

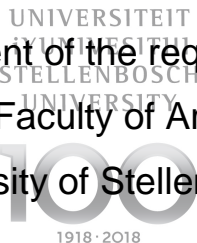
# **Management functions of frontline social workers supervising social auxiliary workers**

by

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Social Work in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the  
University of Stellenbosch



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## DECLARATION

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## **SUMMARY**

The need for social auxiliary workers originated from social workers not being able to cope with all the challenges associated with addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable in South Africa. The purpose of social auxiliary workers is therefore to be assistants to social workers, helping social workers to effectively deliver services to those in need. Social auxiliary workers work under the supervision of social workers and never on their own. The social worker responsible for the supervision is not necessarily a supervisor on middle management level. For the purpose of this study, these social workers will be referred to as frontline social workers.

The goal of this study is to obtain an understanding of how frontline social workers view their supervision of social auxiliary workers through the execution of the management functions. The study was undertaken to firstly provide an overview of social auxiliary work and secondly to explore the supervision of social auxiliary workers in terms of the execution of management functions.

A qualitative research approach was utilised to explore social workers' views on the supervision of social auxiliary workers in the execution of their management functions. The study made use of non-probability; snowball sampling and participants were recruited in their personal capacities. The social workers were all frontline workers, supervising social auxiliary workers in the Western Cape. The researcher used an interview schedule as data-gathering instrument.

The findings confirmed that the supervision of social auxiliary workers is essential to ensure quality service delivery. Hence, the frontline social workers who are responsible for the supervision need proper training in supervision. It is recommended that an accredited training course be developed to equip social workers with the skills to supervise and manage social auxiliary workers. It is also recommended that need-specific training should be done on the four management functions essential for supervision and management of social auxiliary workers to ensure effective service delivery.

## OPSOMMING

Die behoefte aan maatskaplike hulpwerkers het ontstaan as gevolg van maatskaplike werkers wat vanweë al die uitdagings van hul beroep nie voldoende aandag kan skenk aan die nood van die armes en kwesbare mense in Suid-Afrika nie. Die doel van maatskaplike hulpwerkers is om as 'n assistent vir maatskaplike werkers te dien om doeltreffende dienslewering aan hulpbehoewendes te verseker. Maatskaplike hulpwerkers werk onder die supervisie van maatskaplike werkers en nooit op hul eie nie. Die maatskaplike werkers wat vir die supervisie verantwoordelik is, is nie noodwendig 'n supervisor op middelvlakbestuur nie. Daar word vir die doel van die studie na hierdie maatskaplike werkers as eerstelinie maatskaplike werkers verwys.

Die doel van die studie is om 'n begrip te verkry van hoe eerstelinie maatskaplike werkers die supervisie van maatskaplike hulpwerkers ervaar ten opsigte van die uitvoer van hul bestuursfunksies. Die studie is onderneem om eerstens 'n oorsig van maatskaplike hulpwerk te verkry en tweedens die supervisie van maatskaplike hulpwerkers te verken met verwysing na hoe hulle deur maatskaplike werkers bestuur word.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is gebruik om die maatskaplike werkers se beskouing van die supervisie van maatskaplike hulpwerkers deur die uitvoering van die bestuursfunksies te ondersoek. Die studie het van 'n nie-waarskynlike sneeubal-steekproef gebruik gemaak en die deelnemers is in hul persoonlike hoedanigheid gewerf. Die maatskaplike werkers is almal eerstelinie werkers wat supervisie aan maatskaplike hulpwerkers in die Wes-Kaap verskaf. Die navorser het van 'n onderhoudskedule as data-insamelingshulpmiddel gebruik gemaak.

Die bevindinge bevestig dat die supervisie van maatskaplike hulpwerkers noodsaaklik is om dienslewering van gehalte te verseker. Dit is waarom eerstelinie maatskaplike werkers wat vir supervisie verantwoordelik is, behoorlike opleiding in supervisie nodig het. Daar word aanbeveel dat 'n geakkrediteerde opleidingskursus ontwikkel word om maatskaplike werkers met die vaardighede toe te rus om supervisie aan maatskaplike hulpwerkers te bied en hulle te bestuur. Daar word ook aanbeveel dat behoefte-spesifieke opleiding gebied word in die vier bestuursfunksies wat noodsaaklik is vir die

supervisie en bestuur van maatskaplik hulpwerkers om doeltreffende dienslewering te verseker.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASASWEI	Association of South African Schools of Social Work Education Institutions
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CBO	community-based organisation
DoL	Department of Labour
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	early childhood development
ETQA	Education and Training Qualifications Authority
FBO	faith-based organisation
FET	Further Education and Training
FETC	Further Education and Training Certificate
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HWSETA	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
IPU	in-patient unit
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NDSD	National Department of Social Development
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAW	social auxiliary worker
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

In the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) it was highlighted that human resource capacity in the welfare field is inadequate to address the social development needs of South Africa. This is substantiated by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2011), indicating that only 9 000 social workers are servicing a population of 50 million South Africans, meaning that one social worker is expected to service around 5 000 people, which is unrealistic. High caseloads are only one of the reasons leading to social workers leaving the profession. Other reasons include poor working conditions, insufficient safety and security, poor salaries, staff shortages and high staff turnover, lack of resources, inadequate supervision, and a lack of office space, equipment and vehicles (Engelbrecht, 2014:101).

To address the reasons why social workers are leaving the profession, a recruitment and retention strategy was drafted by the Department of Social Development (DSD) (2006) to retain existing social workers and recruit additional social workers. This pointed to the decline in the productivity and quality of social work services as a result of high caseloads, work-related stress and lack of structured supervision. The Department of Social Development (2006:20) also referred to poor-quality supervisors, who themselves lacked the capacity to conduct professional supervision.

The Department of Social Development supports a ten-year human resource plan for other social service professions such as social auxiliary work. The Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa (DSD & SACSSP, 2012) furthermore supports the recruitment and retention strategy, saying that the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and the profession should look after the country's social workers to retain them, and to ensure that effective and efficient supervision becomes an essential part of service delivery and developmental growth.

In 2003 the Department of Social Development (2006) declared social work a scarce skill. This was an admission that the productivity and quality of social work services were declining as a result of high caseloads, work-related stress and lack of structured supervision.

The recognition of social work as a scarce skill has significant implications. According to Lombard (2008:164), “the positive gains of the recognition of social work as a scarce skill was due to the increased budget allocation for the salaries of social workers in the public sector and for scholarships for social work studies, and the recruitment and training of 9 000 social auxiliary workers”. Social auxiliary workers have been trained since 1993, first by the SACSSP until 2006.

Thereafter, the training of social auxiliary workers was taken over by the Further Education and Training Colleges as a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 4 qualification on the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) database (SACSSP Newsletter, 2009). These social auxiliary workers have been working ever since under the supervision of qualified social workers, although the social workers are not necessarily supervisors as set out in the Supervision Framework (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). One of the legislative requirements for social auxiliary workers, set out in the Supervision Framework (DSD & SACSSP, 2012), is that supervision is mandatory and on-going for the duration of the social auxiliary workers’ practice.

According to the same framework social workers who supervise and manage social auxiliary workers need to adhere to certain requirements. Hence, these social workers must be registered with the SACSSP; have at least three years’ experience as social worker; attend a comprehensive supervision course presented by an accredited service provider recognised by the SACSSP; and have a portfolio of evidence available upon appointment in the organisation that confirms social work supervision and management courses completed, experience and competencies (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

Thus, social workers who supervise social auxiliary workers are still frontline social workers. However, they have to fulfil a dual role by being in the field as well as taking on a supervisory role. Not being supervisors as referred to in the Supervision Framework, they still have additional responsibilities. The role of the supervisors, as

indicated in literature on supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014), is on a middle management level. Therefore, social workers in South Africa are expected to deliver middle management functions when supervising social auxiliary workers.

Moving into supervising and managing social auxiliary workers requires a change in the level of responsibilities of the social worker. Transitioning from practitioner to supervisor is an important change that often lacks adequate preparation. Many supervisors do not feel adequately prepared for the task at hand. In a study undertaken by Shulman (1982:77) more than three decades ago on the statement “I received adequate preparation for the tasks and problems I faced as a beginning supervisor” the response was between uncertain and disagree. It is clear that beginning supervisors are not comfortable in their new position; this tendency has been on-going for many decades.

Frontline social workers whose priority is fieldwork are less prepared as they are expected to supervise and manage social auxiliary workers without any training in terms of supervision. “Being a supervisee doesn’t make one a supervisor, just as being a student doesn’t make one a teacher” (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:282). This suggests that it is expected of supervisees to now be supervisors without training for the responsibility laid on them.

Changes in the transition from social worker to supervisor may cause a significant amount of stress to newly appointed supervisors. According to Lewis, Packard and Lewis (2007:150), transition involves change, and change can be painful. However, change can also offer the opportunity for personal development and self-actualisation. The social worker is moving from a position of “I am responsible for myself” to “I am responsible for the outputs of others”. Although frontline social workers are not appointed in the position of supervisors, change can be detrimental to their performance as they are responsible for supervising social auxiliary workers without having received any training on how to supervise.

In some instances, social workers still need supervision themselves as a result of the complexities of being frontline social workers. This can complicate the supervision that is expected from frontline social workers. According to Munson (2002:39), the new supervisor/social worker must adjust to regulating the work of others and must adapt



to the authority associated with the new role. Frontline social workers do not receive any authority by supervising social auxiliary workers because they are not appointed as supervisors; they simply need to fulfil the role as part of their social work duties.

Kadushin (1992:297-298) stressed that newly appointed supervisors/social workers are essentially entering a new occupation, not simply a new position. For frontline workers in South Africa, this is neither a new occupation nor a new position. Instead, it forms part of the daily duties for which they are not adequately equipped.

According to Kadushin and Harkness (2002:282), only a few social workers have had formal training in supervision prior to their appointment. Although this postulation holds in a North American context, this may also be true in a South African context. Hence, these social workers felt considerable anxiety about whether they could do the task at hand for which they have not been trained. Various South African studies (Botha, 2002; Cloete, 2012; Engelbrecht, 2008) agreed with this view. This opens the gap for errors and incompetence as add-on responsibilities come with new requirements and expectations.

Cousins (2004) emphasised that the experience of first-time supervisors or managers is often one of the most challenging in their careers. They rarely have adequate training for their new management roles; they were promoted because of their technical expertise and not because of their managerial expertise. The above-mentioned emphasises the dilemma of expecting frontline social workers who have not been appointed as supervisors to fulfil a supervision role as part of their social work duties.

In terms of management theories, Weinbach (2008:46) stated that “past, present, and emerging management theories all have great importance for social workers charged with demonstrating the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services”. According to scientific management, the work of the manager should involve the design and application of better ways to increase worker productivity. Fayol's (1949) five functions of management are still reflected in current literature (Engelbrecht, 2014). These functions are planning, organising, staffing, leading and controlling. The common denominators among these functions are that they all suggest the efforts of a manager to take an active role in shaping various aspects of the work environment.

Weinbach (2008:73) also supported the functions of management as mentioned by Fayol (1949). Weinbach (2008) referred to the primary purpose of management as positively influencing the activities that take place within an organisation and its environment. It is expected of frontline social workers to shape and influence activities taking place in the organisation while they are still part of the team that is executing the activities.

Authors such as Kadushin and Harkness (2014), Munson (2002), Tsui (2005), Van Dyk and Harrison (2008) and Smith (2005) furthermore identified three main supervision functions, namely the administrative, educational and supportive functions. The administrative function of supervision supports the management functions mentioned by Fayol (1949) and Weinbach (2008). These management functions include the aspects of planning, organising, leadership and control as part of the management function of supervision in social work.

