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Perceptions of newly qualified social workers regarding supervision within the Department of Social Development in the Limpopo province, South Africa

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2016

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The social work profession in South Africa was born out of poverty and initiated by the Afrikaner women's welfare organisation after the end of the Anglo-Boer war in 1902 (Engelbrecht, 2010).In 2012, the International Federation of Social Workers defined the profession as "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Underpinned by theories of Social Work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work" (Hare, 2004, p. 407). As social work is a profession that improves that quality of life of the people it serves and helps them to function more effectively within their environment, supervision for newly qualified social workers is crucial. Supervision is an effective tool in empowering the newly qualified social workers to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to serve individuals, families, organisations and communities.

This Chapter aims to explore and review literature in order to understand the issues relating to social work supervision. Aspects covered in the literature review will include contextualising the DSD, social work supervision, the purpose of social work supervision, components of supervision, models of supervision, ethical issues in supervision, training of supervisors and the attributes of a supervisor.

2.2 The Department of Social Development in Limpopo Province

The DSD renders services through three broad programmes, namely, Social Security, Social Welfare and Community Development. Within these programmes, social workers render social welfare services to those in need. The services of social workers are considered crucial towards helping the social development sector to effectively deal with various social problems. This includes rendering services to vulnerable groups, HIV/AIDS affected households and individuals, addressing substance abuse, poverty, food security and other related social conditions (DSD, 2009).

Owing to the complexity of tasks that social workers perform, supervision for the newly qualified social workers has become mandatory. According to the Supervision Framework, newly qualified social workers must have at least three years of supervision on a fortnightly basis before they can advance to a consultative level (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). Within the DSD, specifically in the Limpopo Province, newly qualified social workers are supervised by social workers with a minimum of five years of experience. The DSD considers years of experience as the main criterion for social workers to be competent to render supervision. This, however, gives little consideration to the actual knowledge and expertise that a social worker has acquired. Botha (2012, p. 5) contends that social workers who have sufficient years of experience are eligible for promotion and consequently are appointed to become supervisors. However, the Supervision Framework highlights that a supervisor should also attend a supervision course presented by an accredited service provider recognised by SACSSP (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

2.3 History of supervision in Social Work

There is diversity and contention of opinions from different authors about the origin of social work supervision (Harkness & Hensley, 1991; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002; Munson, 1979; 2002; Tsui, 2004a). Munson (2002), on one hand, contends that it is not known for certain where, when and how the traditional model of Social Work supervision originated; on the other, Tsui (2004a, p. 9) contends that "social work supervision began as an administrative practice of charity organisations in the early years of the nineteenth century". The term "supervision applied to the inspection of programmes and the institution rather than to the supervision of individual workers within the programme" (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002, p.2). Social work supervision dealt with supervising institutions to ensure that clients or patients were treated and that institutions were run effectively and efficiently (Munson, 2012). At the beginning of the twentieth century, universities in Asia, mainly in Hong Kong and Japan, set up training programmes, and gradually a body of knowledge and a theoretical framework for Social Work supervision formed (Tsui, 2004a, p.9). In 1920, there was increasingly frequent reference to the supervision of individual social workers (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002, p.2).

In the year 2003, the South African Department of Social Development declared social work as a "scarce skill" profession (Earle, 2008). This resulted in the initiation of the Recruitment and the Retention Strategy in 2006 (DSD, 2012). Developed countries such as Switzerland and Australia have Recruitment and Retention Strategies in Health Departments (Shoo, Stagnitti, Mercer, Dunbar, 2005; Stilwell, Diallo, Zurn, Vujicic, Adams, Dal Poz 2004). The Recruitment and the Retention Strategy in the Department of Social Development of South Africa was developed on recognising a decline in productivity and quality of services rendered to clients, and a noticeable lack of structured supervision within the Social work

profession (Bradley, Engelbrecht & Hojer, 2010). The strategy identified the supervision of social workers as one the critical areas calling for immediate attention.

About a decade later in 2012, the Department of Social Development and the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) recognised the need for supervision. Following this, the Supervision Framework was developed and implemented (Engelbrecht, 2013). The rationale for the Framework was aligned with the professional status of social work and the significance of supervision in the social welfare sector (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). According to DSD, lack of supervision for newly qualified social workers will affect professional growth and development (DSD, 2009).

