

**Perceptions of Postgraduate Social Work Students in regards to their Undergraduate Field Instruction Supervision Experiences.**

 **A Report on a study project to**

 **The Department of Social Work**

 **School of Human and Community Development**

 **Faculty of Humanities**

 **University of Witwatersrand**

**In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree Bachelor of Social Work**

 **By**

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 **24 November 2017**

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**Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and that I have acknowledged all the sources I have used.

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**Tafadzwa Kapfudza**

**Date: 24 November 2017**

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I would want to first thank God for granting me the gift of life and good health throughout the time that I was writing my research and also studying for it. It was challenging and mentally, emotionally and physically draining but through him I sailed through

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I dedicate this piece of writing to my loved ones I lost during the year Wedzerai Kapurura, Grace Chitsato and Palmolive Kapfudza may you continue resting in peace, forever loved , thought of and missed.

…………………………Forever in my heart…………………………………..

**Abstract**

Social work field instruction is crucial in social work training and it is regarded as a centrally important aspect of social work. It enables the students to practice skills and know the values of the profession that guide their practice. This study focuses on traditional practice of field instruction, commonly referred to as block placement where a student is placed at an agency for a prescribed period in a given year of study to apply theory into practice implementing basic methods of social work; casework, group work and community work, depending on the level of study. The main components of field instruction block placement are the school of social work, the social work student, the agency, the agency supervisor, and the field instruction coordinator. The aim of this research is to explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students regarding the supervision they received from the agency supervisor on an undergraduate level. The researcher chose exploratory research method to guide this investigation. A sample of eight respondents will be drawn from the population of postgraduate students involved in various programmes in the Department of Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand during the 2017 academic year. The data will be collected through interviews utilising interview schedule as a data collection tool. Collected data will be interpreted using thematic analysis. It is hoped that insights gained from experiences of students regarding supervision could contribute towards improving the effectiveness of student supervision during field instruction. Recommendations made could assist the university to improve structuring of supervision to optimally meet needs of students in their journey of developing as professionals and preparing them to transit from student supervision to professional supervision in social work.

**Key words:** *Social work supervision, student supervision, social work professional supervision, supervisor, supervisee, effective supervision, field instruction,*

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**CHAPTER 1**

**1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Field Instruction provides the students with practice experience through learning and has expected exit learning outcomes that each student is supposed to obtain (Bogo,2008). Supervision in social work is seen to be very crucial especially in one becoming a professional. It becomes even important when field instruction is done in schools. Tsui (2005) argued that it is important to help in bridging the gap that exists between the schools and the reality in the human organisation of what really the service is all about. The aim of this section is to introduce the proposed research study which is about understanding and exploring the views of Social Work Masters students on field instruction and the impact in both academics and being a professional.

According to (Homonoff,2008:38) social work field instruction is crucial in social work training and it is regarded as the central important aspect of social work. He mentions that it enables the students to practice skills and know the values of what they theoretically learnt. This study will focus on the traditional model of field instruction which is for instance the block placements where the students are placed at agencies for expected hours of service. The social work field instruction consists of the social work student, the agency supervisor and the field work coordinator. One of the agency supervision roles is to help in inculcating professional behaviour. South Africa was reportedly to have lacked structured supervision and had poor quality supervisors according to the Department of Social Development (2011:23). As a result, they lack the aspect of professionalism.

Social work functions are said to have been started through Charity Organisations in Europe, North America (Munson,2002). It is then that supervision acquired an educational purpose and the first course was offered in USA. This then sought an aim rooted in the need for administration practices and resulted in emerging perception of education as an additional function of supervision (Munson,2002). This spread to other countries including South Africa in which supervision encompassed both education and administration. This function in the Department of Social Welfare brought rise to the training of supervisors at South African Universities. Bopape explored the student supervision in black colleges in South Africa with the aim of indicating that practices relating to all people of South Africa contributed to the local development of Social Work Supervision.

**1.1.1 Field Instruction in South African Universities**

In the South African context, it is especially the unpredictable, non-routine, non-standardised, highly individualised and imperceptible nature of social work practice, which necessitates supervision (Botha, 2002). In addition, the statutory requirements of social work practices in South Africa, such as the Social Service Professions Act (1978), Code of Ethics (SACSSP, 2007), and the Children’s Act, No. 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2006), all imply supervision of social workers to be crucial. Similar to that (Kadushin,2014)’ s work reflected in South African context. He looked at the University of Pretoria and found out that there was lack of postgraduate supervision with only two of twenty universities in South Africa excluding University of Pretoria where supervision courses where offered. As a result the South African Universities then instituted formal theoretical courses in supervision at honours and masters levels. Some of the universities came with the requirement that candidates had to undergo complete supervised field instruction study. After that social work supervision became reputable in South Africa (Pelser,1988).

Recommendations have been made by Homonoff (2008) which state that there is need for renewing the supervision practice in South Africa. This included variables contributing to the state of supervision practices for instance the state of supervision practice which encompassed the education of social work for supervision and education of top management on supervision and the working conditions of the social workers. Supervision according to Kadushin and Harkness (2010) aims at not only equipping the student social workers with knowledge and skills to use in the field but also to be able to develop a professional conscience. The purpose of the study then is to understand the perceptions of the social work postgraduate students in regard to their experiences of field instruction supervision. According to Bernard and Goodyear (2004) supervision is essential in providing skills that will enable the student into being a professional and it also monitors the readiness of the in-experienced student to understanding the ethics and values of the profession.

**1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Field instruction has many objectives among which is to “ to provide supervised learning opportunities with an academic service learning paradigm for students to demonstrate an understand the commitment administrative responsibility and planning required for professional practice (School of Human and Community Development, 2013,p.1)According to Wits curriculum students start engaging with client in second year of Social Work as an approach to enhance knowledge through gaining insights and experiences (Teater,2010) in order for this process to be engaged there is need for supervisors who will be able to supervise and assess the students interaction with the clients and how they are able to put theory into practice (Bogo,2008).

(Teater,2010) also argues that supervision helps prepare the students in facing the real life situations and experiences they are likely to face as professionals. Some students have failed in meeting requirements of the field instruction course. Some of them indicate that their relationship with the supervisors did not go well. In reality some social workers in the profession still struggle and face challenges on how to deal or handle the situations they come across and yet supervision is supposed to prepare the student to be knowledgeable about certain situations. Therefore this study seeks to explore on the perceptions of the social work postgraduate students on their experiences in social work field instruction supervision.

The importance of this study could be its contribution to improving the process of field instruction supervision and also how important the supervisor roles impacts the students in becoming professionals. Therefore my hope is that this study would enhance the knowledge of the supervision process through understanding the perceptions of the social work postgraduate students on their field instruction supervision. It would also be crucial to ensure the supervision in field instruction equips the students with practice skills through relevant field guidance by fostering desirable attitudes into the students becoming professionals.