This is also evident in the supervision of social auxiliary workers in South Africa as the role that social workers play in supervising social auxiliary workers is mostly focused on the administrative function (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). In social service organisations all the staff members, from managers to care workers, perform these four basic managerial functions as already highlighted (i.e. planning, organising, leadership and control).

Regardless of an individual's level and position in the organisation, the four general management functions are interrelated and performed more or less simultaneously to achieve predetermined goals (Engelbrecht, 2014:49). Although frontline social workers must perform these functions in their own work they are also responsible for the social auxiliary workers' performance of these functions. This increases the responsibilities of frontline social workers significantly, also because they take on these responsibilities without sufficient preparation.

Fayol's functions (1949), namely planning, organising, staffing, leading and controlling, have been designed to increase the likelihood of organisational goal attainment and the delivery of effective services. It needs to be remembered that the functions are simply ways of trying to help us conceptualise the complex work of the

manager by breaking it down into smaller parts (Weinbach, 2008:73). These functions can be used in an interrelated way and individually as the need arises.

Weinbach (2008:333) said in this regard: “The best managers are lifelong learners. They are never content with their current knowledge and skills, always seeking to improve.” Social workers need to familiarise themselves with new theories and developments within the field of management as management forms an integral part of social work practice. It is the responsibility of social workers to keep abreast of new information in the social work field. With reasonable effort and determination, it can also become an exciting and gratifying activity for the social worker (Weinbach, 2008:334).

The nature of the supervisory relationship depends on the supervisor’s leadership style, the supervisee’s motivation, and the organisational needs. The supervisor’s primary task is therefore to ensure that each supervisee views his or her own work as a key component in helping the organisation achieve its goals; and that each supervisee develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to carry out this work and remains motivated towards growth (Lewis, Packard & Lewis, 2007:11).

As mentioned above, various literature studies have found that social workers are not adequately prepared when moved from practitioner to supervisor roles. The research findings of Engelbrecht (2010) in South Africa and Carpenter, Webb, Bostock and Coomber (2012) in the United Kingdom confirmed that supervision sessions are sometimes cancelled or delayed because supervisors are too busy or supervision is conducted “on the run” (Noble & Irwin, 2009:351) and “often focused more on workers completing forms on time rather than on quality outcomes for service users” (Bourn & Hafford-Letchfield, 2011:45). It is therefore important to research what frontline social workers are doing as supervisors of social auxiliary workers, and how they perform the management functions in their dual role of being social workers as well as supervisors, without sufficient training for the supervisory role.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession (DSD & SACSSP, 2012) it is stated that supervision for social auxiliary workers is mandatory and ongoing for the duration of their practice. Social workers will therefore always have to supervise

social auxiliary workers over and above doing their frontline social work, which may lead to compromised supervision. The Framework also states that supervisors of social auxiliary workers should be registered with the SACSSP, have at least three years of experience and training in supervision, and have a portfolio of evidence confirming the training.

It has been highlighted in various literature studies (Botha, 2002; Cloete, 2012; Engelbrecht, 2008; Shulman, 1982) that social workers are not sufficiently prepared for the shift from practitioner to supervisor. Their practice as supervisors is mostly done in the way that they were supervised before. Munson (1983:86) stated that the key to the development of the social worker's style is the style of the supervisor. However, this can also apply to the style of social auxiliary workers as they are supervised by frontline social workers.

Keeping in mind that those frontline social workers are not primarily supervisors but that the function of supervision is expected from them, the question arose: If frontline social workers are still in need of supervision themselves, how will they be able to effectively supervise social auxiliary workers? As a result of the continuous shortage of social workers in South Africa and the huge expectation from social workers to deliver effective services, their supervision and managerial roles have been neglected. According to Naidoo and Kasiram (2003), social workers experience supervision and management as poorly conducted, ineffectual and a source of stress.

From the above it becomes clear that a gap exists in the training of social workers as supervisors and managers of social auxiliary workers. Therefore, the need arises to find out how frontline social workers are managing social auxiliary workers.

## **GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of the views of frontline social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers. In order to achieve this, the following objectives were formulated:

- To describe social auxiliary work as a social service profession in South Africa;
- To explain the execution of management functions by social workers in their supervision of social auxiliary workers;

- To empirically investigate the views of frontline social workers on the execution of management functions in their supervision of social auxiliary workers;
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations to social workers on the execution of their management functions in the supervision of social auxiliary workers.

### 1.3 CLARIFICATIONS OF CONCEPTS

The following key concepts were clarified to enhance the understanding of the issues discussed in this study:

#### **Social auxiliary work**

An act or activity practised by a social auxiliary worker under the guidance and control of a social worker and as a supporting service to a social worker to achieve the aims of social work, Social Work Act (No 110 of 1978).

#### **Social worker**

A person registered and authorised in accordance with the Social Work Act (No 110 of 1978) to practice social work (*New Dictionary of Social Work*, 1995:60).

#### **Supervision**

Supervision is a formal arrangement through which supervisees review and reflect on their work. It is related to on-going learning and performance. Social work supervision is an interactive process in a positive, non-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models and perspectives of supervision. It entails educational, supportive and administrative functions that promote efficient and professional social work services (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

#### **Management functions**

Management functions in this context refer to the functions that help social work managers (for the purpose of this study, frontline social workers) deliver quality services if executed correctly. These management functions include the following (Engelbrecht, 2014:51, 57, 59, 67):

- **Planning:** Planning forms the basis of all management functions because it gives direction to an organisation and defines actions or interventions.

- **Organising:** Organising is the process of arranging and allocating work, authority and resources among employees of an organisation so that they can achieve the goals of the organisation.
- **Leading:** Leadership sets activities in motion and keeps the activities moving until the goals have been accomplished.
- **Control:** Control involves narrowing the gap between the planning and the actual achievements of the social service organisation.

## 1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section will focus on the research methodology that was employed in this study. A description of the research approach and research design as well as the research methodology is also provided.

### 1.4.1 Research approach

This study used a qualitative research approach. Kumar (2005:12) described the characteristics of qualitative research as follows:

- It allows flexibility in all the aspects of the research process;
- It is appropriate in terms of exploring the nature of a problem, issue or phenomenon;
- It describes a situation, phenomenon, problem or event.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011:65) explained that a qualitative researcher is concerned with:

- Describing and understanding rather than explaining or predicting;
- Naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement; and
- Subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to an outsider perspective.

In addition, a qualitative study is concerned with non-statistical methods and small samples, often purposively selected (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:65).

Qualitative research was therefore considered to be particularly suitable as the goal of this study was to gain an understanding of the views of social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers.

#### **1.4.2 Research design**

This study used an exploratory and descriptive research design. The exploratory design is explained by Fouché and De Vos (2011:95-96) as research to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual. It is aimed at providing an answer to a “what” question. In terms of this study, the “what” question was: What are the views of social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers?

The descriptive research design presented a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship, and focused on “how” and “why” questions (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96). For the purpose of this study the questions revealed how social workers view themselves regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers and why they are doing the management. According to Rubin and Babbie (2005:125), description is more likely to refer to a more intensive examination of phenomena and their deeper meanings, thus leading to thicker descriptions, as was the case with this study.

#### **1.5.3 Research method**

##### **1.5.3.1 Literature study**

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:109), there are four purposes for carrying out a literature review:

- To assure the reviewers that the researcher understands the current issues related to his or her topic;
- To point out ways in which the researcher's study is similar to, or different from, other studies that have been previously conducted;
- To fit the researcher's study into the jigsaw puzzle of present knowledge;
- To introduce and conceptualise the variables that will be used throughout the study.

The literature review for this study shed light on the following aspects: a description of social auxiliary work as a social service profession in South Africa, the functions in the management of social auxiliary workers, and the views of social workers on the execution of their managerial functions. Both local and international literature sources on the human service professions were used, including journals, books, articles and theses.

### **1.5.3.2 Population and sampling**

Population is a term that sets boundaries on the study units, and refers to individuals in the universe who have specific characteristics. The population for this study was all registered social workers employed in the Western Cape who supervised social auxiliary workers. In the Western Cape social auxiliary workers are mainly employed by non-governmental organisations. In this study, participants were recruited in their personal capacity through telephone calls, interviews and informed consent forms. Hence, the organisations for which the participants worked were not involved in the study.

De Vos *et al.* (2011: 391) indicated that in qualitative studies non-probability sampling methods are used. This study made use of snowball sampling which is directed at the identification of hard-to-reach individuals. Data was collected on the few members of the target population located and they referred the researcher to other members of the population.

Criteria for inclusion in the sample of the study were participants who were:

- Social workers registered with the SACSSP and employed in the Western Cape;
- Social workers managing social auxiliary workers in any registered welfare organisation that delivers social services;
- Social workers with at least one year of work experience.

In this research study, 20 registered frontline social workers who work in the Western Cape and who supervise social auxiliary workers were interviewed.



### **1.5.3.3 Method of data collection**

Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of the participants' beliefs about, or perceptions, or accounts of, a particular topic (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:351). A set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule (Annexure A) was used, and the interview was guided rather than dictated by the schedule. In this relationship, participants were perceived as the experts on the subject and therefore allowed maximum opportunity to tell their stories.

In this study, the social workers managing social auxiliary workers were the experts who got ample opportunity to share their views regarding managing social auxiliary workers according to the management functions.

## **1.6 DATA PROCESSING**

### **1.6.1 Method of data analysis**

Data analysis, according to De Vos *et al.* (2011:397,398), is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. In reality the process is referred to as messy, ambiguous and time-consuming but also creative and fascinating. Data analysis in this context was used as a non-numerical interpretation of observations in order to discover underlying meaning and patterns of relationships.

In this study, data was collected in the form of recorded interviews, which were transcribed and subjected to thematic content analysis to produce patterns and themes. The researcher managed the data by making additional notes and actively listening to the voice recordings of the interviews. The recorded data was transcribed manually to text format by the researcher. The denaturalised approach of Olivier, Serovich and Mason (2005) was used during this process since the focus was more on the content rather than on how it was said. In view of this, pauses, stutters, silence, involuntary actions and repetition of words that seemed habitual were all removed during transcription. Grammar was corrected where needed to give a clearer understanding of the information provided by the participants. This was done with extra caution to avoid changing the meanings and interpretations that participants gave to their situations.

### **1.6.2 Method of data verification**

Various criteria were used to determine the rigour of qualitative research, but the most common trustworthiness criteria were credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:419).

#### **Credibility**

De Vos *et al.* (2011:419) referred to credibility as being the most important method of data verification. The goal was to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. Strategies to increase the credibility included prolonged engagements and persistent observation in the field and also member checks (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:420).

#### **Transferability**

Transferability of the study was achieved through a detailed description of the research methodology. This ensured that the research findings are transferable to other settings.

#### **Dependability**

The researcher tried to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study. The research design and its execution were described in detail (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:420; Shenton, 2004:71).

#### **Conformability**

Conformability captured the traditional concept of objectivity. It is important that the findings of the study can be confirmed by another study. By doing so, evaluation was shifted from the researcher to the data (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:421; Shenton, 2004:72).

### **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

De Vos *et al.* (2011:114) defined ethics as follows: "Ethics is a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted, and offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students."

The researcher, who is a social worker registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), used the standards of the code of conduct as prescribed by the SACSSP. The researcher obtained permission (Annexure C) from the Ethics Committee of Stellenbosch University to conduct this study.