2.4 Social work supervision

A generally accepted definition of supervision is provided by Kadushin and Harkness as "the process of overseeing, directing, coordinating, enhancing, and evaluating the on-the-job performance of workers for whom the supervisor is responsible" (2002, p.23). Another commonly accepted definition of supervision is provided by Botha (2002, p.11) who describes social work supervision as "a learning process that occurs within a specific reciprocal relationship between a supervisor and a social worker during which knowledge is developed". Similarly, DSD and SACSSP (2012, p.18) defines social work supervision as "an interactional and interminable process within the context of a positive, anti-discriminatory relationship, based on the distinct theories, models and perspectives on supervision whereby a social work supervisor supervises a social worker, student social worker, social auxiliary worker, and learner auxiliary worker by performing educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote effective and professional rendering of social work services".

These aforementioned definitions suggest that supervisors should have knowledge, skills and work experience that will enable newly qualified social workers to provide quality services to the clients. Professional growth and development is emphasised, in order for the newly qualified social workers to be able to work independently, provided they are equipped with quality supervision. Supervisors should therefore have extensive knowledge and expertise in their respective fields of social work services. This will allow them to be able to provide quality supervision to newly qualified social workers with confidence and ease.

2.5 Purpose of Social Work supervision

The main purpose of supervision should be to promote the professional growth and development of the supervisee (Lishman, 2009). Holloway (1995a, p.6) contends that the goal of supervision is to provide an opportunity for the supervisee to learn a broad spectrum of professional attitudes, skills and knowledge in an effective and supportive manner. Supervision helps the workers to grow and develop professionally and to further maximise their knowledge and skills to the point where they can perform autonomously or independent of supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

Furthermore, "supervision helps to prepare the supervisee to deliver effective, efficient services to clients, consistent with the agency's mandate and professional practice" (Kadushin, Harkness & Tsui cited in Kadushin, Berger, Gilbert & De StAubin, 2009, p.180). Supervision improves the standard of services rendered by the agencies. Wonnacott (2012) contends that social work supervision is important because good social work involves the capacity to develop and maintain relationships, manage the emotional dimension of the work and make judgements and decisions, often in the light of conflicting information. It is evident

that the role of supervision in Social Work practice cannot be ignored, as it has a positive impact on the growth of the profession.

Botha (2002) maintains that supervision assists in integrating academic theory with the real social work practice. The newly qualified social workers mostly have theoretical knowledge and lack practical social work knowledge, which is acquired through post schooling experience. Given their years of professional practice and continuous training, supervisors have adequate knowledge and skills in social work practice. They are expected to impart professional knowledge to the supervisees through mentoring and coaching. Supervision empowers the supervisees to have the understanding, knowledge and skills required in the profession (Holloway, 1995a). Supervision increases the capacity of supervisees to be able to handle and respond to the different expectations of the clients (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

For newly qualified social workers, supervision will assist them to manage their caseload and enable them to be independent and provide effective and efficient services to clients. Thompson (2009) contends that one of the roles of social workers involves providing reports on litigation matters, in order to assist the courts in determining the most appropriate outcome. This is another reason why supervision is important to newly qualified social workers, as it will provide them with guidance on how to deal with litigation matters.

2.6 Components of supervision

Kadushin and Harkness (2002) concluded that supervision consists of three components, namely, administration, education and support. These components are discussed in greater detail in the sub-section below.

2.6.1 Administrative supervision

Stein cited in Kadushin and Harkness (2002, p.46) contends that administrative supervision "is the process of defining and attaining the objectives of an organization through a system of coordinated and cooperative efforts". Administrative supervision is to ensure effective implementation of agency policy and service delivery (Tsui, 2005b; Bogo & McKnight, 2005). The administrative function includes the readiness of the supervisor to discuss working conditions with employees (Dirgeliene, 2010). It is also concerned with management of the supervisees' work, with the primary focus on meeting the agency's requirements (Caspi& Reid, 2002). During administrative supervision, the supervisor ensures that the supervisee has a detailed job description linked to performance standards.

Kadushin and Harkness (2002) highlight tasks of the supervisor during administrative supervision as is described below.