**1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

**Perceptions of Postgraduate Social Work Students in regards to their Undergraduate Field Instruction Supervision Experiences.**

**1.3.1. Aim of the study**

The aim of this research is to explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students regarding their undergraduate field instruction supervision experiences

**1.3.2 Objectives of the study**

* To explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students regarding some of the difficulties/challenges of field instruction supervision?
* To explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students regarding how much impact did the supervisor have on their progression in the social work profession?
* To explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students regarding what steps should be taken to improve field instruction supervision on an undergraduate level.
* To explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students regarding the quality of their student supervision?
* To explore postgraduate social work students’ perceptions of support systems coming into play for undergraduate students regarding field instruction supervision
* To explore postgraduate social work students’ perceptions of what field instruction supervision on an undergraduate level should entail in order to prepare them for full-time employment;

**1.3.3 Research Question**

**What are postgraduate social work students’ perceptions experiences of undergraduate field instruction supervision?**

**1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN METHODOLOGY**

The research in in the form of a case study and the design method that will be used is qualitative method. The benefits of using qualitative include that it allows the collection of data in depth. It allows for exploration of the data gathered and collected because it is exploratory in nature (Babbie&Mouton,2011). Semi-structured interviews and open ended questions will be used to allow for probing and explanations from the participants. The study will use non-probability sampling which will include convenience sampling and purposive sampling which will be used in selection of the participants. There will also be the use of the interview schedule as the tool and one to one interviews as a data collection method. The use of one on one interviews will be used to be able to understand the participants’ experiences of supervision (Tsui,2005). This is because semi-structured interviews allows to obtain rich well detailed feedback because the researcher can be flexible (Botha,2002).

Interview schedules will also be used based on the supervision practices of (Hoffman,1987). The research methodology will include inductive and deductive reasoning which will result in efficiency in examining case studies which might be global or local (Hoffman,1987). Non-probability sampling in terms of the purposive sampling and convenience sampling will be used to obtain in-depth data to learn from the participants’ experiences and view. To ensure validity and reliability I would make sure the informants are clear on the nature of the research and the data collection methods I will be using. Ethical parameters will also be followed for instance the participants would be given participation information sheets to ensure they understand how the research would be done and also confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained.

**1.5 ANTICIPATED BENEFITS OF THE STUDY**

* There is hope that the study will help in the future curriculum planning for social work students
* It would also bring understanding to the supervision process and what the students need.
* The study would also shape the process of field instruction supervision for students who will still have to do field instruction
* The study would also put into perspective the student’s opinions in regard to the field instruction supervision process that the department takes
* The recommendations and the challenges identified in the study will hopefully be used to improve the way social work students engage their field instruction supervision.

**1.5.1RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendation for the field instruction process would be to provide a reflection lens through which the effectiveness of the current practice can be determined such that there is a way forward. This is because the ability of social workers to be ethical, competent and innovative depends on the field instruction experience according to (Bogo,2008). Another very important component would be to refine and adjust the social work field instruction supervision process so that it suits the training needs of the students in their field in agencies, not only that but also prepare them for the working space as professionals. As a result the students that leave university are well equipped

**1.6 KEY CONCEPTS**

“**Supervision** is an administrative process with an educational purpose and the ultimate objective of improving the quality of agency services” (Kadushin,1992).

**Student Supervision**

A process whereby a qualified social worker equip a student with knowledge and skills and also coordinate and evaluate the student’s performance under their leadership (Kadushin&Harkness,2010).

**Social Work Supervisor**

Kadushin (2010:22-23) defines the supervisor very comprehensively: "A social work supervisor is an agency administrative staff member to whom authority is delegated to direct, coordinate, enhance and evaluate the on-the-job performance of the supervisees for whose work he is held accountable. In implementing this responsibility, the supervisor performs administrative, educational and supportive functions in interaction with the supervisee in the context of a positive relationship. The supervisor's ultimate objective is to deliver to agency clients the best possible service, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in accordance with agency policies and procedures”.

**Quality Supervision**

It is specialised knowledge and skills necessary for the supervision to be able to function effectively. It takes into consideration the supervision diagnostics skills and competent usage of knowledge and the supervisory role (Broadwell,1990).

**1.7 UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND SOCIAL WORK POSTGRADUATE MODULES**

The university admits fifteen students in the postgraduate classes and some of the modules offered include Advanced Theory and Practice in Occupational Social Work which is aimed at defining what occupational social work is and how it is a specialised field of social work. It addresses the micro, mezzo and macro methods of practice and how these need to be applicable in an occupational setting. The university also offers Advanced Field Practice in Occupational Social Work which emphasizes on the individualisation of each student’s field instruction programme. Its aim I to take into account the needs of the student objectives and structure of their work organisation as well as the course requirements which is a student ‘s involvement in practice with individuals, groups, employees and the organisation.

The other programme is also Contextual Issues for Advanced Occupational Social Work Practice which emphasizes the contextual environment in which occupational social work is operating and how macro factors need to be analysed and considered and understood in order to ensure that intervention is holistic and appropriate. Occupational Social Work Research is offered and also Social Development in which students are given the opportunity to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of diverse areas in social development. Social Policy module examines concepts and definitions of social policy values ideologies and their impact on social development.

There is also the Social Programme Design and Management module which examines the nature and definitions of social development projects and programmes, the relationship between social policy and social development; it also deals with governance issues in relation to social development. The other module done is the Select Topic in Social in Social Development in which students are required to explore a detailed theoretical study on a topic in social development under the guidance of the lecturer. The last module offered is that of a Research Report in which students are expected to write a research report of not less than 20000 words and not more than 30 000 words on an approved topic

**1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH REPORT**

The first chapter of the study consist of the introduction to supervision in trying to understand the views of the social work masters students on field instruction supervision process at the University of Witwatersrand. It will also look at the impact it has had on them becoming professionals. The chapter presents the statement of the problem and the rationale. Chapter two will in-cooperate the literature review whereby the history of supervision is discussed globally and narrowed to the South African context. The theoretical framework will also be discussed in detail. Chapter three then introduces the research methodology that will be used in the study for instance the research design, research tool, data collection methods, pre-testing of the research tool and the data collection methods employed by the study. The chapter will also explain in detail the strengths and weakness of the study. Chapter four will then present data analysis and discuss the results of the data collected. The last chapter which is chapter five will consist of the main findings and conclusions made from the study and also recommendations of the study.

**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Literature review helps to look at similar work that would have been done on the same topic that the researcher is proposing. This as a result enables the researcher to be able to notice the gaps that exists within the study and also helps focus on particular important aspects that might have also resulted from the study before. According to De Vos et al (2005) a literature review helps the researcher to be able to understand the existing knowledge of a topic. Supervision is one of the most important factors in social work practice because it laid foundation for student social workers to be able to familiarise and aware of the real-life experiences and environment they will be dealing with when they graduate eventually to become social workers. Munson argues that it is very important to understand the history of supervision in social work as it clearly gives a picture to how the profession evolved.

The chapter will focus on social work supervision and also explain the different aspects of social work supervision unlike other supervision. It will also explain the different forms of supervision and mostly the educational part because the research is aimed at finding the views of masters social work students on supervision

**2.2. SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT OF SUPERVISION**

South Africa records in its history one of the highest countries in which the violation of human rights and majority of social inequalities exists. It is allegedly said too have been a reason of the Apartheid era. However, after the country declared democracy it sought to adopt a process in which they fought for the rights of everyone and address the inequalities that were in the country (Abdullah,2013). A research that was carried out showed that most of the students that study social work come from a background of poverty more so some grew up in areas where they were deprived or denied their rightful privileges (Collins,2012).