The following ethical issues were considered in terms of this study:

- **Avoidance of harm:** According to Strydom (2011:115), it is a fundamental ethical rule not to cause any harm to participants. Yet, everything we do in life has the possibility of harming someone. Harm in the social services field will mainly be of an emotional nature. The researcher therefore conducted the semi-structured interviews in such a way that the focus was only on the social workers' views regarding the execution of their functions in the management of social auxiliary workers. Questions did not include emotional content and therefore posed minimal risk.
- **Informed consent:** The researcher provided the participants with written consent forms that explained the purpose of the study, confidentiality and voluntary participation. Strydom (2011:117) described written informed consent as a necessary condition, where the emphasis is placed on accurate and complete information, for participants to fully understand the details of the study and to be able to make a voluntary and thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation. See Annexure B for informed consent.
- **Confidentiality:** Participants were informed about confidentiality and that only the researcher and her supervisor would have access to the information. According to Strydom (2011:119), confidentiality includes the handling of information received from participants in a confidential manner, and the continuation of privacy, which refers to agreements between persons that limit the access of third parties to private information.
- **Debriefing:** Throughout the interviews, the researcher was aware of the fact that the interviews could upset the participants, and that they may experience feelings of discomfort afterwards. One of the easiest ways to debrief participants is immediately after the session by discussing their feelings about the project, or by sharing with them the results of the study. If the researcher is not able to do the debriefing he or she can refer the participants to an

appropriate source for counselling (Strydom, 2011:122). However, the interviews conducted in this study did not contain emotional content and debriefing was not foreseen.

- **Secure data:** Data was secured by means of password protected electronic files.

## 1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011), limitations in a research study are important elements that the researcher needs to be aware of, recognise, acknowledge and present clearly. Specific limitations came to the fore while conducting this study. Little literature was available on supervision and management within the social work field and specifically supervision of social auxiliary workers. As a result, the researcher had to make use of literature findings on supervision and management in other disciplines and adapt these for the study. The South African literature focuses on the supervision methods and functions (Lourens, 1995; Mbau, 2003).

The findings could not be generalised due to the small sample but the intention was not to generalise; the focus was on the narratives of the participants. The scope of the study could have included interviews with the social auxiliary workers. However, for the ambit of the study this was not needed as the goal was to gain an understanding of social workers' views on using the management functions when supervising social auxiliary workers.

## 1.9 CHAPTER OUTLAY

This research report is structured into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the study and includes information on how the study will be conducted.
- Chapter 2 is based on a literature study describing social auxiliary work as a social service profession in South Africa.
- Chapter 3 is a literature study on how social workers execute the management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers.
- Chapter 4 provides the empirical study on the findings of social workers' views on executing the management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers.

- Chapter 5 provides conclusions and recommendations to social workers in the Western Cape on the execution of the management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORK AS AN OCCUPATION**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter a brief discussion will take place on how social auxiliary work originated and developed. Attention will be given to social auxiliary work courses on NQF Level 4 and 5 registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), what these courses entail and the importance of these courses for the social service profession in a developing country like South Africa. Attention will also be drawn to the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa (DSD & SACSSP, 2012) and the functions implemented during supervision. This will provide a better understanding of why social auxiliary work is imperative for the social work profession as well as why the continuous supervision of social auxiliary workers as support to the social worker is required.

Training for social auxiliary workers is changing continuously. Social auxiliary work training is ultimately aimed at supporting social workers.

Training started with the certificate course presented by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), following by the NQF Level 4 training presented by the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) and the development of the NQF Level 5 Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work presented by higher education institutions.

#### **2.2 SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORK AS A SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE ORIGIN OF SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORK**

The concept of social auxiliary work was defined by the United Nations as early as 1958. It was defined as “A paid worker in a particular technical field with less than full qualifications in the field who assists and is supervised by professional workers” (Nel, 1976:115). Apart from South Africa, other countries such as Hungary also took the initiative to introduce social work assistants as part of their service rendering to communities. This was done as a result of the significant economic and political changes in Hungary during the late 1970s.

The need for social auxiliary work in South Africa was identified as early as the 1970s. Social workers could not meet the ever-increasing demand for social services from individuals, families, groups and communities. Supportive staff members, who could work alongside social workers, were needed. This laid the foundation for social auxiliary work as a supportive service to social workers.

In South Africa, the then Department of Prisons, now called the Department of Correctional Services, started employing social auxiliary workers in 1972 to support the social workers in its service. Introducing social auxiliary work to the welfare fraternity was very informal at the time, and the Department of Correctional Services developed its own curriculum for the education and training of social auxiliary workers. Currently, the need for social auxiliary work has become even greater. In April 2013, Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini again recognised the need for government to hasten the recruitment, training and retention of appropriately trained social auxiliary workers (DSD, 2013).

In May 1998, after extensive research and consultation, the Social and Associated Workers Act (No 110 of 1978) was amended to the Social Work Act (No 110 of 1978) and the term *associated workers* was replaced by the term *social auxiliary workers* (Lombard & Pruis, 1994:258). According to the Social Service Professions Act (No 110 of 1978), which replaced the Social Work Act (No 110 of 1978), social auxiliary work is defined as “an act or activity practiced by a social auxiliary worker under the guidance and control of the social worker and as a supporting service to a social worker to achieve the aims of social work”, with the emphasis being on the guidance, control and supporting part.

By November 1991, services rendering by social auxiliary workers were recognised in legislation and structures in South Africa (Lombard & Pruis, 1994:257). This involved the compulsory registration with the South African Council for Social Work, now called the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), of people who rendered a supportive service to social workers as social auxiliary workers. The education and training of social auxiliary workers commenced in 1993 with the offering of the original Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work by the SACSSP in collaboration with employers. This in-service training course was phased out with the last intake of students on 30 June 2006 (SACSSP Newsletter, 2009).

The next phase in the training of social auxiliary workers was the introduction of the Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) in Social Auxiliary Work, registered in 2003 as a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 4 qualification on the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) database. This qualification was registered twice and is currently the only valid qualification for providing recognised education and training to social auxiliary workers.

The SACSSP approved the next phase in the development of the education and training of social auxiliary workers, namely to upgrade the NQF Level 4 qualification to an NQF level 5 Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work, which made it possible for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to offer the qualification (SAQA). Furthermore, the qualification would allow for more credits in areas such as probation services, substance abuse, older persons, community work, disabilities, healthcare, correctional services, child and family life or youth work (SAQA, 2014).

The draft of this qualification at NQF Level 5 has been completed and was available for consultation since 2009 (SACSSP Newsletter, 2009). The concept of HEIs offering the qualification was also on the agenda of the Association of South African Schools of Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) Conference held in October 2009, once again showing that there is a need for social auxiliary workers and their specific training.

The identification of the need for social auxiliary work has also highlighted the need for support and on-going supervision by a professional. For the purpose of this study, professional refers to the frontline social worker (the supervisor) of the social auxiliary worker (the supervisee). It is stated clearly in the above-mentioned overview that the social auxiliary worker is not supposed to work independently.

To gain a better understanding of the importance of a social auxiliary worker, the Level 4 training will be unpacked next.

### **2.2.1 Social Auxiliary Work, NQF Level 4 training**

The above-mentioned overview has made it clear that there is a place for social auxiliary work in the social service profession as social workers do not have the capacity to see to all the social issues in our country on their own. The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) confirmed the shortage of social



workers, indicating that 160 000 social workers were required between 2007 and 2010 to meet the needs of the profession (Kasiram, 2009:649). However, in October 2005, only 11 111 social workers (not all in practice) were registered with the SACSSP, which is a mere 1,5% increase over the previous nine years (Department of Labour, 2008:10-11). Statistics available indicate that this shortfall has been growing over the past decade, due not only to increasing poverty levels but also to many social workers seeking jobs in other countries (Kasiram, 2009:648, 652).

This resource drain has resulted in a hugely negative impact on the lives of ordinary South Africans – especially people with disabilities, older people, children and families affected by HIV/Aids, the poor, the unemployed and victims of family violence who require the help of psychological services – all of whom depend on the services of social workers. The constitutional rights of those affected have been compromised as a result of inadequate social services or the complete lack thereof (Dlamini, 2013). Social auxiliary workers can be a support if utilised correctly. When social auxiliary workers work alongside social workers, more people can be reached and more goals can be achieved.

To enrol for the qualification of Social Auxiliary Work on NQF Level 4, students need to have at least a Grade 10 or equivalent certificate or an NQF Level 3 qualification. Students who do not have the above-mentioned qualification but have been working in the social service field for a certain period of time can apply for recognition of prior learning based on their work-related learning over time (SAQA, 2009).

The Social Auxiliary Work course runs over a period of one year. The service provider decides how theory and practice will be integrated. The qualification consists of three types of learning, namely Fundamental, Core and Elective learning (Hallendorf, Richardson & Wood, 2000:13; SAQA Regulations, 1998). Fundamental learning forms the basis needed to undertake the further learning required to obtain a qualification. It generally refers to language and numeracy skills and is prescribed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) according to specific National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels. Core learning is essential for the qualification and refers to the compulsory learning required. Elective learning refers to a selection of additional credits, at the specified NQF level, from which students may choose to ensure that the

purpose of the qualification is achieved. To be awarded the qualification, students are required to obtain a minimum of 180 credits which are divided as set out below.

### **2.2.1.1 Fundamental Component**

The Fundamental Component is compulsory to obtain the qualification of Social Auxiliary Work on NQF Level 4. The subjects that are needed and the value of the credits for each subject are clearly indicated. Mathematical Literacy is done at NQF Level 4 with credits to the value of 16. Communication is done at NQF Level 4 in a first South African language with credits to the value of 20 and at a NQF Level 3 in a second South African language with credits to the value of 20.

It is therefore compulsory for students to take Communication as a subject with two different South African languages, one at NQF Level 4 and the other at Level 3. The total credits for Fundamentals are 56 (Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2003). The researcher agrees with the importance of communication as that is the core of our service delivery. If social auxiliary workers are not able to communicate properly how will they be able to help people? Effective communication can be seen as the most important life skill that a person can have. According to Sebastian (2010), the improvement of communication in an office could lead to better relationships and higher productivity and in turn lead to success in a person's personal and professional life.

### **2.2.1.2 Core Component**

The Core Component equals 116 credits, all of which are compulsory (Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2003). It is aimed at providing students with a basic understanding and knowledge of the context in which social services function in South Africa. During training students are taught about social development in terms of the roles and needs of social auxiliary workers and the policies applicable to them and their work. Moreover, students are provided with basic knowledge of human behaviour, relationships, systems and social issues using appropriate social auxiliary work methods and techniques. Students are equipped to compile accurate reports, keep precise records and file them appropriately. Lastly, it empowers them with the skills to work as a team member and as a provider of support services to the social work team, including being a research, administrative and financial support.

### **2.2.1.3 Elective Component**

A minimum of 8 credits need to be achieved for the Elective Component. In order to achieve these credits, “a primary understanding of the policies, legislation and organizational functioning as well as the ability, within the team context, to respond as a social auxiliary worker in one of the following focus areas is required: child and family life; child and youth care; youth work; disabilities, drug abuse; chronic illness; mental health; older persons; correctional services; victim empowerment; life skills or community development” (Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2003:15).

Students need to meet 13 exit-level outcomes to be deemed competent. The outcomes state the knowledge, skills and values that a qualifying student will have achieved at the point of leaving the learning programme, leading to a qualification (SAQA, 2012). In summary, it includes a basic understanding of how social welfare works in South Africa, the job description of the social auxiliary worker, the Code of Ethics and the South African legislation including the acts applicable to social welfare. It also includes a basic understanding of human behaviour and social issues impacting social work and social auxiliary work.

Also imperative is understanding and implementing the social work methods of individual, group and community work, and research; being an active team player; knowing your resources in service delivery; effective and efficient recording and reporting; and providing administrative support to the social worker with knowledge of financial matters referring to social auxiliary work.