2.6.1.1 Staff retention and selection

Supervisors play a critical role in the retention and selection of staff. According to Cascio (1995), retention comprises of the activities of sustaining employees' motivation to perform their jobs effectively and maintaining a safe, healthy work environment. Supervisors have a better knowledge of the kind of skills needed to achieve work within their organisation. In this instance, they participate in establishing the criteria and procedure for hiring staff including forming part of the panel during job interviews (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

2.6.1.2 Induction and placing the worker

Supervisors are expected to make sure that they place workers where there is a need for service delivery. After placement, the supervisor should then involve the worker in the induction process. The main purpose of induction is to assist the new employees' integration

into the organisation (Nel, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono & Werner, 2004). Induction programmes may assist newly qualified social workers to adjust quickly to the organisational culture and may contribute to their job satisfaction and enhance their performance. Within the DSD, newly qualified social workers are inducted and orientated to the employer's service contract, court protocols, information on relevant acts and policies, and are included on visits to relevant institutions such as places of safety.

2.6.1.3 Work planning

Once the worker has been inducted and placed, the supervisor has to plan what the agency needs him or her to do (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).The activities of work planning may include services offered, the clients served and the geographic area of operation.

2.6.1.4 Work assignment

During this stage, the supervisor selects tasks for individual workers which are line with the organisational operational plan. This is where the supervisor allocates case loads, and other administrative tasks to the individual worker. However, during this stage the supervisor has to be vigilant about the type of task he/she allocates to individual workers. Within Social work practice, there are certain cases such as writing court reports that newly qualified social workers may not have necessary knowledge to handle. So, it is unethical for the supervisor to assign cases to a supervisee who is without the necessary knowledge and skills to offer effective services (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

2.6.1.5 Work delegation

The supervisor is responsible for delegating tasks to supervisees. Kadushin and Harkness (2002) contend that work delegation involves the supervisor sharing some of his or her

authority with the supervisees. This knowledge sharing can empower the supervisees as they will have the authority to make decisions on the task assigned to them. However, when the supervisor does work delegation, he or she needs to take into account factors such as years of experience. For newly qualified social workers, it may be difficult for them since they are inexperienced to undertake certain tasks.

2.6.1.6 The supervisor as advocate

Advocacy involves articulating and further advancing the needs of supervisees to those in decision-making positions (Berg-Weger, 2010). The supervisor is expected to act as a mediator between the supervisees and management. This is where the supervisor takes information to the supervisees or vice versa. Howe and Gray (2013) contend that the supervisor should act as an intermediary between the supervisees and the management of organisation. This is necessary because supervisors, many of whom are assumed to be in management positions, attend meetings with fellow the senior managers.

2.6.1.7 Supervisor as administration buffer

The supervisor also performs some of the administrative duties of the organisation. This includes activities such as overseeing programme development and operations, budgets, fundraising and personnel (Berg-Weger, 2010). It may also include meeting the agency's requirements in terms of the case load including the rates of intake and discharge (Caspi &Reid, 2002).This concludes the administrative roles played by supervisors.

2.6.2 Educational supervision

Educational supervision is "concerned with teaching the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for the performance of social work task through detailed analysis of the worker's interaction with the client" (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002, p. 129). It also focuses on the learning and development of the employee with the aim of promoting their understanding and skills (Jenkison, 2010; Caspi & Reid, 2002). This means that the supervisor should have knowledge and skills pertaining to Social Work theory and practice and must be able to disseminate this knowledge to the supervisees. The supervisor has a key role in promoting education and training for supervisees (Munson, 2002). Supervisors should regularly keep themselves abreast of current information that will assist in Social Work duties and functions. If the supervisor does not have knowledge regarding certain aspects within the profession, then the quality of services offered to the clients may be compromised. Zastrow (2004) argues that social workers need training and expertise in a range of areas to effectively handle the problems faced by individuals, groups, families, organisations and the community at large. This is where the supervisor needs to be equipped with knowledge and skills to conduct educational supervision for supervisees.