**2.3. DEFINITION OF SUPERVISION**

Supervision is an educational process with the main aim of transmitting knowledge of social work skills into practice from trained to the untrained from the experienced to the inexperienced according to the Encyclopaedia of Social Work. It is also a process whereby one-person id designated to facilitate the professional development of a supervisee with the aim of safeguarding the interest of the clients (Hoffman,1987).

**2.4. EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE SUPERVISION**

Social workers believe that positive supervision requires the suitable environment to be carried out that allows the supervisor and the supervisee the opportunity to reflect honestly and openly on their work with no interruptions. This type of supervision then becomes effective (Kadushin,2010). Effective Supervision would also be effective if the supervisor who received training and knowledge in the field of supervision thus being adequately prepared to offer structured supervision (Munson,2002).

**2.5. THE SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR**

This is an agency administration staff member who has the authority to delegate directly in ensuring that there is direction in the work that the supervisee is doing. Therefore, the aim and duty of the supervisor becomes to implement the responsibility to deliver to the agency client the best possible service in accordance with the agency policies and procedures (Tsui,2005). Although these services to the supervisee are not offered directly they indirectly affect the level of service offered through their impact on the direct services to the supervisee.

 **2.5.1Field Work Coordinator**

A field coordinator is employed by the student’s training provides to oversee the placement of students in field work agency (Tsui,2005). The coordinator plays a role to prepare students for fieldwork agency which constructs the grading of student, assessments and debriefing which helps the student in completion of fieldwork practicum (O’Donoghue, 2011).

**2.5.2Agency Field Instruction**

An agency field instructor is a staff member in the fieldwork practicum, agency who facilitates the student’s learning in practice settings (Tsui,2005).

**2.6. FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION**

Administrative function helps in the promotion and maintenance of good standards of work co-ordination of practice with policies of administration and the assurance of an efficient and smooth-running practice (Harkness,2014). The primary concerns to correct effective and appropriate implementation and adherence of agency policies and procedures. The educational function allows for the development of each supervisee to realise their potential (Harkness,2014). The main aspect is to equip the supervisee with the knowledge attitude and the necessary skills required to do the work. The supportive function ensures that there is maintenance of a harmonious working relationship and to improve the morale and job satisfaction.

**2.6.1Supervision Models**

**Block Model**

This is a field instruction placement that implies that the student is placed in a fieldwork agency for a continuous period of time which could be a term or a semester which the student devotes five days a week to experimental learning in the agency (Kadushin&Harkness, 2010).

**Rotational Model**

This is when students using a wide range of agencies instead of remaining at one agency for the duration of field instruction experience (Tsui,2005). The rotations take place both internally within an agency and externally at other agencies.

**Community Centre Model**

Students work within communities to identify needs and from there develop macro, mezzo and micro interventions. Centres have developed in partnerships with communities and social work agencies and have strong focus on developmental principles (Rogers, 1995).

**Group Field Instruction**

This is an alternative model to one on one traditional supervision style commonly used with the block and concurrent field instruction models (Tsui,2005). Group supervision makes use of group setting to implement the administration, educational and supportive functions of supervision (Kadushin,2010).

**2.7. FORMS OF SUPERVISION**

There is the peer supervision which is aimed at professionals giving each other criticism and supportive feedback in different facets of professional work. This type of supervision is flexible because it allows for the social workers to be able to accept or reject the suggestions made based on evaluation procedures (Gould&Baldwin,2004).

**Consultation** is also very crucial as it allows for specific contact with the consultant to discuss. It is not a continuous process and it is in advisory nature. Therefore, it is between the consultant of a different organisation and an expert in a certain field (Bromberg,1982)

**Group supervision** is making use of a group setting that promotes the implementation of the functions and implementations. However, it should be noted that it is different from a seminar or workshop because there is only one leader who is the supervisor (Bromberg,1982).

**Individual supervision** is when there is a one on one interaction in which the supervisor contract with a supervisee to provide educational administrative and supportive functions of supervision (Baldwin,2004).

**2.8. FIELD INSTRUCTION**

It is a form of experimental learning where students develop their professional selves and integrate their knowledge and skills under the supervision of experts and practitioners (Noble,2011). Studies from New Zealand suggest that the quality of supervision is particularly important given that experiences of students encounter in formulating stages of their professional development. It is very influential in shaping their professional Practice (Beddoe,2010). Field instruction is also a way or method used to socialise students to the role of a practitioner and vital for the consolidation of theory and practice. as a form of reality check students can test what they learnt in lectures and put it into practice and integrate theory. Social work education involves two components of the curriculum which is the classroom and the field. These are crucial in the curriculum with each promoting competences of professional practice. Field Instruction is thus important in in cooperating contemporary knowledge about learning theory.

There is also cultural supervision which is formal or informal relationship that exists between the supervisee and the supervisor of the same culture to uphold ethicality according to the set of values, protocol. It promotes cultural accountability and cultural development. The significance of field instruction sees an educative tool that corresponds with learning theory which is crucial to understand how people work (Kolb,1984).

**2.8.1Experimental Learning**

Field Instruction learning is based on academic learning from experience. In Social Work gathering experimental knowledge is the aim. It emphasizes how supervisors prepare students for practice by stressing socialisation to the profession, knowledge building and growth enhancement through reflective teaching methods (Kadushin,2010). Experimental learning for social work training can be through guided learning and reflective learning (Kolb,1984). In experimental Learning cycles it allows for the act which is concrete experience, reflection which is observation of behaviours and consequences, conceptualisation which is abstract conceptualisation and application which is active experimentation (Kadushin,2010).

**2.9. FIELD INSTRUCTION SUPERVISION**

Field Instruction originated from an Apprenticeship model located in the field with an eventual move to formalised field work education within tertiary training institutes (Kadushin&Harkness,2010). In field Instruction the supervisor oversees the student’s field work and guides the client towards placement expectations. It has focus on education function. This is because it emphasizes the importance of the learning theory in Social Work and preparation and conceptualisation of fieldwork supervisions. It becomes important for the supervisor to be a skilful practitioner but also a skilled teacher. The field instruction supervision prepares the student to embark in realistic expectation of the working environment (Munson,2002).

**2.9.1Field Instruction Placement Agency**

This is the organisation where the social work student is placed to do practical. It is important in demonstrating research experiences. It allows for the students to encounter formative stages of their professional development and shape their professional development

**2.10. FIELD INSTRUCTION ROLES**

**2.10.1Supporter**

 The supporter creates an environment that supports learning and growth. It helps the structures feel understood, manage anxiety, take risks and negotiate challenges. As a result, they can be professional (Kadushin,2014).

**2.10.2Teacher**

The instructor identifies goals and strives to achieve them through rehearsal opportunities for student through observing their performances. They provide constructive feedback which builds up motivation and ways to improve their work professionally (Kadushin,2014).

**2.10.3Administrator**

Plans, organises and assigns work and upholds quality standards through monitoring. They also solve problems and establish due dates (Kadushin,2010).

**CHAPTER 3**

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 INTRODUCTION**

A research methodology is an approach that is used when planning and outlining the methods that are used in a research study through the means of collecting data. This chapter will discuss on the research methodology employed in finding that data. It will also outline the research question, the population sample, data analysis, the research instrumentation, data collection data analysis and ethical considerations. The study will use a qualitative design which is exploratory inn nature and this would be in form of interviews. In the end the study will focus on the limitations of the study and the methodology that was used when conducting the study

**3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION**

What are the postgraduate social work student’s perceptions of undergraduate field instruction supervision?

