Afrocentric-based supervision. Key informants concluded that Afrocentric-based supervision would assist the DSD in better delivering social services to clients and communities.

The main objective of the study was to use an Afrocentric perspective to critically analyse social work supervision in the Department of Social Development, with the view of finding possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. The possible

ways that could be utilised to achieve the Afrocentric-based supervision emanated from the findings of the study from social workers, supervisors, and key informants. The proposed ways that could be utilised to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision are presented below:

7.3.4.1. Conducting Extensive Research on Afrocentric-based Supervision

Conducting extensive research was one of the ways that participants and key informants believed was critical to the realisation of Afrocentric-based supervision. Mkabela (2005) states that advancing the Afrocentric paradigm locates research from an African viewpoint, creates Africa's own intellectual perspective, focuses on Africa as the cultural center for the study of African experiences, and interprets research data from an African perspective. The "African-centered researcher is committed to advancing research that promotes the voice of its participants. It starts from the premise that people's experiences are unique and that their stories matter to knowledge generation" (Bent-Goodley *et al.* 2017:03). Conducting research on supervision using an Afrocentric paradigm and theory would contribute to the expansion of Afrocentric-based supervision's knowledge base.

7.3.4.2. Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

The DSD is a governmental institution located in different communities across South Africa, specifically in the province of KZN. The participants identified a gap within their service offices in their relationship with the traditional community leaders. Hence, participants outlined that forging a meaningful partnership that strengthens engagement and consultation with traditional community leaders would be beneficial for the realisation of Afrocentric-based supervision. This is because traditional leaders are considered the custodians of African cultures and traditions and would value when engaged and consulted as critical stakeholders. Mabunda (2017) asserts that partnership building involves a collaborative approach, which enhances service delivery at the local level. Moreover, the stakeholder engagement and consultation should also focus on other critical role players in the DSD, such as managers, directors, politicians, etc.

7.3.4.3. Policy Transformation and Restructuring

Social work is a practice-based profession that is guided by legislation and policies that influence the discourse and practice of social work supervision. Participants alluded that the transformation and restructuring of policies and legislation underpinning the profession and practice of social work and supervision is critical for the official recognition and implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision. The policies and legislations that inform the social work profession and practice should be grounded on African values, knowledge, culture, and people. African-centered policymakers understand that not only does policy matter, but it also impacts people differentially, which makes policy an expression of values that are critical, particularly to the individuals who develop, promote, and implement them (Bent-Goodley *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, advocating for a shift in policy-underpinning supervision is deemed critical for the successful officiation of Afrocentric-based supervision.

7.3.4.4. Introduction of Afrocentric Social Work Education

Social work education in South Africa has been criticised for being dominated by Eurocentrism, as alluded to in Chapter Two. Hence, participants revealed that there is a need for social work education at the university level to be Afrocentric so that Afrocentric-based supervision will be complemented. Bent-Goodley *et al.* (2017) explain that Afrocentric social work education is critical for students to develop a critical perspective. Mathebane and Sekudu (2018:15) state that "it is therefore critical that Afrocentric social work be developed optimally to allow for the possibility of it making a meaningful contribution to the social work domain, without which it will be impossible for Africa to make a contribution to the global body of social work knowledge." Therefore, the success of Afrocentric-based supervision is directly linked to the Afrocentric social work being administered in training institutions. "The content of supervision training should, however, take the country's unique welfare policy context and social environment into consideration and should not randomly adopt other countries' body of knowledge on supervision without context-specific adaptations" (Engelbrecht, 2013:464).

7.3.4.5. Implementation of Afrocentric-based Supervision

The final step in the realisation of Afrocentric-based supervision is its implementation. The implementation of Afrocentric-based supervision should happen at the service office level, where social workers and supervisors interact with African communities. Its implementation will empower social workers and supervisors to be culturally competent and ground their practices in accordance with the Afrocentric features described in Chapter Three. Bent-Goodley *et al.* (2017:03) state that Afrocentric social work "can inform various relationships with diverse communities and can create space for important dialogues to take place that start with respect and a genuine commitment to build understanding and create bridges between groups." Therefore, Afrocentric-based supervision, when implemented at the service office level, will empower social workers to genuinely develop different relationships with diverse professional relationships built upon African values, principles, and features.