Educational supervision plays an important role in the professional development of the supervisees, as areas for the supervisee to develop are further highlighted. Development should be continuous in the sense that professionals should always be actively seeking to improve their performance (Wilson cited in Skinner, 2012). In responding to the need for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of social workers, the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) has developed a policy to keep social workers abreast of developments in their field:this was undertaken after recognizing the need for professionals to be in a position to provide high quality services, and also to feel confident in

their abilities to attend to the needs of the community (SACSSP, 2007). The premise upon which CPD is based is that no qualification or personal registration can guarantee that an individual's proficiency will be maintained for the rest of their professional life (HPCSA cited in Lombard, Pruis, Grobbelaar & Mhlanga, 2010). Therefore, all registered social workers are required to earn twenty CPD points to demonstrate that they have updated their skills and knowledge; this result in maintaining their names on the SACSSP register.

According to Botha (2002, p.103) the educational process of supervision should be as follows:

> *"In the first place an educational model should be compiled; secondly, each social worker's personal learning needs should be explained in an educational evaluation; thirdly, the supervisor should compile a separate educational programme for each social worker from these educational evaluations; and fourthly different supervisory sessions should be planned and executed accordingly."*

An educational model provides learning and educational styles in social work supervision. Botha (2002) favours the Holistic Model in the supervisory process. The purpose of educational supervision is to assist the supervisees towards adequate knowledge of certain aspects in the Social Work field. Botha (2002, p.103) contends that an educational model should contain those aspects that the social workers do not know. The composition of an educational model should be based upon five components developed by Kadushin and Harkness (2002). According to Kadushin and Harkness (2002, p.136), "the nuclear situation for all social work is that of a client (individual, family, group, or community-*people*) with a *problem* in social functioning, coming from or referred to by a social agency (*place*) for help (*process*) by a social worker (*professional*)". The model comprises of the details concerning the place, people, the problem, the process and the profession.

The model is normally known as the five Ps of Social Work practice. The elements within the model cannot be treated in isolation and as such, social workers should have knowledge of all five Ps. It is also important that the social worker acquires knowledge about the policies of the organisation; furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of the individual, group and community needs and challenges is required. This will assist them in understanding the client system as a whole. On the Social Work process, the social workers should have an understanding of the intervention processes regarding casework, group work and community work (Botha, 2002). They should also have understanding of the profession, including the Code of Conduct that governs the profession. In addition, Botha (2002) contends that supervisory sessions should go through the following phases: structuring phase, preparation, presentation and termination.

2.6.3 Supportive supervision

Supervision is also identified with a supportive function wherein the aim is to provide a safe space, and to listen and support the employees in relation to their work (Jenkison, 2010). The support function of supervision is to raise the morale and job satisfaction of the staff (Tsui, 2005a). Low morale may affect the job satisfaction or the performance of social workers. Supportive supervision is aimed at helping social workers to deal with stress and blockages (Engelbrecht, 2006). Supportive supervision is more likely to promote a person-centred, professional agenda with different types of power dynamics between the worker and supervisor (Bradley, Engelbrecht & Hojer, 2010). At workplace level, the supervisor should provide emotional support and be available when needed by the supervisee.

The complexity of social work as a profession often causes stress amongst the supervisees. This may be as a result of supervisees having to adapt to a new working environment, new

colleagues, while having to render service to vulnerable groups such as mentally ill clients, victims of crimes and violence, elderly, HIV/AIDS-affected and differently abled persons (Suraj-Narayan, 2010). Given the nature of services rendered daily, social workers often find themselves not coping when executing certain duties at the workplace. This happens as a result of the stress they endure.

Acknowledging this further, Botha (2002) highlights various causes of stress as follows; namely, the community's attitude towards services rendered by social workers; the organisational culture within which social workers practice, including policies and processes therein; execution of administrative and educational functions; the tasks that social workers have perform, as well as the relationships they have with their supervisors. Having mentioned the above, the supervisor should take positive steps to create a working environment that is conducive to supervisees by upholding professional attributes and values (Botha, 2002). Munson (2002) contends that if the supervisees make requests for support of their work, be it technical, administrative or in line with their career development plans, supervisors should support the request. Botha (2002) argues that the working conditions and needs of the social workers should always be adequate, inspiring and professional. Attention should also be given to emotional aspects of the supervisee, and supervisor experience can be critical in improving job performance and preventing burnout (Berg-Weger, 2010).

2.7 Models of supervision

According to Kadushin et al., (2009), there are three model of supervision, namely, individual, group and peer supervision. These models will be outlined below.