**3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a detailed plan that entails the plan of how the research will be conducted with the aim of responding to every research question asked in the study (DeVos et al (2005). The research design that will be used is qualitative research design. It was chosen because it is exploratory in nature. It also allows the exploration the phenomenon or situation of a person or group (De Vos,Strydom,Delport &Fouche ,2005). One of the purposes of employing a qualitative design method is to be able to get an in-depth understanding of the meaning that people attach to the experiences of field instruction in their own terms.

The qualitative research design will also use the phenomenology approach which is the study of the description which allows understanding of an experience of a person. Thus, the focus is on the Social Work postgraduate who participated in Field Instruction in Social work. To allow for the comprehension of views the participants will use the study will also use the interpretive approach.

Using the qualitative approach also enables the need to understand human and social interaction from the insiders’ perspective (Greenstein,2016). Interviews will be used to obtain data because they allow a participant to be flexible through the use of open ended questions unlike closed questions which would be a limitation to the information the participant would be allowed to give in the circumstances

The researcher will use semi-structured interviews which will allow for face to face interviews with the participant. To guide the sessions there would be use of the interview schedule which comprises of open ended questions. The schedule will be used to guide the discussions. Using open ended questions would be beneficial because it allows the researcher to be able to probe information from the participant following up on the questions intended to be asked (Marshall &Rossman,2011). Semi structured interviews are used to be able to address the key matters

They also go on to further state that open ended questions enable participants to be able to talk openly and freely on anything they would have been asked as they are able to be subjective of their situation.

I chose the use of interviews because they help acquire understanding of the participant’s lived experiences. They provide thick descriptions which give detailed accounts of information (Tsui,2005). These descriptions provide detailed deep and dense accounts of experiences.

**3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION**

Semi-structured Interviews and questionnaires will be used and the interview schedule will be used as the tool. The use of semi-structured interviews will enable the participant to fully express their views based on their experiences (Jacobson,2009). The use of the tool would also enable for the researcher to be able to do follow up questions and build up during the interview. The research schedule will consist of open ended questions that will be used in the interview and this will take approximately 45 minutes to ask each participant. In this case permission was asked to be able to tape record the client to ensure reliability and also ensuring that the responses given are backed up.

**3.5 PRE -TESTING OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION &TOOL**

The pre-testing of the research toll that will be employed will be done on post graduate social work students who are not part of the study to be able to see if they understand the questions being asked. According to (Bryman,2004) pre-testing allows the researcher to be able to see if the questions they intend to ask are clear and can be understood in carrying out the study

**3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The main aim of sampling is to be able to gain understanding of the situation at hand. The researcher will use non-probability sampling. The researcher will use convenient sampling which. The sample size will be ten potential participants who will be interviews. The criterion included participants who would have been at wits and did social work and thus have experienced social work field instruction supervision at some point. The sample would be chosen through scheduling appointments and agreeing to meet them on the days that they feel comfortable to do the interviews. The selection will be done on those readily available and a willing audience.

**3.7 DATA COLLECTION**

The data collection would be done through interviews with the post graduate social work students which would be face to face interviews. Interviews are a way a researcher can use to gather means of information and a direct exchange of information between the researcher and the participant in a carefully planned manner aimed at providing detailed information which would be used to address the study De Vos et al (2005). An interview schedule will be used during the interviews which will allow the interviewer not to miss important aspects. The researcher will give the participants an information sheet with detailed information about the study. The interviews will be done in Umthombo Buildings at the University of Witwatersrand. The interviews will take from 10 to 25 minutes. The use of the tutorial rooms will help in promoting confidentiality than an open space. The collection of data will probably take me three weeks to complete everything

In using the face to face or one on one interviews one of the strengths associated with it is that is the participant is fully aware of the information that they are disclosing and they provide a true reflection of what they experience (Finn &Jacobson,2008). Face to face interviews allow for the researcher to obtain lengthy data in a short period of time. However, participants may be sensitive to some questions asked such that their answers become biased because feelings of being uncomfortable or distressed are evoked.

**3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

**3.8.1Thematic Analysis**

Thematic Analysis is a method of identifying and analysing and reporting patterns/ themes within data (Braun&Clarke,2006). This can be from sources such as audio tapes, recorded interviews and stories. Thematic Analysis provides easily interpretable and concise descriptions of the emergent themes and patterns within a dataset, usually as a foundation phase of interpretation (Braun&Clarke,2006). Thematic Analysis provides core skills that are useful in conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. It gives a flexible and useful research tool which provides a detailed and complex account of data. Thematic analysis processes and analyses data without encoding pre-existing themes which means it can be adopted to any research that relies on participants and clarification (Braun,2006).

**3.8.2 Six –steps of Identifying and Analysing Qualitative data using Thematic Analysis**

According to Braun and Clarke they mention a six-step method of identifying analysing and reporting qualitative data using thematic analysis. The first steps the researcher plans on using is familiarising myself with the data. This involves transcribing the data of the interviews and re-reading transcripts and listening to recordings (Braun&Clarke,2006).

The researcher planned to extract and synthesise the study findings according to the review question. The study was qualitative and the researcher focused on using interviews to obtain various perspectives on the research questions related to the perceptions of Postgraduate social work students in regards to their field instruction supervision. Conducting interviews with the students was to be able to get an insight into the phenomenon under investigation. This is because the key informants are crucial to the success of the study. The reason the researcher chose thematic analysis is because it can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions (Braun&Clarke,2006). Utilising this approach complemented the research questions by facilitating an intervention of the interview data to see if the data would be consistent with research questions to provide rich-detailed information.

The second step would be generating initial codes from the collected data. The researcher will then identify features or data that appear to be interesting and meaningful. The collection of data would be done through audio recording and in-depth personal interview.

The researcher used interviews and also made use of the interview schedule and audio-taping the participants. In this step the researcher used an Inductive approach to be able to obtain raw and varied data from the responses of the participants. This was done to help come up with links between the objectives and the summary findings derived from raw data obtained

The researcher transcribed the interviews and listened to the audio tapes of the eight participants for a number of times too be able to ensure accuracy in relation to the transcripts. This process was carried out on the Microsoft word office. The researcher also coded the transcripts whilst listening to the recordings.

The third step would be searching for themes from the collected data (Braun&Clarke,2006). This allows for the interpretative analysis of data and the relevance of the data collected. This then means data can be sorted combined or split making relations links from the data. There would be the use of sampling, interview guide and pre-testing and data collection.

The researcher then focused on theme development by re-reading the transcripts to identify themes. The researcher came up with themes. The researcher previously counted how many times the participants referred to the above mentioned themes or said similar aspects to be able to get a theme that keeps being mentioned

The fourth step of thematic analysis the researcher planned on using was the reviewing of themes to be able to combine, refine, separate or discard initial themes. This allows for the data to be coherent and meaningful (Braun&Clarke,2006). This will allow me to select information from an individual piece of information from an in-depth interview. As a result there is transcribing of the recorded to put in written form. The two phases intended to be used include phase one which will be coded extracts and phase two which is the overall data collected.