7.4. The Study's Contribution to Academic Knowledge

This study contributes significantly to the body of knowledge in academia as it critically analyses social work supervision through an Afrocentric lens. The study provides an operational definition of Afrocentric-based supervision in Chapter One to guide the reader on how Afrocentric-based supervision should be defined, as there is no reference traceable reference for the term Afrocentric-based supervision in literature and academic scholarship. The study's literature review and findings comprehensively provided foundational features that should characterise it against the supervision underpinned in the Western/Eurocentric models, approaches, and epistemologies. The study signifies a shift in the field of mainstream social work supervision to a more Africanised and indigenised knowledge and practice of social work supervision.

As social work practice is characterised by the challenges of working with diverse people, ethical dilemmas, and emotional hardships, supervision is crucial in providing support to social workers in order to deliver effective services to clients (Voicu, 2017). Afrocentric-based supervision, which is central in this study, provides a space for social workers practicing social work in an African context to respond to unique challenges better and be effective and efficient when working with African clients. There has been a significant amount of work done towards the conceptualisation of

Afrocentric social work by several scholars, such as Schiele (1996; 1997; 2017), Pellebon (2012), Mungai (2015), and Bent-Goodley *et al.* (2017), amongst others. No literature has been populated on Afrocentric social work supervision. This is supported by the fact that when reviewing the literature on this study, there have been no direct sources that specifically talk about Afrocentric-based supervision or Afrocentric social work supervision. The contribution of this study is that it serves as a baseline study that begins a discourse of thinking and understanding social work supervision within an Afrocentric perspective.

The study highlights through findings the possible successes that Afrocentric-based supervision would present to clients, social workers, supervisors, organisations, and professionals. This contribution is critical as it talks about how Afrocentric-based supervision would strengthen the "ecology of supervision." Khosa (2021:47) explains the "ecology of supervision centers on the interrelations between service users, practitioners, supervisors, and social service organisations". Beyond this, this contribution demonstrates that Afrocentric-based supervision would resolve many contemporary problems, challenges, and dilemmas confronted in the social work practice relating to social work supervision.

Lastly, the study contributes by suggesting possible and practical ways that could be utilised to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. The possible outlined ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision are not only critical for this study but also allow for scholarly arguments with scholars who will find interest in researching Afrocentric-based supervision and how this kind of supervision could be achieved. Therefore, the study provides the platform for scholars and researchers to contribute to exploring the phenomena of Afrocentric-based supervision.

7.5 Recommendations

The recommendations emanating from the findings and conclusions have been divided into three sections: recommendations for future research, recommendations related to supervision practices and recommendations related to policies transformation.

7.5.1. Recommendations for Future Research

The main recommendation of the study concerns the need for further research on Afrocentric-based supervision. Future research studies are recommended to focus on the following:

- i. The findings revealed that the Afrocentric-based supervision would need to be centered on African culture, values, and knowledge systems. Therefore, it is recommended that comprehensive comparative studies relating to the nature of Afrocentric-based supervision in different cultural and ethnic contexts in South Africa should be conducted. This is critical because South Africa is a culturally and ethnically diverse country, and that was not reflected in this study as it was only conducted in the province of KZN, where the Zulu culture dominates.
- ii. Findings revealed the currently implemented social work supervision in the DSD relies largely on the models, theories, and knowledge bases adopted from the West and consequently has been characterised as not linked to Afrocentricity. Therefore, it is recommended that studies be conducted with aim of developing concise guidelines, strategies, or models for developing Afrocentric-based supervision.
- iii. Findings revealed that the balanced execution of supervision practice are still a major problem in the DSD as the administrative function takes precedence over the educational and supportive functions. Therefore, it is recommended that studies be conducted to explore and describe how the supervision functions (administration, support, and education) can be Africanised and indigenised for effective execution within the African context.