The 13 exit-level outcomes that Social Auxiliary Work students need to achieve within a timespan of only 12 months are challenging. They complete the course and are deemed competent most of the time. It is thus unclear whether they are able to put theory into practice with the knowledge gained.

It is imperative that social auxiliary workers know how to integrate theory and practice to be a support to the social worker. Social auxiliary work complements and supports social work in all focus areas with services to individuals, families, groups and communities. Definitions of social auxiliary work accurately contain the fundamental elements of providing a supportive and complementary service to social work, focusing particularly on prevention, social development and care. Students need to be equipped

with the necessary knowledge and skills through the training to fulfil their role effectively as an assistance to the social worker.

This qualification is unique to South Africa and is appropriate for the unique needs of social services in this country (SAQA, 2012).

#### **2.2.1.4 Two specific course requirements**

The Social Auxiliary Work qualification consists of 70% workplace-based practical work and 30% theoretical work. It is expected to be delivered in the context of the work situation, since a large part of this course relies on practical experience. Students are thus expected to work at an organisation providing social services for the duration of the learning programme (SAQA, 2012). The practical and theoretical components collectively equip students with the required knowledge, skills and competencies to carry out effective social auxiliary work duties and apply them in the workplace for which the learning was intended (Olsen, 1998:61). Registration with the SACSSP as a learner social auxiliary worker is a statutory requirement for admission to the qualification (Social Work Act, 1978, Regulations and Rules).

The providers of the learning programme fall into two main categories. In the first category are social service organisations accredited as providers of both the theoretical and the practical components. This means that the students receive all their education and training from one provider. The second category consist of organisations that are accredited to either provide the practical component or the theoretical learning.

Providers must be accredited by the relevant Education and Training Qualifications Authority (ETQA). This also applies to the fieldwork placements (SAQA, 2012). Training is more realistic if both the practical and theoretical components are rolled out by one accredited service provider. This service provider will have more control over the progress of the students in terms of both the practical and theoretical components. Also, having the mentor and the assessor under the same roof, so to speak, can only benefit the process.

### **2.2.1.5 Assessment**

Assessment is conducted on a continuous basis throughout the learning programme that contains both practical and theoretical components. Students must work in a social service delivery agency under supervision of a registered social worker for the duration of the programme. The assessment by service providers and/or organisations integrates theory and practice and the related competencies. Assessment is on-going and integrated, using a range of formative and summative methods, including the following (SAQA, 2012):

- Written and oral tests/ examinations
- Problem-solving/practical assignments and essays
- Role-play and simulation sessions
- Written reports
- Peer group review
- Case and project evaluations
- Supervisor evaluations
- Feedback from beneficiaries.

Assessment plays a key role in this qualification. Only registered assessors with the Health and Welfare SETA may facilitate and assess the course. The researcher, based on her experience as an accredited assessor, has found that assessing the theory is easier than the practical component as the students found it difficult to integrate theory into practice. In some cases, they gave back the theory because they lacked the ability to integrate theory into practice. After completion of the theoretical and practical components of the course, moderation takes place.

Moderation means the process that ensures that the assessment of the given outcomes is fair, reliable and valid (Ministry of Education, 1998a:4). After the moderation process has been completed, the applicable SETA will verify and issue the qualification. The qualification is not obtained from the service provider, and will not be issued directly after completion of the course as the processes of moderation and verification still need to take place.

The Higher Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work on NQF Level 5 will be discussed next.

### **2.2.2 Social Auxiliary Work, NQF Level 5**

The Higher Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work on NQF Level 5 has been approved for roll-out from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018. This qualification does not replace the NQF Level 4 qualification. The University of South Africa is currently the only accredited service provider to offer this qualification (SAQA, 2014). This is a 120-credit course and it consists of the following compulsory modules:

- Welfare Policy (12 credits)
- Introduction to Social Work and the Helping Process (12 credits)
- Methods in Social Work (12 credits)
- Human Development and Fields of Practice in Social Auxiliary Work (12 credits)
- Social Auxiliary Work Practical Skills (12 credits)
- Integration of Theory and Practice (12 credits)
- English Proficiency for University Studies (12 credits)
- Developing Information Skills for Lifelong Learning (12 credits)
- The Anthropological Study of Culture in a Multicultural Context (12 credits)
- Language through an African lens (12 credits).

Level 5 has the same exit-level outcomes as Level 4 but there are slight changes in the description of what is expected of the social auxiliary work student. The Level 4 course focuses on basic understanding while the Level 5 course focuses on understanding, assisting and identifying. There are no critical cross-field outcomes in the Level 5 course but it clearly explains what associated assessment criteria speaks to what exit-level outcomes. Students are assessed in terms of the mentioned assessment criteria (SAQA, 2014).

This qualification compares favourably to similar qualifications in the international arena. This has been verified through the South African structures affiliated with the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). The IASSW recently formulated a draft document on Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training, and this qualification, by large, measures up to the standards contained in the global document (SAQA, 2014).

Both the Level 4 and Level 5 programmes run over one year and include theory and practice. When looking at the criteria against which students are assessed, it is clear that a significant amount of work is required from them within a short time span. Students are expected to attend theoretical classes, do formative and summative assessments and complete workbooks for the integration of theory and practice when doing their practical, and build a portfolio of evidence. The logbooks that are signed by their mentors also serve as a summary of their work and need to represent the total amount of the hours required to be competent. The question arises whether justice was done to equip students for practice or whether the emphasis was placed on completing the course even if the student lacked understanding. If the latter is the case, the quality of social auxiliary workers sent out in the field will certainly be compromised.

When considering all the aspects required for students to become competent social auxiliary workers, it will be beneficial to both the students and the organisation if the duration of the training can be shifted from one to two years. More time will be available to facilitate theoretical models, understanding and practical application.

The job description of the social auxiliary worker, when employed in an organisation, will now be discussed.

### **2.2.3 Job description of the social auxiliary worker**

Registered social auxiliary workers employed by a welfare organisation are responsible for the following as part of their job descriptions:

They need to assist the social services professionals by providing services and counselling support to individuals, families and communities, to perform the following tasks (SACSSP, 2008):

- The collection of information relevant to clients' needs;
- Assessing their relevant skills, strengths and deficits;
- Assisting clients to identify options and develop plans of action while providing necessary support and assistance;
- Assisting clients to identify and access community resources including legal, medical and financial assistance, housing, employment, transportation, and assistance with moves, day care and other referral services;

- Providing crisis intervention and emergency shelter services;
- Implementing life skills workshops, substance abuse treatment programmes, behaviour management programmes, youth services programmes and other community and social service programmes under the supervision of social work or health care professionals;
- Assisting in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and programmes by monitoring and reporting on clients' progress;
- Maintaining contact with other social service agencies, schools and health care providers involved with clients to provide information and obtain feedback on clients' overall situation and progress.

When considering the above-mentioned tasks, it is evident that social auxiliary workers can be a huge asset to social workers when used correctly.

Social auxiliary workers are not allowed (SACSSP, 2008) to do the following:

- To perform research acts
- To function independently
- To provide therapeutic services (but they can provide supportive services)
- To provide statutory services
- To write reports regarding statutory or therapeutic interventions (this is solely the task of the social worker)
- Be appointed to do the work of a social worker.

The job description of social auxiliary workers is clear in terms of what is expected from them in order to support the organisation in a meaningful way and to ensure a healthy relationship between the social worker and the social auxiliary worker. The relevance of the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa (DSD & SACSSP, 2012) plays an important role in the use of social auxiliary workers. This will be unpacked next.

## **2.3 SUPERVISION POLICY**

The supervision policy is the tool that guides social service professionals (social workers and social auxiliary workers) in delivering quality social services through the use of effective supervision. The supervision policy was drawn up as a result of the



challenges supervisors have encountered with effective supervision due to high caseloads, a shortage of staff, burnout, and the emigration of social workers (Engelbrecht, 2006). As a result, organisations employing social auxiliary workers must have a context-specific supervision policy in place, aligned with the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). It is only to the benefit of such organisations to customise their policies according to their contexts. In South Africa, traditional supervision, as defined by Botha (2002), is practiced only by social workers and other social service professions, such as social auxiliary workers, probation officers, community development workers, and child and youth care workers (SACSSP, 2008). Social auxiliary workers always work under the supervision of a social worker, although the social worker need not necessarily be a supervisor as set out in this document; the supervisor can also be a frontline social worker.

To effectively supervise social auxiliary workers, organisations should have a theoretical model as their basis. In a study done by Engelbrecht with supervisors, the participants were not aware of the existence of any practice theory or model of supervision at all (Engelbrecht, 2010). They referred to the organisational manual which states that supervision is based on a situational leadership model, but they had no knowledge of the model's theoretical underpinning. The latter was the response of supervisors on middle management level. Even less should be expected from frontline social workers, with less practical experience, who supervise social auxiliary workers. When frontline social workers do not have a theoretical model from which to work they will not have a basis for the supervision of social auxiliary workers.

The ratio of supervisor to supervisee is as important as the theoretical model. The ratio of supervisor to supervisee will differ from organisation to organisation, depending on the staff component. In a one-person office, the social worker is responsible for more than just his or her job description. In bigger organisations where sufficient human resources are available, middle management supervisors are usually responsible for supervision. It is mostly the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) that struggle with ratios because they have to fill the supervision gap when a gap exists in the organisation. The social workers, being frontline social workers, have to do field work while still taking on the responsibility of supervising

social auxiliary workers. It is clear that supervision will be done on the run and some aspect of the work will suffer (Noble & Irwin, 2009).

A manageable ratio of supervisor to supervisee is as important as ensuring non-discriminatory service delivery.

Non-discriminatory practices should be the starting point of all social service delivery, but in reality discrimination still happens. It is each organisation's responsibility to ensure that it practices non-discrimination. According to South Africa's Constitution all people should be treated equally. If social services are rendered from that stance discrimination will have no place (RSA, 1996).

The decision on how to implement supervision in an organisation is the responsibility of the management with buy-in from the rest of the staff. Every organisation should do research on how to implement supervision and how to sustain effective and efficient service delivery. The definition, goal, functions, requirements, methods, contract, personal development plans, supervision sessions, reports and responsibilities in terms of continuing professional development need to be organisational specific for it to meet the needs of the organisation and its staff (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

When looking at social work as a scarce skill and social workers overloaded with high caseloads, can the above-mentioned policy receive justice? Poor working conditions have to be taken into consideration in any discussion on supervision practices in South Africa, and they also have an impact on the training of supervisors, determined as a contentious issue since the establishment of the National Department of Public Welfare in 1937 (Muller, 1965). Hölscher and Sewpaul (2006:174) stated that "social workers in post-apartheid South Africa battle with diminishing resources in relation to increasing numbers of service users, spreading our professional time and resources of financial and material aid increasingly thinly". Social workers across South Africa migrate to other countries in pursuit of better salaries and working conditions as these conditions are dismal in urban and rural areas (Alpaslan & Schenck, 2012; Hölscher & Sewpaul, 2006; September, 2007).

Although the White Paper for Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997) identified the poor salaries, and the service and working conditions of personnel in the welfare sector as major concerns and proposed that it be addressed urgently, after 18 years

these challenges still remain major concerns. Despite the poor salaries, resources and working conditions, social workers also have to deal with high caseloads and competing demands. Social workers are so busy addressing backlogs that they do not have the time to constructively attend to the needs of social auxiliary workers even though the latter need ongoing supervision and guidance from the social workers. The South African Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession is based on “the perceived need for effective supervision within the social work profession in order to improve quality social work services offered to service users” and “it is informed by, amongst other things, lack of adequate training, structural support and unmanageable workloads” (DSD & SACSSP, 2012:14).