The researcher then used one in-depth interview from the participants who had incorporated the important aspects of the sample responses and used it as the data set

The fifth step will require to define and name themes and sub these of data collected (Braun&Clarke,2006). This allows to go through the transcripts to look for meanings and patterns and become familiar with the data (Braun&Clarke,2006). To also ensure the information is correct the researcher would then check transcripts back against the original audio recordings for accuracy.

The researcher went through the verbatim of the transcripts to be able to make notes on the meanings and patterns that emerged from each participant’s responses. The researcher did this by going back to the recordings and ensuring all the information matched or linked.

In conclusion of the six-step of thematic analysis the researcher will then transform the analysed data into an interpretable piece of writing by using themes research questions and literature. The report thus it contains results of analysis and validity with empirical evidence.

The researcher extracted the data by finding specific words in the transcripts that have important features of data in some of the transcripts based on the requirements of the question.

**3.9 LIMITATIONS**

The study will be using interviews to collect data on the participant’s experiences. However, there is a possibility that interviews might take time and thus making it very difficult to analyse and compare the data gathered (Finn&Jacobson,2008)). Depending on the mood that the participant portrays there is likely to be bias of the responses given. Interviews might also be intrusive to the participant. The use of questionnaires can also result in not getting careful feedback. The wording used on the questionnaire can bias respondent’s answers (Jacobson,2008). The questionnaires do not give the full story and it might also take time depending on the participant. The use of the qualitative data can be resource intensive and time consuming.

Qualitative data is also subject to misinterpretation. It may also be specific which makes it difficult to draw conclusions across the population context (Finn&Jacobson,2008). Using thematic analysis can retain a sense of continuity and contradict through any one individual account (Braun&Clarke,2006). This is because the contradictions and inconsistencies across individual accounts may be revealing. The interviewer can create bias which leads to drawing of extraneous conclusions (Finn&Jacobson,2008). Through the Halo Effect he interviewer may allow single characterisation of candidate to affect the judgement of another candidate. More so the interview of the previous candidate may influence the interviewer.

**3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

**3.10.1 Reliability**

According to (De Vos, 2005) reliability is the extent to which the independent administration of the same instrument provides similar results when comparisons are made. The condition in which the data is collected and processes improves reliability (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Thus the researcher will improve the reliability of the data collected by giving a detailed in-depth interpretation of the data to give a clear representation of the methods used in the study.

**3.10.2 Validity**

Validity is used to determine the accuracy of the findings Gall, Borg, & Gall (2007). It is the extent to which an empirical measure suggests the meanings around the concepts being studied (Babbie, 2013). The researcher will thud observe the data collected from the participants and compare with the information from literature review.

**3.10.3 Credibility**

 According to (Shenton, 2004) credibility implies the extent to which findings agree with reality. Credibility contributes greatly in establishing trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004). The researcher will be professional throughout conducting the research study by ensuring that ethical aspects are followed.

**3.10.4 Dependability**

Dependability is when a research can be repetitive with the use of the same methods to ensure the same results (Shenton, 2004). It is quite difficult to carry out the procedure because the use of the same criterion might not really produce the same results (Shenton, 2004). The researcher will describe fully the research methodology and design that will be used. The researcher will also ensure that all direct quotations from the participants or respondents are highlighted in verbatim to ensure dependability.

**3.10.5 Confirmability**

The researcher will ensure the findings from the study are from the participants’ experiences and ideas and not imposed by the researcher. This avoids the imposing of the participants or using of the information preferred by the researcher (Shenton, 2004). Thus the researcher is expected to be objective and not subjective. The researcher will ensure there is trustworthiness by making certain that results will be from the data collected from the participants.

**3.10.6 Transferability**

External Validity is when findings of one study can be relevant to other studies (Merriam, 1998). Transferability allows for findings of another study to be applied in different studies or situations (Shenton, 2004). Thus there is need for an in-depth description of the phenomenon being studied, the number of participants and the inclusion criteria for participants and the methods of collecting data (Shenton, 2004). However transferability is not easily applicable because when a research is being done it mainly focuses on a specific area. The researcher will ensure that there is transferability by giving a comprehensive description of the study and the content in which it will be narrowed to.

**3.10.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

 According to (Christensen, 2007) ethics are a set of guidelines that help researchers when conducting ethical research. The most crucial aspects when conducting an ethical research are the ethical behaviour and ethical considerations especially if the research entails the field of human activities (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). In this respect, this study will adhere to the following research ethics:-

**3.10.8Voluntary participation**

 This emphasizes the importance of the voluntary participation of participants without being forced to participate in the research study as cited by Rubin and Babbie in (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). The researcher will inform participants that participation in research is voluntary and if they withdraw to participate in the study at any time they will not be any negative consequences.

**3.10.9 Informed consent**

 The participants will be treated with respect and given the opportunity to decide and opt for what will happen or not happen to them (Grinnell& Unrau as cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). The informed consent allows for all information of the goal of the research study; the duration of the participant’s involvement; the procedures followed; the advantages, disadvantages and dangers respondents may be exposed to; the credibility of the researcher to be rendered to potential subjects (Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, Fouche & Delport, 2011). Written informed consent is necessary and emphasizes the importance of the participants being given accurate and complete information to allow them to comprehend the details of the research study and be able to make decisions voluntarily if they want to participate (See Appendix B).

**3.10.10 Adhering to the code of ethics**

The study will not begin until the researcher obtains an ethical clearance from the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee. Permission from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Social Welfare Department has been granted to conduct research.

**3.10.11Autonomy and Self-determination**

The potential participants of this study will be given information openly and in an honest manner. These details will entail the purpose and procedure of the study; the approximate time; the voluntary nature of participation in the study; their choice to withdraw from the study any time without negative consequences. The participants will also be informed that they are allowed to refuse answering questions that make them uncomfortable. The researcher will seek informed consent from potential research participants if the interviews that will be conducted will be audio-taped (See Appendix C).Participants will be asked to sign consent forms to affirm their participation.

**3.10.12 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Yegidis and Weinbach as cited in De Vos,Strydom, Fouche &Deport (2011) emphasizes the fact that everyone has the right to privacy and therefore can decide when ,where, to whom and to what extent their attitudes ,behaviour and beliefs can be revealed. Thus the researcher will ensure that privacy is maintained by safeguarding the privacy and identity of the respondents. This would also mean applying confidentiality which will require the researcher to explain to the participant that their names or identity details will not be included in the final reports. Thus the researcher will not use their personal identity but rather pseudonyms.

According to (De Vos,Strydom, Fouche & Delport,2005) confidentiality is a continuation of privacy which includes agreements that foster privacy and limit access to given information. This also means all information collected is kept confidential. The researcher will keep raw data on one drive and make a secret password known only to the researcher. The Data will then be destroyed two years after any publications or six years after study has been completed.