7.5.2. Recommendations Relating to Practice

Recommendations relating to the supervision practice at the DSD were necessary as the findings demonstrate challenges within the department relating to supervision. The recommendations relating to practice are to address contemporary challenges relating

to supervision, as Afrocentric-based supervision is subject to scholarly debate. The recommendations relating to practice are as follows:

- i. The findings revealed that social workers and supervisors are often confronted with client cases rooted in cultural orientations which necessitate culturally tailored interventions. Therefore, there is a need to form functional working relationships with traditional leaders and traditional healers so that such cases can be resolved. This is necessary as it could help reduce ethical dilemmas and promote culturally sensitive practice in the supervisory process.
- ii. The findings reflect that supervisors are facing high caseloads and are also responsible for other organisational duties outside of their primary role of supervising which affects the successful and effective implementation of social work supervision in the DSD. It is, therefore, recommended that the workload of social work supervisors be reduced and that their organisational mandate should be limited to executing supervisory responsibilities to social workers. This is necessary to give social workers the much-needed support and guidance that was described as lacking in the findings.

7.5.3. Recommendations Relating to Policy Transformation

Social work, particularly social work supervision practice, is guided by governmental, organisational and professional policies. The recommendations relating to policy transformation seek to address problems in the implementation of social work supervision as a result of

- i. The findings revealed that social workers and supervisors are confronted with problems related to the lack of representativeness of African cultures, customs, and traditions in governmental and organisational policies. The consequences of this lack of representativeness of African cultures, customs, and traditions on policies result in ethical dilemmas in the supervisory process. It is therefore recommended that policies and legislation that regulate social work practice such as the Children's Act 38 of 2005 be transformed to make provisions for African cultures, customs, and traditions.

- ii. Findings reveal that social workers and supervisors regard the Supervision Framework as mostly Western than African in its orientation and is not centered on African values and Afrocentric features. Therefore, it is recommended that a new Supervision Framework be developed centered on Afrocentric values, features, and principles.

7.6. Concluding remarks

The study sought to critically analyze social work supervision within the DSD with an aim of proposing possible ways for achieving Afrocentric-based supervision. In an endeavor to achieve this goal, the researcher got an opportunity to have several conversations with social workers, supervisors and expert informs relating to the discourse of social work supervision in the DSD and ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision. Carey (2017) asserts that social work research assists us with understanding the context and challenges of practice and offer the opportunity to gain new insights by interrogating policies and legislations underpinning practice. During the research process, the researcher, participants and key informants had an opportunity to interrogate the context in which supervision is implemented and challenges confronted the during its implementations. Furthermore, challenges relating to social work policies, legislations and Supervision Framework were critiqued with calls for their transformation to allow for the Afrocentric-based supervision. This research study conceptualised Afrocentric-based supervision, Afrocentric-based supervision features, and outlined possible ways to achieve Afrocentric-based supervision.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form for Social Workers and Supervisors

Name : Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi
Student number : 219073275
Reference Number : HSSREC/00004320/2022

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: 2022/02/20

My name is Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi. I am a PhD 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, "*Critical Analysis of Social Work Supervision in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Social Development: An Afrocentric Perspective*". This study intends to use an Afrocentric perspective to critically analyse social work supervision in the Department of Social Development, with the view of identifying the challenges and successes. The duration of your interview will be approximately 30 minutes to 40 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:

Please note that:

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 understand the purpose and procedures of the study.
- I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- 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.
- I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me because of study-related procedures.
- 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 or telephonically at 0828428114.
- 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

Additional Consent

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

Signature of Participant

Signature of Witness

Date

Annexure B: Ethical Clearance



20 June 2022

Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi (219073275)
School of Applied Human Sc
Howard College

Dear SN Gumbi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004320/2022

Project title: Critical analysis of Social Work supervision in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Social Development: An Afrocentric perspective

Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 06 June 2022 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**.