### **2.3.1 Legislative requirements**

According to the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa (DSD & SACSSP, 2012), specific legislative requirements apply to the supervision of social auxiliary workers. When looking at South Africa and taking into consideration the scarcity of social workers, some of the requirements mentioned in the Supervision Framework are not attainable because organisations have to make do with what they have, even if it means that a social worker supervising an auxiliary social worker does not have three years of working experience (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

The researcher is in agreement that supervision should be mandatory as social auxiliary workers need lifelong supervision because their services are complementary and supporting. Social auxiliary workers must never expect to work on their own. The supervisors, who for the purpose of the study, are frontline social workers, are co-responsible for the work of the social auxiliary workers. Sometimes, even social workers or supervisors still need supervision themselves.

The requirement of three years of experience to qualify as a supervisor in South Africa is ideal but not workable as a result of the shortage of social workers, the fact that social work has been declared a scarce skill, and the insufficient number of social workers to effectively provide social services (Dlamini, 2013). The circumstances of social service organisations as well as the availability of staff will to a large extent determine who will be used to supervise social auxiliary workers. Social service organisations sometimes have no other choice but to use the resources at their

disposal, even if it means asking a social worker fresh out of university to supervise social auxiliary workers. Even though they know that it is not ideal, non-governmental organisations need to make do with what they have.

Making use of supervisors specifically appointed to do supervision is very rare, especially with social work being declared as a scarce skill and with insufficient numbers of social workers to effectively provide social services to the needy (Dlamini, 2013). This would be the ideal but it is not always possible. In many instances, the social workers or frontline social workers are also the fieldworkers, which mean that supervision is regarded as an additional duty.

To outsource the supervision of social auxiliary workers can become a financial burden, specifically for non-governmental organisations. For outsourcing to work for NGOs, more subsidies should be allocated to NGOs and the sustainability of subsidies should be secured. Considering that social auxiliary workers need lifelong supervision it should not be expected of them to ever work on their own or to be supervised by another social auxiliary worker because it is unethical (SACSSP, 2008). The researcher believes that it is the responsibility of the organisation to see that enough staff is available and equipped to do the required supervision.

As described in the policy, social auxiliary workers with a minimum of five years' experience may move from weekly to monthly supervision. This should be documented within the supervision contract. As social workers progress from supervision to consultation, social auxiliary workers progress from weekly to monthly supervision (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

Ratios of supervisor to supervisee can be complex without knowing the context of the organisation. Ratios are also impacted by the difference between urban and rural work which involves aspects like distance, travelling time and the availability of resources. The ratio of a supervisor (for example, a frontline social worker), whose added responsibility is casework or the management of social welfare services, to supervisee is 1:3 (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). During the dialogues at the Social Workers' Indaba held in Durban in March 2015, supervision was revealed as a major inhibiting factor in the delivery of quality social services. While social work supervisors are appointed, they are not available in sufficient numbers to effectively mentor the estimated 19 500

practitioners in the public service. Currently, the ratio of supervisor to practitioner (including social auxiliary workers) ranges from 1:10 to 1:13 (DSD & SACSSP, 2012) depending where you are in the country, leaving many practitioners working without supervision.

When considering the job description of the frontline worker, the above-mentioned requirements are not in their scope of practice. However, the expectation exists that they need to take on the role of supervising social auxiliary workers without being prepared for the task. According to the National Development Plan (RSA, 2013), South Africa will need 60 000 social workers in 2030. Currently, only 17 441 are employed by the state and non-governmental organisations in the country (RSA, 2013).

Answering a question in parliament in May 2015, the Department of Social Development acknowledged that social workers' caseloads are too high (Swanepoel, 2015). How will frontline social workers effectively supervise and mentor social auxiliary workers if they are not in a position to cope with their own loads and responsibilities? This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed if we want to keep our social workers and social auxiliary workers. The recruitment and retention strategy (Department of Social Development, 2006) is also in question if circumstances are not changing for the better in the social service field.

### **2.3.2 Requirements for supervisors**

According to the Supervision Policy, the following are required from supervisors in order to supervise social auxiliary workers (DSD & SACSSP, 2012):

- The social worker must be registered with the SACSSP;
- The social worker must have at least three years of experience as a social worker in the field;
- The social worker must attend a comprehensive supervision course presented by an accredited service provider recognised by the SACSSP;
- The social worker must have a portfolio of evidence available upon appointment in the organisation, which confirms social work supervision or management courses completed, experience and competencies.

frontline social workers do not have three years of experience yet. However, due to the shortage of social workers, these social workers simply have to supervise social

auxiliary workers. Social workers sometimes still need supervision themselves when this responsibility is dumped on them. The struggle to get registered with the council (SACSSP) is a huge challenge in South Africa because the processing of registrations is very slow. Social workers can wait years to get registered with the council; if they are not registered they work illegally.

The registration issue also compromises the subsidies that non-governmental organisations receive for their service delivery. According to Karen de Kock, DA shadow minister of Social Development, the Department of Social Development does not have money to appoint social workers, but they realise that there are not enough social workers to handle the caseload in South Africa (Swanepoel, 2015). Efforts are made by South African universities to include supervision as part of the social work undergraduate curricula (Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2003).

Since 2007, there has been a positive move towards supervision training as all undergraduate social work curricula at universities must comply with SAQA requirements to meet specific outcomes (Earl, 2008). One category and outcome of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) qualification specifies that students must demonstrate understanding of the roles, functions, knowledge and skills for effective social work supervision and consultation (Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2003). Training is aimed at giving students a better understanding of supervision and its importance, with the hope of producing better supervisors for the future.

### **2.3.3 Ethics**

In South Africa social work values, and ethical principles and standards are articulated in a Code of Ethics by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP), guiding social workers and social auxiliary workers' conduct as well as providing guidance with ethical challenges (SACSSP, 2004:4). This statutory body regulates the Social Service Profession in terms of the Social Service Professions Act (No 110 of 1978), as amended. Gray and Gibbons (2007) referred to values as ideals, whereas ethics guides the individual towards the achievement of these ideals.

Supervision plays an important role in the service delivery of the social auxiliary worker who is obliged to adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Social Work Profession. Social auxiliary workers as well as frontline social workers as supervisors are put in a difficult

position to adhere to the Code of Ethics when supervision is done on the run. When they do not have the time or skill to do supervision properly, their profession is put at risk.

#### **2.3.4 The importance of supervision or supervision sessions**

The Supervision Framework (DSD & SACSSP, 2012:viii) defines social work supervision as “an interactional process within the context of a positive anti-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models and perspectives on supervision whereby a supervisor with the required experience and qualification, and to whom authority is delegated, supervises a social worker, student social worker, social auxiliary worker and learner auxiliary worker by performing educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services”.

For the purpose of this study, supervision is provided to social auxiliary workers by frontline social workers. In most cases, these frontline social workers are not experienced in supervision, have no delegated authority and still need supervision themselves. The supervision task is thus compromised.

According to Carpenter *et al.* (2012), supervision should be geared towards increasing job satisfaction, reducing work stress and burnout, providing assistance with tasks, social and emotional support, and the retention of workers within organisations, based on positive relationships between workers and supervisors. When frontline social workers do not have the necessary training as supervisors, they will not be able to provide proper supervision services to social auxiliary workers. The relationship between the frontline social worker and the social auxiliary worker, and quality of service delivery will be compromised due to a lack of information and training regarding supervision.

Structured supervision sessions are non-negotiable for social auxiliary workers. They support social workers and therefore need continuous guidance and control. Supervision sessions must be structured to include all the functions of supervision, namely administrative, educational and supportive (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; Munson, 2002).



“The sessions should be properly planned, linked to the personal development plan of a social auxiliary worker, state a specific goal and set out an agenda and afterwards a report should be written and signed by the supervisor and the supervisee” (DSD & SACSSP, 2012:27). This would be the ideal. However, at present, the achievement of this is challenging as a result of the shortage of social workers.

Planning and preparing for supervision sessions is a must to provide structure; without it, the effectiveness of the supervision will be compromised. Clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries are necessary, taking into account diversity and the human rights enshrined in South Africa’s Constitution. Recordkeeping of supervision sessions is non-negotiable as it serves as proof of supervision being done. It is the organisation’s responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to conduct effective supervision (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

### **2.3.5 Roles and responsibilities of supervisors**

Although the supervisor’s responsibilities are guided by the Code of Ethics of the SACSSP it is still difficult for the frontline social worker (for the purpose of this study acting as the supervisor) to adhere to all the guidelines. Lack of knowledge and experience has a significant impact on the effectiveness of supervision that is expected from the supervisor. The researcher is of the opinion that the context and human resource capacity of each organisation should be considered when looking at the roles and responsibilities of supervisors. What fits the one may not be working for the other as a result of different expectations in terms of supervision and variables such as urban versus rural circumstances.

It is the organisation’s responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to conduct effective supervision (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). However, in reality, adequate resources with specific reference to human resources (staff component) are a challenge. It is difficult to force organisations to strictly enforce the framework’s roles and responsibilities because, in practice, the supervisor in this study can refer to frontline social workers that range from those just out of university to those with many years of experience. Hence, the way in which roles and responsibilities will be executed will depend on factors such as years of experience and the organizational context.



The roles and responsibilities of both the supervisor and the supervisee are important. This will be unpacked next.

### **2.3.6 Roles and responsibilities of supervisees**

For the purpose of this study, supervisees are the social auxiliary workers who must receive supervision as long as they are in practice. For effective supervision, social auxiliary workers – as supervisees – also need to take on certain roles and responsibilities. They need to be registered as social auxiliary workers with the council (SACSSP), which means that they need to adhere to its Code of Ethics. If there is no commitment towards the supervision, the quality and impact of service delivery will be compromised. Supervisees thus have a responsibility to commit to the supervision sessions.

It is every professional's responsibility to keep abreast of new developments in the field, and to seek training and support for their own growth and development. The organisation alone cannot take full responsibility for this. Recordkeeping is an essential part of social services to build up evidence of what has been done, track progress and provide management information. Planning and preparation is a responsibility that both supervisor and supervisee need to take on to make supervision work effectively (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). Once again, when an organisation has a shortage of human resources and when inadequately trained supervisor are used, supervision is compromised.

The importance of structure needs to be explained to supervisees for them to have an understanding of why it is necessary. The social auxiliary workers, as the supervisees, need guidance to develop their personal development plans even though the development of a personal development plan forms part of their training. Supervisees need to understand the protocols that need to be followed in terms of the lines of communication. Supervisees cannot sidestep their supervisors and approach the next in line. Lines of communication are used for a purpose and need to be followed to avoid unnecessary conflict (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

The role of social auxiliary workers is to support social workers. As such, social auxiliary workers need to work with and under the guidance and control of their supervisors. It is therefore important to understand the supervision functions and how

these impact the frontline social workers who supervise the social auxiliary workers. Next, the supervision functions applicable to the supervision of social auxiliary workers will be explored.

## **2.4 SUPERVISION FUNCTIONS**

Supervision is focused on the professional growth of the supervisee to enable the worker to provide good quality service to clients and to function independently (Hughes, 2010; Kadushin, 1992; Munson, 2002:10; Smith, 2009; Tsui, 2005:8; Van Dyk & Harrison, 2008). It is important to highlight the fact that supervision is a scientifically based process whereby the supervisor guides the social worker/ social auxiliary workers in the development of their professional capacity to enable them to function independently and autonomously within the context of an organisation. However, it is not fair to expect from frontline social workers to guide social auxiliary workers in the development of their professional capacity if they themselves are in need of guidance and development.