2.7.1 Individual supervision

This is the one-on-one kind of supervision and occurs when the social worker (which in the case of this research report is the newly qualified social worker) and the supervisor meet for the purpose of supervision. It is used particularly for inexperienced social workers with less than two to six years of practice experience in the same setting (Kadushin & Harkness cited in Kadushin et al., 2009). The advantage of this type of supervision is that the supervisor and the supervisee can discuss various problems (including personal) that may affect work performance or the professional relationship at work. This type of supervision is suitable for newly qualified social workers, as it provides a demarcated space to allow the supervisee to raise their personal problems. It will also allow the supervisees' time to discuss their cases with supervisors. The disadvantage is that this type of supervision is time consuming and sometimes the supervisor may not have enough time to attend to supervisees individually. The researcher observed that individual supervision is the model conducted mostly amongst supervisors and supervisees within the DSD. However, the Supervision Framework of the DSD acknowledges the use of individual supervision, as well as group and peer supervision (DSD& SACSSP, 2012).

2.7.2 Group supervision

Group supervision consists of group meetings of the supervisees under the guidance of a supervisor. The intention of group supervision is to advance the supervisees' understanding regarding themselves as professionals, the clients they serve and the services they render to the clients (Arkin, Freund & Saltman, 1999). It is characterised by supervision within the group setting wherein the social workers together with their supervisor share their individual knowledge and experiences.

Kadushin et al. (2009) maintain that a formal Social Work supervisor should be present to perform administrative, educational and support functions in a group format. The group supervision will allow the supervisor to address the identified needs of supervisees collectively as it saves time. The other advantage associated with group supervision is that the supervisor can probably see more supervisees by conducting group supervision (Hawkins &Shohet, 2012). This type of supervision is however not without limitations. First, supervisees may not feel comfortable enough to discuss their cases in front of their peers. As a result, this may create artificial layers of superiority and inferiority amongst the newly qualified social workers, as the bolder supervisees may receive more attention and recognition from supervisors than those who prefer a one-on-one feedback session with their supervisor. This can polarise and fragment cohesion amongst newly qualified social workers and contribute towards a depressing working environment. Second, with this type of supervision, there is less time for each supervisee to receive supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

2.7.3 Peer supervision

Another form of group supervision is peer supervision, where all participants are equal in terms of accountability and responsibility for their own practice (Kadushin et al., 2009). This means that this kind of supervision does not rely on the supervisor. This kind of supervision may be characterised by case conferences that social workers may have within an organisation, with the purpose of sharing information amongst colleagues. It offers an opportunity for colleagues to learn from each other.

2.8 Ethical issues in supervision

The social work profession mandates ethical conduct, and supervisors should be aware of their ethical responsibilities towards their supervisees. The Policy Guidelines for the Course of Conduct, the Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Worker (SACSSP, 2007) determines that a social worker should be supervised on social work matter by a supervisor who is registered as a social worker. Furthermore, the supervisor should have the necessary knowledge and skills to supervise appropriately and should only do so within their areas of knowledge and competence (Munson, 2002; SACSSP, 2007). This, it is argued, that supervisors will assist the supervisees to handle difficult cases as they will receive guidance on the cases. It is regarded as unethical for the supervisors or supervisees to present themselves as competent to deliver professional services beyond their level of experience and competence (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002, p. 469). This implies that supervisors or supervisees should refer clients to relevant services or the next level of reporting, if a problem presented is beyond their scope of practice. A supervisor should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with the supervisee in such a manner that there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee (Munson, 2002). A supervisor should also relate to the supervisees with respect and dignity, providing them with timely and meaningful feedback. The supervisor has to make him or herself available in case of emergencies to assist the newly qualified social worker when they need to make decisions (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). This will assist newly qualified social workers as they may be inexperienced, and the availability of a supervisor will assist them to make correct decisions.

However, supervision may be ineffective when the supervisor and the supervisee do not communicate. Communication is key in supervision. Supervision implies a way of communication and cooperation between the supervisor and the supervisees (Damian,

Necula, Caras, Sandu, 2012). Also, lack of adequate supervision time spent between supervisor and supervisees leads to lack of knowledge and its integration into the practice of newly qualified social workers (Gidding, Cleveland, Smith, 2006). The relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee should be maintained at the professional level.