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.

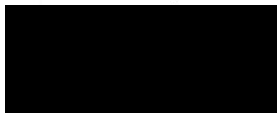
This approval is valid until 20 June 2023.

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 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Annexure C: Gatekeeper Letter



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DIRECTORATE:
HUMAN RESOURCE UTILISATION & DEVELOPMENT

FAX : 033 264 2075
Telephone/ Ucingo /Telefoon : 033 264 2083
Enquiries / Imibuzo / Navrae : Ms PSN Makhoba
E-mail :
Reference no. : S.6/9/2

174 Mayors Walk,
Private Bag X9144
PIETERMARITZBURG
3200

Mr S Gumbi

PO Box 897

MTUBATUBA

3935

Contact No: 082 842 8114

Email: gumbisn4@gmail.com

Dear Mr Gumbi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH UNDER A TOPIC "CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION IN THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: AN AFROCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE".

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 PhD degree in Social Work.
3. The permission authorizes you to: -
 - (a) Access Service offices which are uMlazi Service Office, and UMbumbulu Service Office under EThekwini Cluster and KwaMsane Service Office, Mbazwana Service Office, and Hlabisa Service Office under Northern Cluster, and conduct semi-structured interviews with social work supervisors who have a minimum of five years as social workers and currently hold a position of a supervisor, and social workers who are under a supervision for a period of three years in the department, at their consent deemed relevant to your research project and maintain high level of confidentiality; and
 - (b) Share your findings with the Department.
4. The Head of Department wishes you all the best with your studies

Regards

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

DATE: 15/05/2022

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

Annexure D: Semi-structured interview schedule



Sandile Ntethelelo Gumbi
219073275

Interview Schedule

Research Title: Critical Analysis of Social Work Supervision in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Social Development: An Afrocentric Perspective.

Part 1: English Version

Objective 1: To examine the social workers' and supervisors' conceptual understanding of supervision practice and the context in which it is implemented in the Department of Social Development.

1. What is your understanding of social work supervision in regards to the supervision framework?
2. How would you describe an Afro-centered supervision practice?
3. How would describe the implementation of supervision in this service office?
4. How would you critique the implemented supervision's impact on your duties?

Objective 2: To explore what social workers and supervisors regard as the Afrocentric elements/features of the Afrocentric-based supervision practice.

- What do you regard as the features/ elements of Afro-centered supervision?
- How would you describe supervision practice in your organization in relation to Afrocentricity?
- What are the key Afrocentrism features incorporated in the supervision?
- What do you think can be done to achieve an Afro-centered supervision practice?

Objective 3: To identify the participants' views of possible successes that may be presented by Afrocentric-based supervision.

- a) What are do you think may be the successes to be brought by the Afrocentric supervision in your workplace?
- b) What are the benefits that clients may gain from you receiving supervision that is Afrocentric?
- c) What benefits could be gained from an Afrocentric-based supervision in relation to the supervisor-supervisee relationship?
- d) What benefits could be gained from an Afrocentric-based supervision in relation you relating with other employees?
- e) What advantage would the Afro-centered supervision bring to the profession of social work?

Objective 4: To explore the possible ways to achieve the Afrocentric-based supervision.

1. In your view, what is the extent of your organization's readiness to embrace the Afrocentric supervision?
2. What steps do you think must be taken to attain Afrocentric-centered supervision?
3. Describe the possible ways that must be used to acquire Afro-centered supervision?

Part 2: IsiZulu Version

Uhlelo Lwezingxoxo

Isihloko Socwaningo: Ukuhlaziywa Okujulile Maqondana Nohlelo Lokuqondisa Umsebenzi Wezenhlalakahle eMnyangweni Wezokuthuthukiswa Komphakathi KwaZulu-Natal: Umbono Ohambisana Nokuphila kwase Afrikha (Afrocentrism).