Supervision functions refer to the tasks that supervisors have to perform according to their middle management position. The social workers supervising social auxiliary workers are not in middle management positions. Instead, these social workers are mostly frontline social workers who need to take on a responsibility expected from middle management. Authors such as Kadushin and Harkness (2014), Munson (2002), Tsui (2005), Van Dyk and Harrison (2008) and Smith (2005) identified three main supervision functions, namely administrative, educational and supportive. Frontline workers – who at times also struggle to keep up with their own administration, education and support due to high caseloads and a shortage of staff – may find it challenging to help social auxiliary workers keep up with their administration, education and support. It should be remembered that social auxiliary workers need to be supervised for as long as they are in practice.

Other authors like Mbau (2003) and Makondo and Van Biljon (2002) identified six supervision functions, namely:

- Administrative
- Supportive
- Educational

- Motivational
- Modelling
- Personality enrichment.

Even though the first-mentioned authors (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; Munson, 2002; Tsui, 2005; Van Dyk & Harrison, 2008; Smith, 2005) did not distinguish the additional functions, these functions are identified as subdivisions of other functions. Kadushin (1992:201-228) discussed modelling as an element of educational and motivation as a component of the supportive function. Although the functions are distinguished from one another, they are interrelated. The unique value of the supervision functions does not lie in any of the functions in isolation, but in the combination and integration of these functions into a meaningful whole.

The three supervision functions – namely the supportive function, educational function and administrative function – will be discussed next.

#### **2.4.1 Supportive function**

The supportive supervision is vital to help workers cope with job-related stress in order to prevent this stress from influencing their work negatively (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). Supportive supervision comprises the interventions that strengthen the defence mechanisms and capacity of the ego to cope with work anxiety and stress. Kadushin and Harkness (2014) supported this by stating that this function should improve the morale and job satisfaction of social work supervisees because the stress they face may lead to burn-out if they do not receive the necessary help

This function focuses primarily on worker morale and job satisfaction. The goal is to improve morale, job satisfaction and the quality of work (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). An enabling environment must be created to enhance productivity. The supportive function helps the supervisor and supervisee to deal with job-related tensions and stressors, which may, if left unattended, impair the work to detriment of service delivery. Frontline social workers themselves are in need of an environment that is conducive to enhance productivity. To expect from them to support social auxiliary workers while they themselves are in need of support is unreasonable.

A key source of stress for frontline social workers is caseload size. Increasingly, social workers in both public and private agencies have to do more with fewer resources.

Zutshi and McDonnell (2007:20) stated the following: “By offering support within the supervision context supervisees should be given the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the work upon them and prevent issues adversely affecting them and their work.” It is difficult for frontline social workers to grant the mentioned opportunities to social auxiliary workers if they themselves are struggling with high caseloads and few resources.

Tsui (2005:36) highlighted the following aspects regarding the supportive function of the supervisor, saying that the supervisor must be able to:

- Sustain and stimulate a climate of trust, respect, interest and support;
- Empathise with the supervisee's feelings, attitudes and behaviour;
- Recognise the supervisee's frustrations, tensions and anxiety;
- Recognise and reinforce achievement and reflect on success as well as failure;
- Handle painful material directly, objectively and openly.

According to Tsui (2005), the same supervision outputs are required from both supervisors and frontline social workers. However, it is more challenging for frontline social workers to supervise others when they themselves also require supervision.

#### **2.4.2 The educational function**

The educational function involves the teaching of knowledge, skills and attitude that are essential for social work, social auxiliary work and the rendering of services (Botha, 2002; Kadushin, 1992; Tsui, 2005). The implementation of the educational function is a significant challenge for frontline social workers. They need to gain knowledge, skills and attitude themselves while they are mostly not in a position to educate social auxiliary workers. Workers who have been equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to do their work efficiently have been educated to function independently. Supervisors are not experts; they merely draw on their knowledge, skills and experience to facilitate the progress of their supervisees (Todd & Storm, 1997:219).

This function focuses primarily on the ignorance and/or ineptitude of social workers regarding the knowledge, attitudes and skills required to execute their work (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). The primary goal is to improve their knowledge, attitudes and skills so that they can perform to their optimal level when executing their duties. Supervisees must be empowered to intervene in various situations on different levels.

According to Jacques (2014), educational supervision is a reciprocal process between the supervisee and the supervisor. The supervisee utilises the educational input from the supervisor to guide the intervention, while the supervisor uses supervision sessions to identify the training and developmental needs of the supervisee. When social workers themselves are in need of supervision to perform at their optimal level, they are not in a position to fulfil this supervisory role for social auxiliary workers.

The educational function of supervision should be distinguished from staff development and in-service training. It maintains an individualised focus as it is directed at the educational needs of the supervisee within the context of a prescribed workload (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). The content of educational supervision shifts in focus, depending on the education, competencies and experience of each worker. Supervisors need to consider each supervisee's individual learning style and needs, which are shaped by both personal experiences and cultural factors (Jacques, 2014; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; Tsui, 2005). The education function is of utmost importance in aiding the supervisee to grow professionally (Tsui, 2005). Hence, it is important for the supervisor to value the professional development of the supervisee.

#### **2.4.3 The administrative function**

Social work supervision has its roots in the administrative function (Tsui, 2005:486), which is concerned with the promotion and maintenance of good organisational standards and policies. Kadushin and Harkness (2014) referred to the administrative function of supervision as being primarily concerned with ensuring that the agency's policies and procedures are implemented correctly, efficiently and appropriately. The supervisor carries the responsibility to ensure that the policy of the organisation or institution is implemented. It is unfair to expect from frontline social workers to carry the responsibility of implementing policies as their primary focus is to do fieldwork and take care of their own administrative responsibilities.

The administrative function refers to the administrative and managerial tasks of the supervisor. It is aimed at improving the quality and quantity of the services rendered. According to Kadushin (1992) and Tsui (2005), the tasks that the supervisor is called upon to perform in discharging the responsibilities of administrative supervision, include the following:

- Staff recruitment and selection
- Inducting and placing the worker
- Work planning
- Work delegation
- Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating work
- Coordinating work.

The above-mentioned tasks pose a significant challenge, specifically to frontline social workers who are on a low level and who are expected to first copy with their key duties and responsibilities.

The administrative function is a function of supervision. The administrative function plays a key role, even when the supervisee is experienced and functions independently. Significant emphasis is placed on this function as a result of accountability to the organisation, funders and the Department of Social Development. In South Africa, the administrative role of supervision takes priority (Bradley, Engelbrecht & Höjer, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2010; Jacques, 2014). The reason for this is that social workers and social auxiliary workers are accountable to an organisation.

Kadushin (1992:1490) concluded: “Even if all the workers were well trained, were objectively self-critical, and had developed a level of self-awareness that eliminated their need for educational supervision, even if all workers were so highly motivated, so self-assured, so rich in inner resources that they felt no need for supervisory support, administrative supervision would continue to be necessary as long as the workers were employers of an agency.” It should be noted that the intensity of control and management differs in the case of inexperienced workers who are therefore subjected to intensive supervision.

The administration function will be emphasised in the following chapter, with specific focus on the management of social auxiliary workers.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

It is evident from the literature that frontline social workers have a huge challenge to supervise social auxiliary workers, taking into account that they have no or little training

as supervisors. Due to high caseloads, shortage of staff and lack of resources, frontline social workers are struggling to cope with their own work demands.

When taking into account the training that social auxiliary workers receive, it becomes clear that they should be taken by the hand to be able to function effectively as social auxiliary workers. Also keep in mind that supervision for them is mandatory and needed for as long as they are practicing in the profession (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). Social auxiliary workers need to receive effective supervision to support social workers in a competent way.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **MANAGEMENT THEORIES AND MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS WHEN SUPERVISING SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORKERS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will give an overview of the theoretical framework for the management of social auxiliary workers as well as the management functions, planning, organising, leading and control, used when supervising social auxiliary workers. When unpacking the different management functions, it will become clear how frontline social workers use these functions in their supervision of social auxiliary workers. Firstly, attention will be given to the theories, models and perspectives underlying the supervision and management of social auxiliary workers.

#### **3.2 MANAGEMENT THEORIES**

Certain theories and perspectives are important when dealing with supervision and the management of social auxiliary workers. To gain a better understanding of how these theories and perspectives feed into supervision and the management of social auxiliary workers, the use of the strengths perspective as a resource will be discussed.

##### **3.2.1 Strengths perspective**

The strengths perspective is a resource that can be used during supervision and the management of social auxiliary workers as all human beings have strengths that they already use. The strengths perspective focuses on the abilities and strengths of a person and not the weaknesses (Healy, 2005). This perspective draws on the supervisees' abilities, competencies, knowledge and skills, allowing them to prove what they are capable of. In a sense, the approach is non-judgemental because the supervisees are allowed to be part of decision-making and discussion.

The strengths perspective therefore focuses on the strengths of an individual and how these strengths should be utilised during supervision and management. New theoretical developments concur with a strengths-based perspective on supervision because the strengths perspective is an integral part of the competence model of supervision, which is proposed to empower social service professionals like social



workers and social auxiliary workers (Engelbrecht, 2004). Although the strengths perspective is merely seen as a way of thinking about what you do and with whom you do it, it provides a distinctive lens for examining the world of practice (Saleebey, 2002:20). The focus is to move away from the problem towards discovering the strengths of the supervisee and building on it. The emphasis thus shifts from pathology to what can be achieved or what competencies are available. Taking into account that social auxiliary workers must be supervised and managed as long as they practice, the strengths perspective can be an asset to social auxiliary workers to achieve competence and move away from pathology.

According to Healy (2005), the strengths perspective focuses on strengths, competencies, capacities, capabilities and resilience instead of problems and pathology, and is based on key concepts such as empowerment, partnership, facilitation and participation. In addition, it concerns itself with a language of progressive change; it is compatible with social work's commitment to the person-in-environment; and it can be applied in a number of contexts and situations (Gray, 2002; Healy, 2005; Oko, 2000; Saleebey, 2008; Weick, Rapp, Sullivan & Kisthardt, 1989). The strengths perspective informs a developmental approach to social welfare as instituted in South Africa (RSA, 2006). The White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) calls for traditional social work practice to be changed and for services to be rendered from a social developmental perspective. The White Paper proposes a welfare system that would facilitate the development of human capacity.

### **3.2.2 Competence-based and outcomes-based models**

The strengths perspective, as mentioned above, forms part of the competence model, because through it the competence of social workers can be improved by shifting the focus from deficits to capabilities and strengths. According to Page and Stritzke (2006), the competence model of supervision also correlates with outcome-based supervision, and is thus in line with SAQA's requirements to meet specific learning outcomes in academic training (Lombard *et al.*, 2003). Outcomes-based supervision involves a paradigm shift away from the inputs of the supervisor towards a focus on the outcomes of supervision. According to SAQA (1998), outcome is defined as "... the contextually demonstrated end-products of the learning process". Engelbrecht (2004:206) is of the opinion that the competence model of supervision for social

workers or social auxiliary workers and students is relevant for the current South African situation because the implementation of policy, as stipulated by the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) and the South African Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA, 1998), requires that social workers or social auxiliary workers and students demonstrate specific competencies. The success of outcomes-based supervision depends on the continuous, systematic and creative application of outcomes-based principles (Engelbrecht, 2002:209)

As with any model, adopting a competence approach will not meet all the managerial and supervisory needs or responsibilities of the supervisor, but it will highlight the importance of developing supervisor competencies. Although the supervisor for the purpose of this study is the frontline social worker supervising and managing a social auxiliary worker, striving towards competence and reaching certain outcomes are still important. Both frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers need to grow and develop.