Supervision is not the responsibility of the supervisor alone. The supervisees equally have a responsibility towards their supervision. One of the responsibilities of the supervisees is to prepare themselves for supervision. The supervisees also have the responsibility to identify the issues with which they need to be assisted (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Supervision can be more effective if the supervisee and the supervisor know their responsibilities towards supervision. The supervisor, on the other hand, has the responsibility of ensuring the quality of work the supervisee is doing with the clients (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). The supervisor also has an ethical responsibility for self-development, upgrading skills and monitoring their own effectiveness (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002, p. 469).

2.9 Training of supervisors

Rue and Byars (1996, p. 196) contend that "training involves acquisition of skills, concept, rules or attitudes by employees in order to improve their performance". Training of supervisors is important in improving knowledge and skills of the supervisee. Werner and DeSimone (2006) contend that training involves providing employees with the knowledge and skills needed to do a task or job. Training could play a significant role in the professional development of the supervisor and the supervisee. Training programmes for supervisors should include content that assists them in identifying stress and in helping practitioners deal with it (Munson, 2002). Supervisors should be trained, because lack of theoretical knowledge may make it difficult for them to implement educational supervision. Social workers are not

taught how to train others and impart information. Therefore, there is a need to look at how supervisors are assisted to become more effective in their task. The Supervision Framework on the social work profession highlighted that supervisors should attend a supervisory course accredited by service providers recognised by SACSSP (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

2.10 Attributes of a good supervisor

A supervisor should be open to learn from supervisees and from new situations that emerge (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) and be able to give answers when the situation demands it (Munson, 2002). A good supervisor is approachable and someone from whom the supervisees can seek advice and be assisted (Jacob, 2009). The availability of supervisors to newly qualified social workers is most important; furthermore the supervisor should promote staff development in the workplace.

The supervisors should treat their subordinates fairly in line with a professional code of conduct. Jacob (2009, p. 216) states that "a good supervisor is fair, impartial, avoids harsh criticism and makes good judgements". Hawkins and Shohet (2012) contend that the supervisor should also have a sense of humour.

Furthermore, a good supervisor should have a broad knowledge of laws, ethics and professional regulations applied within the Social Work profession. In addition, the supervisor should have education and training and the necessary skills in the area of the Social Work profession. The supervisor should play a role in promoting learning and continuous professional development (Morrison as cited in Thompson, 2009). Such expert knowledge will assist them to conduct educational supervision. Key to their role is to

evaluate the performance of supervisees in a manner that is fair and respectful (Munson, 2002).

A poor supervisor may impact on the supervision processes within the institution. Poor supervision "often lacks proper planning, which involves determining the most effective means of achieving the work of the unit" (Rue & Byars, 1996, p. 68). Moreover, poor supervisors do not show support and are inconsiderate of the difficulties faced by the supervisees (Romani, 1995). For example, some supervisors tend to shout at supervisees for making petty mistakes which could frustrate the supervisees and hinder the professional growth that should be derived from supervision. Poor delegation may characterise a poor supervisor: this involves a situation in which the supervisor takes on too much work and is not able to finish projects that have been started (Black, 2008, p.68). It is important for the supervisor to delegate to other workers who might assist in the execution of the task. Within the DSD, there are social workers with work experience to whom the supervisors may delegate, for the execution of duties.

2.11 Policy Framework on Supervision

SACSSP (2007,p.37) Policy Guidelines for the Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers, section 5, provides guidelines for the supervision of social workers which are:
that the social worker who provides supervision should have the necessary knowledge and skills to supervise appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence, and the supervisor could be held liable in an instance where a complaint of alleged unprofessional conduct is lodged against the supervisee/ social worker. The guideline does not, however, state anything on how a newly qualified social worker should be

supervised. Also, it is silent about the lack or non-existence of supervision for newly qualified social workers.