Injongo 1: Ukuhlola ukuqonda kosonhlalakahle kanye nabaphathi maqondana nenqubo yenkambiso yokugadwa komsebenzi kanye nesimo lapho isetshenziswa khona eMnyangweni Wezokuthuthukiswa Komphakathi.

1. Kuyini ukuqonda kwakho ngemithetho nezakhiwo zamapholisi ezisekele ukuqashelwa komsebenzi emnyangweni wezenhlalakahle?
2. Ungaluchaza kanjani uhlelo lokuqashelwa komsebenzi oluhambisana nolwase Afrikha (Afro-centered)?
3. Ungaluchaza kanjani uhlelo lokuqashelwa komsebenzi emnyangweni wezenhlalakahle?
4. Ucabanga ukuthi uhlelo olukhona lokuqashelwa komsebenzi lunamiphi umthelela emsebenzini wakho?

Inhloso 2: Ukuhlola lokho osonhlalakahle nabaphathi abakuthatha njengezakhi zenqubo yobu Afrikha (Afrocentric features) ezikhona ekusebenzeni kokuqashelwa komsebenzi eMnyangweni Wezokuthuthukiswa Komphakathi.

- a) Yini oyibheka njengezakhi zokuqashelwa komsebenzi okugxile enqubeni yase Afrikha?
- b) Ungakuchaza kanjani ukuzijwayeza nenqubo okuqashelwa komsebenzi enhlanganweni yakho ngokuhlobene nenqubo yase-Afrikha?
- c) Yiziphi izakhathi ezibalulekile zenqubo yase-Afrikha okungafanele zifakwe ekuqashelweni komsebenzi ukuze kufinyeleleke ohlelweni oluhambisana nobu-Afrikha?
- d) Ucabanga ukuthi yini engenziwa ukuze kufinyelele ohlelweni lokuqashelwa komsebenzi okuhambisana nobu-Afrikha (Afrocentrism) ngokuphelele?

Inhloso 3: Ukuhlonza imibono mayelana nokungacatshangwa ukuthi kungaba yimpumelelelo engalethwa ngokuqondisa kokuqondisa okusekelwe yinqubo yase-Afrikha enhlanganweni yakho.

- a) Yiziphi izimpumelelo ezingadalwa wukusetshenzisweni kohlelo oluhambisana nenqubo yase-Afrikha endaweni yakho yokusebenza?
- b) Iyiphi imivuzo engatholwa abantu bomphakathi obasizayo uma ungase uthole uhlelo lokuqondiswa komsebenzi oluhambisana nenqubo yase-Afrikha endaweni yakho yokusebenza?

1. Iyiphi imivuzo engadalwa ukusentehsnziswa kohlelo lokuqondiswa komsebenzi oluhambisana nenqubo yase-Afrikha endaweni yakho yokusebenza maqondana nokuthuthukisa ubudlelwano bakho nokumqondisi wakho?
2. Iyiphi imivuzo engadalwa ukusentehsnziswa kohlelo lokuqondiswa komsebenzi oluhambisana nenqubo yase-Afrikha endaweni yakho yokusebenza maqondana nokuthuthukisa ubudlelwano bakho nozakwenu?
3. Iyiphi inzuzo engalethwa ukuqashwa komsebenzi ngenqubo ehambisana nenqubo yase-Afrikha emsebenzini wezenhlalakahle?

Injongo 4: Ukuhlola izindlela ezahlukene zokuzuzwa kwenqubo yokuqashwa komsebenzi ngenqubo yase-Afrikha?

- a) Ngokubona kwakho, lingakanani izinga lokulungela kwenhlangano yakho ukwamukela ukuqashwa komsebenzi ngenqubo yase-Afrikha?
- b) Yiziphi izinyathelo ocabanga ukuthi kufanele zithathwe ukuze ugashwa komsebenzi ngohlelo oluhambisana nenqubo yase-Afrikha?
- c) Chaza izindlela ezahlukene ezingahambisana nenqubo yase-Afrikha?