**3.10.13 Triangulation**

The aim of the procedure of qualitative inquiry is to examine a single social phenomenon from more than one point of view (Braun&Clauke,2006). This involves the use of different researches using various information sources or multiple methods in order to enhance the inter-subjectivity of the study.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will focus on the presentations and the analysis of data which was collected through interviews. The researcher collected data through the use of a tape recorder and ad face to face interviews. The data that was collected was transcribed and organized according to the thematic analysis. The researcher was able to deduct reoccurring themes from the interviews that she had. The discussions that will be carried out are based on the objectives of the study

**4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**Table 1** Profile of the Participants

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Age Group** | **Total** |
| Male  | 25-2829-34 | 3 |
| Female  | 20-2425-2829-34 | 32 |

The table one indicates the number that participated. The data was collected from 8 participants of whom three were females and fives were ales. The researcher aimed at being able to get perspectives from both the female and the male post graduate social work students. From the table it is clear that most females are the ones who participated more in the study and we can link this to the idea that social work is regarded as a caring profession and therefore it might be that women are seen as the most nurturing and understand of the sexes. (Khunou, Pillay &Nethononda,2012).

**4.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

The sample of the study comprised of eight social work postgraduate students. These participants all received field instruction at the University of the Witwatersrand which makes them eligible to have encountered field instruction supervision which is a requirement of the practicum. The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of social work postgraduate students’ experiences in regard to their undergraduate field instruction supervision. The first objective was to explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students in regarding quality social work supervision

**The first objective was to explore the perceptions of the postgraduate social work students regarding quality social work supervision.**

**4.4 FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION IN PROVIDING QUALITY SUPERVISION**

From the findings it shows that the students received different structures of supervision whether from an external or internal supervisor and one of the crucial aspects of social work is the supervision process which should consist of the education, administrative and supportive function. It emphasizes that this should be the core of the training for supervision to be able to successfully supervise (Tsui,2005). Some of the participants mentioned that they understood the quality of supervision from the display of the three functions during the supervision process from their supervisors. They mentioned that the supervisor is supposed to also focus on other aspects apart from the academic one thus being supportive especially when the students have personal problems and finding the work overwhelming.

**One participant responded by saying:**

*“Quality supervision should serve three purposes administrative, education and the support function. I mean the supervisor should be able to help me familiarize myself with the agency policies in regards to the agency. When I talk about education I mean the supervisor should be able to help me integrate the practice with theory so I can be able to provide the best care to the clients. When I mention supportive I mean the supervisor should be able to minimize the possible harms that could come my way during my tenure at the agency of the field instruction internship period”.*

According to (Bogo, 2008) the role of the supervisors is to be able to guide students whilst carrying out their practicum as part of their training in becoming professional social workers. One of the tasks that they carry is to be able to orientate the student social workers on the rules and regulations of that particular agency they are placed at.

When looking at the functions of supervision it is also stated that the three functions include education, administrative and the supportive function (Bogo,2008). The administrative function focuses on the promotion and maintenance of the good standards of work, coordination and practicing within the policies of the agency. The education function emphasizes the fact that there is need for the development of the supervisee in a manner that will evoke the supervisees to realize their potential. The supportive function includes the maintaining of a harmonious working relationship and to improve the job morale which will increase job satisfaction

In relation to that Kadushin (2010) describes social work supervision as a process through which the supervisor and the supervisee interact with each other in a structured learning situation in which the supervisor becomes the teacher, supporter and administrator to the student so that the student can be assisted with the development of professional skills.

 **The second objective was to explore the perceptions of postgraduate social work students regarding how much impact the supervisor had on their progression in the social work profession.**

**4.5 IMPACT OF THE SUPERVISOR AND THE FIELD INSTRUCTION SUPERVISION**

From the findings it was clear from what the participants said that supervision plays an important role in the social work practices. It prepares the students to the reality of a work setting and contributes to the effective professional relationships (Gould &Baldwin,2002). The respondents stated that the supervision process helped them to develop professionally and prepared them for the reality that the work environment would be and also growth as a person.

**The respondent said that:**

*“The supervision process was very effective because there is a gap between what we are taught in University and what happens in the agencies and it is through the supervisor you are able to know all these. In my case I was at Johannesburg Child Welfare and my supervisor taught me that if a case of a child is reported you first do intake and then risk assessment and then statutory process and then it goes to court, information I was not taught at the University”.*

In relation to this Field Instruction supervision is important in grounding preparation of students for field instruction experimental learning (Bogo,2010). He mentions that the supervision process allows for the students to be prepared, developed and delivered by training providers preferably in conjunction with field instruction supervisors.

In agreement to that social work supervisors they should be able to help the students in planning for the practicum, teach them by assigning them to integrate course work and practicum to be able to work effectively in the field (Botha,2008).

Munson(2002) also agrees to this notion by defining the supervisor as an agency administrative staff member to whom authority is delegate to direct , co-ordinate enhance and evaluate the job performance of the supervisee for whose work is held accountable.

In relation to this the Council of Social Work Education requires that undergraduate programs provide each student with a minimum of 400 hours of Field Instruction. The Council mandates that every program specific policies, criteria and procedures for selecting field settings placing and monitoring students ,maintaining field liaison with field instruction education or setting and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the program’s competencies

**The next objective was to explore the post graduate social students in regards to some difficulties and challenges of Field Instruction Supervision**

**4.6 DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES OF FIELD INSTUCTION**

The findings from the participants suggest that field instruction supervision for the students was usually once or twice a week which is not necessarily beneficial especially if you have an external supervisor. This practice is aligned to the field instruction supervision noted by (Tsui,2005) as crucial for students undertaking field instruction placement. All the respondents stressed the importance of communication between the supervisor and the supervisee. Some went on to discuss the fact that it was very important for the Social work Department to be able to focus on these challenges to be able to address the problems that are being faced during supervision processes.

**The respondent mentioned that:**

*“My challenge was having an external supervisor. I only managed to have one internal in my experience. Of which when you have an external supervisor that is a challenge because in terms of communication and times for supervision it is challenging you need to send an email or call which might take a lot of time before actually being responded to”.*

 **The respondent mentioned that:**

*“The supervisor was an external and was not always there when you are supposed to have supervision once a week. They did not come and did not honor appointments and my supervisor did not give feedback to the written reports”.*

The participants also stated that in Field instruction supervision the internal supervisor adhered to supervision firmly than the external supervisor with students having to pursue the supervisor to ensure that supervision took place.

In relation to this Tsui (2005) suggests that students should get supervision and for each time supervisors are not able to make it they should reschedule within a few days prior to the supervision date. In exploring external supervision a study suggested that supervisees viewed internal supervisors as more constructive and confrontational with less formal authority and more expert-based authority than external supervision (Bogo,2008)

Hawkins (2002) also supports this notion by stating that one of the objectives of the supervision process is to relate with the student in a practical manner by improving their skills through relevant field guidance and enabling the student to build a positive professional relationship with clients. However he mentions that if the supervisor is not internal it could affect the progress of the student in obtaining knowledge because the supervisor is absent to be able to monitor the student whilst doing their practical.

In another study done for Bachelor of Social Work regarding the perceptions of postgraduate students on supervision experiences it revealed that field instruction supervisors’ accessibility and frequency of supervision positively influenced a student’s assessment of their field instruction supervisor (Knight, 2000).

**The other objective was to explore the postgraduate social work students’ perceptions of supportive system coming into play during supervision**

**4.7 SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE**

 In the findings seven of the participants emphasized on the importance of supervision to be able to provides support and guidance to the social work students for it to be deemed as important.