The National Department of Social Development and the South African Social Service Profession developed a Supervision Framework of the Social Work profession which was finalised during the financial year 2011/12 (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). According to Supervision Framework, "the newly qualified social workers must at least have three years of supervision on a fortnightly basis before they advance to the consultative level" (DSD & SACSSP, 2012, p.32). The other statutory requirements of Social Work practice in South Africa include the Social Service Profession Act (1978), the Code of Ethics (SACSSP, 2007) and the Children's Act no. 38 of 2005; these policies provide a mandate for the supervision of social workers (Engelbrecht, 2013). According to the Framework, newly qualified social workers must have fortnightly supervision for at least three years. However, the Framework is silent about the remuneration of social work supervisors. This could demotivate the supervisors and prevent them from rendering effective supervision to newly qualified social workers.

2.12 Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework for this study will draw on Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and the Systems Approach. Social Constructivism focuses on social interaction in gaining knowledge and new meaning (Bergh & Theron, 2009). Vygotsky believes that learning is a social and collaborative activity wherein people create meaning through their interactions with one another (Schreiber & Valle, 2013). Furthermore, Social Constructivism views learning as a social process which occurs when an individual is engaged in social activities (Kim, 2001). The social constructivism approach view supervisor's working experience as

playing a crucial role towards the professional development of newly qualified social workers. This view is supported by Burton (2011) who contends that social constructivism approach to supervision provide an advantage that supervisor's working experience assist the supervisees within the context of learning and professional development. The researcher is of the opinion that supervisors, using the social constructionist perspective, engage supervisees in a collaborative relationship that encourages the exploration and exchange of information, ideas and opinions.

In the Systems Approach to supervision, the heart of supervision is the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, which is mutually involving and aimed at bestowing power on both members (Holloway, 1995a). Hawkins and Shohet (2012) described five elements of supervision which are all connected to the supervisory relationship. These elements are: supervisor, supervisee, the client, the work context and a wider systemic context. Supervision is here described as:

> *a joint endeavour in which a supervisee with the help of the supervisor, attends to the client, themselves as part of their client practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their clients' relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession*"(Hawkins &Shohet, p.5).

The Systems Approach views supervision as the combination of these five elements as they have influence on the supervisory process. The five elements of supervision will be explained below.

2.12.1 The supervisor

According to Kadushin cited by Shulman (1993, p. 13) a supervisor is "an agency administrative staff member to whom the authority is delegated, to coordinate, enhance, and evaluate on the job performance of the supervisees for whose performance he/she is held accountable". The supervisor is responsible for encouraging the supervisees to use supervision well in the interest of clients. She/he also has the responsibility to perform administrative, educational and supportive functions to supervisees within the content of a positive relationship (Shulman, 1993).

2.12.2 The supervisee

For the purpose of this research, the supervisees are newly qualified social workers. Since, they are still new within the profession, it is required that they receive supervision regularly. Regular supervision provides an opportunity to review their work, discuss current problems and plan for future programmes and activities (Suraj-Narayan, 2010).Supervision provides an opportunity for the supervisee to learn and grow professionally. The main aim of supervision is to increase the capacity of the supervisees in engaging effectively with clients (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

2.12.3 The client

Supervision is aimed at providing quality services to the client. Supervision should assist the supervisees to pay attention to the client and the choices that the client is making (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). The supervisee is committed to practising to the best of her ability and the supervisor is employed to promote best work (Proctor, 2008).

2.12.4 The work and wider systemic context

The agency determines what supervision should be conducted. Within the DSD, the Supervision Framework for the social work profession has been developed and implemented. According to DSD and SACSSP (2012), a supervisor should be a social worker registered with SACSP with the minimum of five years of working experience. This shows how supervision is influenced by the profession and agencies.

Supervision takes place within the professional context and in the context and within the context of an agency. Social work supervision is governed by a Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics of social workers regulates how supervision should be conducted. For example, SACSSP (2007) highlighted that social workers should be supervised on social work matters by a supervisor who is a registered social worker, meaning that no person other than a registered social worker may supervise social workers.

Changes within the system will affect the supervision process within the DSD. Effective supervision involves balancing the systems and paying equal attention to all dimensions (Howe & Gray, 2013). These two frameworks are relevant as the supervision process is about learning and practicing Social Work within the DSD.

2.13 Chapter summary

Occupational social work provides support to employees with personal and work-related challenges through the provision of counselling services. Also, supervision entail a support function whereby giving recognition to personal and work-related challenges that might affect the employees' productivity. Supportive supervision provides a safe space where an

employee is listened to and supported to execute his or her daily duties. The next chapter presents research methodology.