Admittedly, in reality, supervision, management and social work responsibilities probably are carried out on a day-to-day basis, irrespective of the particular model that is employed by the organisation. However, in the demanding environment in which the organisation operates, the use of an appropriate model like the competence model would benefit the supervisor and consequently the organisation as a whole (Guttman, Eisikovits & Maluccio, 1988).

The competence model focuses on the outcomes of supervision rather than on the process followed to achieve these outcomes (Engelbrecht, 2002:207). The workers must be able to demonstrate that they have attained set outcomes, so as to prove that they have successfully accomplished certain tasks. This is also relevant in the studies of both social workers and social auxiliary workers where training is done according to outcomes. Outcomes-based training focuses on the final results that are expected, enabling the worker through supervision to achieve the anticipated outcomes and demonstrate specific competencies. The supervisor plays the role of facilitator. The assessment criteria used to indicate the various categories of competence are discussed next.

### **3.2.2.1 Intellectual competence**

Intellectual competence involves knowing what to do, when to do it and who has to do it. The focus is on practical and useful knowledge, but also on the development of more abstract knowledge. Competence and knowing what knowledge to apply to particular people and circumstances must therefore be developed. During supervision, competencies must be carried over from one situation to another and must be adapted in accordance with the demands of the environment and the situation. This is the pivotal aspect of the competence model.

### **3.2.2.2 Performance competence**

This involves knowing how to act in any given situation. The worker must be able to assess the impact of systems on the environment. Strengths in the environment must be facilitated, while limitations must be inhibited. Workers must be able to critically evaluate their own performance competence.

### **3.2.2.3 Personal competence**

Worker must understand themselves, as well as their need for self-development. It develops the mutual relationship between the worker and the supervisor that lays the foundation for the various roles that they both play during supervision. The supervisor's role is to promote the workers' self-awareness and to assist them in understanding their work and related situations. Another role is to highlight areas where self-development is necessary and to propose ways in which the workers' self-development can be promoted. The supervisor must therefore provide the workers with opportunities for professional development. The supervisees' role is to be actively involved in their own development.

### **3.2.2.4 Consequence competence**

Consequence competence involves facilitating the workers' efforts to determine the effectiveness of their interventions. This means determining to what extent the goals of interventions have been achieved according to the intervention plan. A baseline assessment is done prior to the intervention, which is then measured again during and after the intervention.

Apart from the theoretical framework on which supervision should be based, frontline social workers (the supervisors for the purpose of the study) should be able to understand and implement the functions of supervision. The above-mentioned theoretical frameworks will help frontline social workers to make a paradigm shift from the weaknesses to the strengths, capabilities and competencies of the social auxiliary workers. This will also guide frontline social workers in their planning, organising, leading and control as the social auxiliary workers will be included in the decision making processes.

The management functions of planning, organising, leading and control will be discussed next to provide an understanding of how frontline social workers execute these functions in the supervision of social auxiliary workers.

### **3.3 MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS**

Certain management functions are imperative when supervising social auxiliary workers. Fayol (1949) referred to these functions as planning, organising, leading and control. These functions will be unpacked separately with contributions from other sources as well (Cronje, Du Toit & Motlatla, 2009; Engelbrecht, 2014; Hellriegel, Slocum, Jackson, Louw, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw, Oosthuizen, Perks & Zindiye, 2012; Lazenby, 2016; Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba, 2007; Weinbach, 2008). It is important to gain an understanding of all the functions but also to remember that they can overlap at any time. All of them are important to ensure effective and efficient service delivery.

The execution of the management functions is important for frontline social workers who supervise social auxiliary workers. Both have to plan their work. In addition, social auxiliary workers will always work under the supervision of a social worker, and will always need guidance and assistance. The frontline social workers are responsible to organise with the social auxiliary workers and to ensure that what is planned and organised is implemented. By motivating and following up, social workers execute leadership. Measures of control are also put in place to measure successes and losses, and what needs to be improved and what needs to change. This enables both

the frontline social worker and social auxiliary worker learn from their mistakes and turn these into opportunities.

### 3.3.1 Planning

Planning can be seen as the starting point of the management process as it determines what the organisation plans to achieve (goals and objectives) and how it will achieve this, referring to both the ends (what must be done) and the means (how it must be done) (Cronje *et al.*, 2009:140; Lazenby, 2016). Coulshed and Mullender (2006:92), Potter and Brittain (2009:65), Smit *et al.* (2007:113) and Lewis *et al.* (2007:9) believed that all members of management – including the supervisor and, for the purpose of this study, the frontline social worker – should be part of planning and goal formulation. Schermerhorn (2012:182) supported this statement that frontline social workers should be part of planning and goal formulation because they are directly affected by planning.

Including all staff members in the planning of an organisation can improve the creativity of planning. According to Nel (2014), planning needs to take place on all levels of the organisation and include all managers and employees, also frontline social workers. Planning is seen as the primary managerial function because, until plans have been made and an organisation knows what it wants to achieve and how to do it, it will not be in a position to structure the organisation, motivate staff or compare outcomes with required results (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2012). Planning therefore plays a pivotal role in supervising and managing social auxiliary workers.

Supervisors do not always understand the principles of goal formulation, and a lack of confidence in their own abilities or those of their workers can add to their unwillingness to plan (Smit *et al.*, 2007:126). Weinbach (2008:76) defined planning as “a rational approach to pre-selected objectives”. It entails deciding in advance what needs to be done, what are the best ways and times to do it, and who is the best choice to do it. Planning attempts to structure individual and group activities in such a way that they are both productive and supportive of each other. Weinbach (2008) emphasised that planning requires both human and material resources to create plans and to put them into effect. As a result, everyone’s input is valuable in organisational planning, irrespective of their position in the organisation.

Smit *et al.* (2007:125) mentioned three obvious mistakes that supervisors make in terms of supervision: (a) accepting that the external and internal environment of the organisation is unchangeable, (b) resistance towards the consequential change, and (c) spending too much time on daily activities. Planning is also neglected because it is time consuming. These are mistakes that supervisors and supervisees should be cautious of.

According to Nel (2014: 51), planning lays the foundation for all management functions as it gives direction to the organisation, community project, group, family and individual service users, and defines the actions of interventions. The planning of interventions and daily activities is what the social auxiliary worker mostly needs guidance with. To ensure that supervisors do not neglect planning that can impact service delivery, it is important to set aside time to assist social auxiliary workers with planning. This is specifically important for social service organisations because it gives direction, promote coordination between the various sections in the organisation and it compels managers and employees to look to the future.

In addition, planning ensures that the organisation, group or project keeps abreast of technology, it ensures cohesion and it enables managers and employees or members of a community group to work collaboratively towards reaching communal goals. Planning also promotes stability to employees or service users in unstable environments (Du Toit, Erasmus & Strydom, 2007; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2012). Frontline social workers therefore need to plan their own work as well as that of the social auxiliary workers in order to achieve shared objectives.

Nothing will happen without planning. We need to know what we want, what is needed to achieve it, and how long the execution of the plan will take to achieve the desired outcomes. Planning requires discipline. If adhere to, planning can lead to effective outcomes.

#### **3.3.1.1 Types of planning**

Various types of planning are undertaken in social service organisations. These include strategic planning, programme planning, project planning and planning of business plans. Strategic planning addresses the organisation's mission and overall strategies to fulfil the mission. Within the context of social development, it is important

that representatives on micro, meso and macro levels and in different sections or units of the organisation, as well as service users, should form part of the strategic planning process as it contributes to more commitment from staff to the mission and long-term objectives of the organisation (Nel, 2014).

In bigger organisations like state departments and hospitals, frontline social workers are not included in strategic planning as the planning is usually done by senior management. In smaller organisations like non-governmental organisations, all types of planning are expected and undertaken by all staff, irrespective of their position in the organisation. Weinbach (2008) mentioned that more ownership will be given in reaching the goals of the organisation when more employees are included in the planning. It is imperative for frontline social workers to be involved in strategic planning as this will enable them to guide social auxiliary workers to understand their place and role in the organisation.

According to Weinbach (2008:92), strategic planning is a team activity that entails clarifying the boundaries of an organisation (its mission and mandates) and assessing both its external and internal environments. This includes an honest and careful examination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strategic planning is ongoing and not a one-time activity. When there is commitment to it on the part of leaders and other staff, and when it is undertaken with the necessary skills and resources (planning is expensive in terms of staff time and research needed), strategic planning can be very beneficial to an organisation (Weinbach, 2008:93).

When considering the poor working conditions, inadequate resources and staff shortages that lead to frontline social workers stretching themselves, then service delivery in social work will be compromised. Ideally, strategic planning should be a team activity. However, in reality, this is not always possible when caseloads are high and unmanageable. This could prevent social workers from being part of the planning and from understanding the bigger picture and seeing where the social worker fits into the picture.

Programme planning provides plans of service delivery in order to achieve outcomes for service users and communities (Lewis *et al.*, 2007). It is important to include all the various stakeholders in this process, namely the board members of the NGOs, senior



managers, middle managers, supervisors, social workers on grassroots level, volunteers, care workers and, most importantly, service users in need of these programmes (Nel, 2014). Frontline social workers have a huge responsibility in terms of programme planning for they are responsible for achieving the outcomes for service users, and for ensuring that social auxiliary workers do the same. Both are on a low level and have similar expectations from management, although it is expected from frontline social workers to execute the dual role of supervisor and field worker.

Business plans are also required to address the financial aspects of implementing plans of programmes and projects. Although drawing up business plans is not a core responsibility of frontline social workers, it is sometimes expected from them when they are based in a one-person office. The finance department of an organisation most takes care of the finances involved in programme planning.

Next, strategic planning and programme planning will be discussed in more detail.

#### **3.3.1.2 Strategic planning**

According to Bryson, in Lewis *et al.* (2007:93), strategic planning is defined as “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it”. It often happens that strategic plans are developed but not fully implemented. The process of strategic thinking and strategic managing should happen regularly and involve as many workers as possible, because the process is more important than the plan itself (Lewis *et al.*, 2007). Hellriegel *et al.* (2012) referred to strategic planning as asking and answering three basic questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be (or what kind of organisation do we want to be) at some time in future?
- How are we going to get from where we are now to where we want to be?

These questions are applicable to all employees from top to bottom, as everyone has a role to play to reach the goals and objectives of the organisation.

Several requirements are needed for strategic planning to be successful. These requirements include the following:



- The support and commitment of managers, the governing board and all staff members;
- The commitment of the managers and employees of the organisation to develop and implement plans;
- The ability of staff members to challenge the way in which the organisation is operating on a daily basis.

All staff members should agree on the purpose of the strategic plan, the steps to be taken to implement the plan and the roles of all involved, with full agreement by all on the final plan (Nel, 2014). A team comprising of the organisation's senior managers, other managers and important representatives of staff on all levels and from all sections, including line staff such as social workers in practice and service users, should develop the plan.

The supervisors, in this study referring to the frontline social workers, are responsible to formulate plans and objectives for their workers, in this study referring to the social auxiliary workers. For example, when an organisation develops a strategic plan which includes the goal to involve the community in terms of the placement of children, the supervisor should form part of the planning process to determine how his/her unit will reach this goal (Potter & Brittain, 2009:66). Frontline social workers in non-governmental organisations, known for their lack of human resources, sometimes have no choice but to form part of strategic planning.

### **3.3.1.3 Programme planning**

Programme planning or design is the conceptualising of a service to accomplish outcomes in order to meet the identified needs of service users (Lewis *et al.*, 2007). A key aspect of the planning process is the choice of an appropriate service delivery method, such as casework, group work or community work. The staff members who are responsible for this need to identify alternative programmes, specify any constraints and, lastly, decide on the most feasible, efficient and effective service or programme (Nel, 2014). The input of frontline social workers are crucial when deciding on methods of service delivery during programme planning. They are the people whose core function it is to implement case, group and community work with the support of the social auxiliary workers they supervise.