**The respondent mentioned that:**

*“Supervision was helpful in many ways first of all because supervision needs to serve as a source of support. Students when dealing with clients need support, so supervision for me offers support when dealing with individual clients and the knowledge to be able to deal with them ha to be instilled in us by the supervisor”.*

According to Bernett et al,(2008) the supervisor-supervisee relationship is one crucial part of the social work supervision and central to the social work field education. The respondents mentioned it as one important factor which makes it just as effective for any supervision to take place.

 In relation to this support in supervision is regarded as important mostly because it is one of the functions of supervision. Munson (2002,p.33) argued that supportive supervision was considered the most effective learning practice and that most of the supervision processes that are non-supportive result in a negative impact of the supervision process. This argument proves that the supportive function is valuable and according to (Kadushim & Harkness,2002) supportive supervision includes such procedures as reassurance, encouragement and recognition of achievement along with realistically based expression of confidence, approval and attentive listening that communicates interest and concern. Therefore it is important to use the supportive function because it provides the supervisee by encouraging and reassuring the developing professional Kim and Stoner (2008,p.14).

Supervision enables supervisees to receive second opinions from the supervisor to be able to deliver more efficient care (Tsui,2005). This also assist them in carrying their own interventions and pursue professional development whilst receiving feedback to deal with their own feelings which will help them enhance their own self-management (Bogo,2010)

One of the supervisor’s roles is the responsibility of having the capacity too conceptualize and transmit knowledge and have the ability offer the student opportunities to demonstrate and eventually master the core or advanced competencies based upon measurable practice behaviour.

**The other objective was to explore postgraduate social work students perceptions of what Field Instruction supervision should entail in order to prepare for full time employment**

**4.8 AGENCY WORK**

The findings from the participants emphasized that supervision is effective in social work practice. They mentioned that regardless of the fewer times a person had supervision, they alluded to the fact that there is need for supervision which is good, structured, regular from the supervisors because in as much as the process was not always smooth they did benefit and learn from the whole process and it also prepared them into preparing to become professional social workers

**This participant mentioned that:**

*“My supervisor treated me like an employee and this meant I had to dress professionally, be professional at all times, adhere to policies, dress professionally, time management which is what is expected in most working sectors. After my internship period I felt as though I was prepped to be able to present myself as a professional in the best way possible*”.

 In relation to this (Munson,2002) suggests that the organization set up should have experts in the work description of that agency especially the supervisory role so that if you become a professional social worker in a similar agency it is easier because the supervisor was able to assist you whilst focusing on the agency and the activities services offered at that agency.

Supervision is a process in which students are mentored by those that have experience in the field of practice (Munson,2002).The process of mentoring equips the students by guiding them through theory and practice hence the supervisor’s role is to assure that students are able to balance theory and practice (Munson,2002).

According to Tsui (2005) one of the characteristics of supervision which ensure effective and quality supervision process is the supervisor assuming the educator role in which the supervisor’s actions are aimed at improving their own job-related knowledge, skills and personal adjustment as well as that of the student social worker for whom the supervisors responsible.

**The other objective was to explore the role of social work students regarding the steps taken to improve field Instruction on undergraduate supervision**

**4.9 IMPROVEMENTS THAT COULD BE ADMINISTERED**

Most of the respondents about six of them stated that most of the problem arose because of the supervisor and the supervision process. Respondents who mentioned this suggested that having an external supervisor was the greatest disadvantage to them and if improvements would begin on this very aspect then it would be very helpful to them. They emphasized on the importance of workshops, supervision meetings, seminars and the training of the supervisors as well to ensure there are improvements. Some of them mentioned that the supervisors seemed unaware of their roles and were in constant conflict with what was required of the students from the University.

**The participant’s response was:**

*“I think supervisors need a form of training and attending workshops arranged by The social Work Department before they engage with students. This is because most of the times you find out that they want things done a certain way whereas the field instruction manual mentions totally different things. This also goes with the theory usage sometimes the theories we are guided to use are not exactly what they want you to use”.*

**The participant mentioned in response to the question that:**

*“The department should provide seminars and workshops. They must go into details when they have meetings and educate the supervisors on what the students expectations are according to the manuals. Communication is very important in Social Work and the Department of Social Work must be able to communicate well with the supervisors and not rely on sending messages via the students”.*

In relation to that Hoffman (1987) suggested that supervisors should be well aware of social work programme and the field instruction process including the philosophies, the content, courses and the expected level of student performance. He also mentioned the fact that before the supervisors supervised the students there are special training sessions provided for them to ensure the assignments given to students are consistent with the student’s abilities and program expectations.

**4.10 GROUP SUPERVISION AND INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION**

The findings indicated satisfaction with individual supervision sessions by saying that it allowed for them to grasp the purpose and process of supervision more clearly thereby allowing them to be shaped into professionals.

Effective supervision facilitates professional development of the supervisee, the continued growth of the supervisor and overall development of the social work field and practice (Bogo,2008).

**The respondent mentioned that:**

*My first supervision was a group session and because I am a quiet person I sat throughout the session and listened to others speaking and my supervisor was not hands-on. Therefore I am against group supervision. I enjoyed my fourth year individual supervision because I had all the time with my supervisor*

In relation to that individual supervision deliver better outcomes through exploring and discussing new ideas and enhancing problem solving skills (Bogo,2008) and it improves the clarity and objectivity in decision making, motivates and increase work satisfaction.

**The participant shared that:**

*“I received group supervision and it was the six of us in the group. For me it was not effective. It was a case in which each student described the activities you are doing at the agencies and colleagues would chip in. The supervisor would give direction to an extent but it was not really that effective. I think individual supervision was going to be helpful because you will have enough time to explore on the challenges you are facing but since we were six students we did not have enough time in only two hours to speak individually. So sometimes you do not receive the feedback you expected which is helpful to you individually”.*

In relation to that group supervision can provide unique opportunity to establish critical professional repertoires such as peer feedback skills and public speaking skills whilst in cooperating concepts from supportive supervision (Kadushin &Harkness,2014)

This corresponds to O’Donoghue (2012) who suggests that the impact of supervision hinges on both the supervisee and supervisor’s expectations and behaviors in regards to the supervision processes

From the respondents six of them had preferences in the type of supervision they preferred based on their experiences and mentioned if it was effective or not and this depended on whether it is individual or group supervision.

Group Supervision is whereby a group of people are supervised all together by a designated supervisor (O’Donoghue,2012). A study done in Aotearoa New Zealand suggested that students receiving group supervision gain poorer evaluations of content covered in supervision and supervision and supervisory relationship. This could also be similar to what some participants faced and it would help understand the results of those who were affected by group supervision in a negative way

**4.11 OVERALL PERCEPTIONS ON THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE**

From the findings the participants experienced a positive experience from the field instruction process despite having challenges from time to time. There was a broad diversity of their experiences and relationships dynamics. They suggested that when supervisors displayed effective communication skills they experienced positive supervision.

**The respondent mentioned that:**

*“We need a professional to guide you and to help you on what works or what does not given their experience in the professional world. It was useful to have someone who knows the profession so they can enhance the skills you have or help you in whatever you need”.*

**The respondent said:**

 *“Supervision is a necessary part of Field Instruction and it molds you into becoming a social worker. It also prepares you when you are a professional because you still receive supervision”.*

This can be in conjunctions with (Gidding,2004)’s work which showed that less than ideal supervision eventuates when elements of productive supervision are either administered or omitted.

The findings led the researcher into discovering the participants’ experiences on the reality of field instruction supervision and in accordance to O’Donoghue (2012)’s work it necessitated an interpretivists approach which emphasizes the need to comprehend a phenomenon from the perceptions of the participants (O’Donoghue,2012). The applicability of the approach lies in the fact that the focus is on the field Instruction supervision which is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced by individuals who have knowledge of the situation (Hawkins,2002).

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**MAIN FINDINGS CONCLUSIONS AND RESULTS**

**5.1 INTRODUCTIONS**

The previous chapter was focused on discussing the findings of the study. In this chapter the focus is to infer the conclusions drawn from the findings. The study was aimed at exploring the perceptions of postgrad social work students in regards to their field instruction supervision, thus the title “Perceptions of the Postgraduate Social Work Students in regards to their field instruction Supervision Experiences. Themes emerged from the study from the questions asked which were derived from the objectives of the study.

**5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

**5.2.1Challenges of external supervisors**

The researcher was able to find that during the field instruction supervision the participants seemed to have a lot of problems especially because they had external supervisors and it was very difficult for them especially to discuss about their challenges and also get sound feedback of their work or written reports. The unavailability of the supervisor was a great disadvantage because there was no one to guide them throughout carrying their practical activities and also dealing with clients. When they made time to be able to see them some of the supervisors did not even honor those appointments which worked negatively for the students because they could not see the progression of their work.

Some participants mentioned how their supervisions sessions were based on power relations and according to (Foucalt,1970) people tend to use power given to them in unacceptable ways.

**5.2.2 Impact of the supervisor**

Most of the participants responded that supervision was of great importance to them because it provided them with guidance and support which made them aware of what it was they had to do and also be groomed into becoming professional social workers. They mentioned that apart from the academic part of field instruction they were also able to be helped by their supervisors when they had problems which could be personal and the supervisor was a source of support.

**5.2.3 QUALITY SUPERVISION**

Most of the despondence mentioned the importance of the supervisor to be able to perform the three functions of supervision for it to be effective and it is the essential of every social work supervision process. Most of them reported that their supervisors were able to educate them on the specifics especially of how to treat clients and also the administrative parts which made them aware of the agencies and the supportive especially because the students needed to be prepared for the professional and because they did not always get things done, would fail to cope with the load and it was important for the supervisor to be very supportive.

**5.2.4 IMPROVEMENTS THAT CAN BE ADMINISTERED**

Some of the respondents suggested that it was important for supervisors to be able to receive training, to go to workshops to able to understand the University’s expectations of the student on their field instruction practicum. They suggested that most of the supervisors are not aware of the requirements and sometimes see other things as unnecessary. They also emphasized that there should be communication between the University and the supervisors so that all activities done are transparent to both parties.

**5.2.5 SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE**

All the participants agreed on the importance of supervision to be providing the supervisee with guidance and support in their academic work and also social lives. Through support and guidance they are also equipping the students to be professionals and preparing them for the reality of a work environment setting.

**5.2.6 GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION**

Among the respondents they had different types of supervision which included the group supervision and individual supervision and this type of supervision impacted on them differently with some of them preferring one over the other stating the various advantages and disadvantages of each.

**5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study was based on finding data from interviews with eight participants who were postgraduate social work students. This means that the study depended on the credibility of the participants, their recollections and interpretation of participants’ responses (O’Donoghue, 2012,p.228)

**5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to De Vos et al (2011) every research study has recommendations. The research had the following recommendations:

1. Participants recommended for the University to go for training and workshops in preparation for the supervision during the internship
2. Organizations should be accommodative of student learning requirements
3. The student learning about Field Instruction has to make it an on-going throughout the Field Instruction Practicum period
4. Ongoing Supervision offered by fellow students through various mechanism of peer support would enhance student learning and existing support available from the training provider. Increasing peer support would be in many instances of peer support to be made available to students and may require an increased diversity (Tsui,2005)
5. The University and the Social Work Department should allocate internal supervisors and not external supervisors
6. The course coordinator should allocate fewer students to each supervisor to enable the supervisor to give as much attention as the next student

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**APPENDICES**

 

**Appendix A-Participant Sheet**

**Title: Perceptions of Postgraduate Social Work students in regards to their undergraduate field instruction supervision experiences.**

**Good Day**

My name is Tafadzwa Kapfudza and I am a fourth-year student registered for the degree of Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree I am conducting research into the perceptions of social work postgraduate students in regards to their undergraduate Field Instruction supervision experiences. This also entails their experiences of the field instruction supervision processes. In the end, my hope is that the findings and conclusions I could arrive at would be helpful in the Department of Social Work in planning of the curriculum by taking into consideration the view of students.

I therefore invite you to participate in this study as social work postgraduate students. Participation is voluntary and by choice and if at any chance you feel uncomfortable or unwilling your decision will be respected. If at all you would want to know about the results of the study abstracts will be made at your requests and this I will also discuss with my supervisor.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in the research, your time and effort

**Yours Sincerely**

**Tafadzwa Kapfudza (Student Social Worker)**



**APPENDIX B: Consent form for participation in the study**

**Research Topic**

**Perceptions of Postgraduate Social Work students in regards to their undergraduate field instruction supervision experiences.**

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to participate in the research study. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me

I understand that:

* My participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study without being disadvantaged in any way
* I may choose not to answer any specific questions asked if I do not wish to do so
* There are no foreseeable benefits or particular risks associated with participation in this study
* My identity will be kept strictly confidential, and any information that may identify me, will be removed from the interview transcript
* A copy of my interview transcript without any identifying information will be stored permanently in a locked cupboard and may be used for future research
* I understand that my responses will be used in the write up of an honours project and may also be presented in conferences, book chapters, journal articles or books.

Name of the participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX C: Consent form for audio-taping of the interview**

**Research Topic**

**Perceptions of Postgraduate Social Work students in regards to their undergraduate field instruction supervision experiences.**

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_hereby consent to tape-recording of the interview.

I understand that:

* The recording will be stored in a secure location (a locked cupboard or password-protected computer) with restricted access to the researcher and the research supervisor.
* The recording will be transcribed and any information that could identify me will be removed.
* When the data analysis and write-up of the researcher study is completed, the audio-recording of the interview will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study.
* The transcript with all identifying information directly linked to me removed, will be stored permanently and may be used for future research.
* Direct quotes from my interview, without any information that could identify me may be cited in the research report or other write-ups of the research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D: Interview Schedule**

**Title: Perceptions of Postgraduate Social Work students in regards to their undergraduate field instruction supervision experiences**

1. What is the importance of field instruction supervision?

2. What are some of the difficulties/challenges of field instruction supervision?

3. How much impact did the supervisor have on your progression in the social work profession?

4. What are some of the problems you experienced during field instruction supervision with the supervisor?

5. How did you respond or what was the plan of action in regards to the challenges?

6. How helpful was the field instruction supervision in becoming a postgraduate student?

7. What are your opinions and feelings in regards to field instruction supervision?

8. What are your thoughts, ideas or opinions on what improvements could be administered?

9. What are your perceptions on the quality of student supervision?

10. What is the subsequent impact of student supervision on their practice?

11. What aspects of supervision do you perceive as important to experience supervision as a positive experience?