The success of the programme planning and implementation is the joint responsibility of the supervisor (frontline social worker) and the supervisee (social auxiliary worker). Botha (2002:69) emphasised the need to regularly evaluate programmes in order to monitor their success. Weinbach (2008:90) was of the opinion that if programmes no longer serve any significant purpose in the organisation, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to end these programmes. However, terminating such programmes can be complicated as this may involve the loss of jobs for colleagues.

Frontline social workers also need to take responsibility for doing workload planning with social auxiliary workers. Time needs to be set aside to do this planning, as this will give the social auxiliary workers direction in terms of what to do when, where, and with whom. Also remember that social auxiliary workers need on-going supervision and that they serve as assistants to social workers. Workload planning will therefore help social workers to manage social auxiliary workers' expectations.

For social auxiliary workers, workload planning includes assisting social workers by providing counselling to individuals, families and communities, collecting information relevant to client needs, developing plans of action while assisting clients, linking clients to resources, providing crisis interventions, and implementing life skills workshops (like substance abuse treatment programmes, behaviour management programmes, youth services programmes and other community and social service programmes) under the supervision of the social workers. Social auxiliary workers always work under the supervision of social workers. Social auxiliary workers help to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, to plan and to report (SACSSP, 2008). Once plans are in place, all role-players can focus on implementing the plans.

### **3.3.2 Organising**

Once the plans have been developed, comprehensive organisation is needed to translate the plans into reality (Nel, 2014). Schermerhorn (2012:256) and Smit *et al.* (2007:186-188) described organising as the process of developing a structure for an organisation that enables personnel to work effectively towards the achievement of the organisation's mission, vision and objectives. According to Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (1995), organising can be defined as the process of arranging and allocating work, authority and resources among the employees of an organisation so that they can achieve the goals of the organisation.

Organising refers to the systematic coordination of different tasks that need to be executed in the organisation, as well as the relationships between those who execute the tasks (Smit *et al.*, 2007:188). The researcher agrees that there should be a good relationship between those executing the tasks. For the purpose of this study, the relationship between frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers should be sound and strong in order for plans to be executed. Without organising, the successful implementation of plans is not possible because of the lack of the efficient allocation of resources and people to carry out the plans. The researcher agrees with this and is of the opinion that plans are empty without organising to bring about their fulfilment.

The following aspects are embedded in the organising function (Hellriegel *et al.*, 2012; Nel, 2014; Weinbach, 2008):

- Designing jobs for employees
- Grouping employees into teams, unit or sections
- Assigning authority
- Establishing a command structure
- Establishing coordinating mechanisms and delegating.

### **3.3.2.1 Organisational structure**

Employees working at an organisation need a stable structure within which they can work together towards accomplishing their goals (Nel, 2014). In a large organisation, like the Department of Social Development, the structure is normally hierarchical, with a top-down way of command. Employees need to know the line of reporting. Smaller organisations, like community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), usually have a flat organisational structure, which is more informal with a looser structure of command. The flat structure is ideal for involving all staff members in the decision-making processes of the organisation. This flat structure also leads to buy-in, a better understanding of the organisation and what it wants to achieve, and where the frontline social workers fit in and how they can help to build a conducive organisational culture to ensure the buy-in of the social auxiliary workers they supervise and to ensure that goals will be accomplished.

### **3.3.2.2 Delegation**

Du Toit *et al.* (2007:187) defined delegation as “the process of assigning responsibility and authority for achieving organizational goals”. It means giving employees new tasks, which may become part of their responsibilities, or once-off tasks. Effective delegation is vitally important to empower people by exposing them to development opportunities in order to improve follower contributions and satisfaction; to build and strengthen interpersonal relationships; to energise followers to take action that supports higher purposes rather than self-interest; to ensure that people will keep up their motivational levels and enthusiasm; and to stimulate an attitude of self-reliance (Brown, 2006; Coulshed & Mullender, 2001; Cronje, Du Toit & Motlatla, 2009; Lewis *et al.*, 2007).

According to Nel (2014), two parties are always involved in delegation, the one who delegates and the one to whom the task is delegated. The one who delegates should do the following: trust the process and the one that must carry out the task, obtain clarity on expectations, arrange training if training is needed to do the task, provide the necessary information to implement the task successfully, allow own initiative as well as access to appropriate resources, give deadlines and arrange follow-up sessions for monitoring purposes, distribute tasks evenly among the people involved in the project without duplicating tasks, write down all the tasks to avoid confusion, allow time before intervening, allow mistakes and turn them into opportunities, acknowledge people for their contributions, always be supportive and give regular feedback (Lazenby, 2016).

Frontline social workers, when supervising social auxiliary workers, can use delegation to achieve pre-set goals as it will be helpful for both parties. Supervisors cannot carry the entire burden, and supervisees will get an opportunity to develop, grow and learn. Working together through delegation can also strengthen interpersonal relationships and build trust that is beneficial for all the parties, including the organisation. Supervisors need to bear in mind that social auxiliary workers have specific tasks that they can and cannot do.

### **3.3.3 Leading**

According to Weinbach (2008:252), leadership has been defined as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute toward effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members”. Lazenby (2016)

supported the above-mentioned definition of Weinbach, saying that leading is influencing others to achieve the organisation's goals by inspiring and directing their actions towards reaching the goals.

Managers can consciously influence other people within the organisation to engage willingly in those behaviours that contribute to the attainment of organisational goals. Leadership puts activities in motion and keeps the activities moving until the goals have been accomplished (Cronje *et al.*, 2009:173-174). When the plans have been made and the structures are in place, a leader or leaders are needed to lead the organisation, unit, group or community project.

Weinbach (2008) is of the opinion that managers should exert leadership when they plan and when they organise and control staff as they frequently attempt to influence the behaviour of staff members in order to encourage them to help achieve the organisation's goals and objectives. Organisations consist of financial, physical and human resources, with human resources as the most complex resource due to its uniqueness. Potter and Brittain (2009: 189) referred to the supervisors of welfare organisations who have the privilege of keeping their workers effective, focused and productive through helping them to obtain a clear understanding of their significant contribution toward making a difference in the lives of others.

In the context of this study, frontline social workers need to lead the social auxiliary workers that they supervise. Although frontline social workers do not get additional payment for supervision and are not on middle management level, the expectation is that they provide leadership to those they are leading. Without leaders, plans will be made and organised but no one will take the responsibility to lead the team towards the implementation of the plans. It is thus important that frontline social workers take the lead in supervising social auxiliary workers in order to ensure that goals are achieved.

Research has shown that supervisors who help their workers to achieve practice outcomes and who provide their workers with a goal-oriented environment of which they can be proud will be the supervisors with the best client outcomes, lowest staff turn-over and overall healthiest division in the organisation (Potter & Brittain, 2009:189). Trust is also a key element of successful leadership by supervisors. When

there is trust between the supervisor and the worker, the supervisor's requests are perceived by workers as reasonable, trustworthy and with clear motives (Weinbach, 2003:242).

### **3.3.3.1 Characteristics of leadership**

The following characteristics can be associated with effective leadership (Nel, 2014; Lazenby, 2016):

- **Communication:** Leadership is founded on communication. Leaders communicate their vision, plans, problems and expectations to the people with whom they are working. Leaders also need to be listeners to know the aspirations of the people with whom they are working. Communication forms the essence of social work. Therefore, when frontline social workers are not able to communicate and listen to their social auxiliary workers, leadership will be experienced as negative.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Leadership is based on interpersonal relationships, where leaders are willing to engage with other members of the organisation, unit or group to create a better way of doing business or a better way of living. Positive relationships lead to better outcomes. There will be no reason for leadership if the leader has no followers. It is thus important for the purpose of the study that strong relationships are built between frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers.
- **Motivation and influence:** Leadership involves motivating and influencing others to act towards the accomplishment of the goals of the organisation, unit or group. When sound relationships are established between frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers, motivation and influence become part of the relationship.
- **Trusting and learning:** Successful leaders are able to establish trust and are willing to learn and to change. They also have the skills to facilitate effective decision-making and to encourage people to take risks. Leadership is not a one-man show; instead, it should allow others to participate as well. Social auxiliary workers also come to the table with strengths. If these strengths are acknowledged, trust is built and learning becomes a two-way process between frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers.

- **The power of positivity:** Leaders should believe in the power of the positive. They should always try to acknowledge the strengths in others and build on it. Based on the strengths perspective, we all have strengths that need to be explored and used. The same applies to the strengths that social auxiliary workers can apply to the benefit of the organisation.
- **People-oriented approach:** Effective leaders care about people, and help people to learn, grow and develop. Helping people to learn, grow and develop forms part of the developmental approach of welfare and is important to bring out the best in people. When sound and trusted relationships are built between frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers, helping will come naturally and both will support each other in learning, growth and development.
- **Collaboration and team work:** Effective leaders know the value of high-performance teams to achieve organisational goals. Relationship building is essential to group people into task teams. Frontline social workers will know who to group together in teams to achieve the best outcomes.

The above-mentioned leadership characteristics also apply to efficient social workers because many of these characteristics depend on communication. To speak and to listen are an integral part of a social worker's skills set. Frontline social workers will be able to apply these leadership characteristics when supervising social auxiliary workers in order to bring about a win-win situation with mutually beneficial results (Ishak & Ballard, 2012).

### 3.3.3.2 Leadership theories

In an attempt to understand effective leadership, various theories have been developed. These include trait theories, behavioural theories and contingency theories. All of them defined leadership as a top-down individual process to influence employees in order to achieve organisational goals (Lazenby, 2016). Contemporary theories, on the other hand, are the most appropriate for social service organisations. Contemporary theories include:

- Principle-centred leadership
- Visionary leadership
- Transformational leadership



- Shared leadership
- Facilitative leadership, and
- Appreciative leadership.

### 3.3.3.2.1 *Contemporary theories of leadership*

According to Du Toit *et al.* (2007), leadership has changed from only focusing on top managers to focusing on managers on all levels who are influencing others in the organisation. Hence, principle-centred leadership, transformational leadership, shared leadership, facilitative leadership and appreciative leadership will now be discussed within the context of South Africa as a developing country with significant social development challenges.

The need for principle-centred leaders in South Africa has increased as a result of corruption and the unethical ways in which leaders are operating. **Principle-centred leadership** focuses less on personality and more on underlying values, principles and attitudes, which direct the behaviour and relationships of leaders. Such leaders encouraged good basic values such as honesty, integrity, openness, competence, consistency, loyalty, compassion, humanity, equality, trust, recognition, participation and empowerment. They should be role models of ethical behaviour and be able to apply ethical behaviour in their organisations. They need to make it possible to establish and maintain an ethical culture in an organisation (Du Toit *et al.*, 2007; Werner, 2003). For the purpose of the study, frontline social workers, as the supervisors of social auxiliary workers, should lead by example and create an ethical culture in the organisation.

**Transformational leadership** can also be useful within the context of welfare and social service organisations in South Africa. Transformational leaders are visionaries; they are able to identify core values, they give purpose that guides people in the organisation, unit or group, and they operate with integrity (Cronje *et al.*, 2009; Du Toit *et al.*, 2007; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2012; Lewis *et al.*, 2004; Werner, 2003). They provide strong motivation, and people feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect for such leaders (Lazenby, 2016). Transformational leaders need to influence employees in such a way to achieve more than was originally expected or thought possible.



The focus of transactional leadership is on self-interest, where employees are rewarded when they comply with the requirements of their respective jobs (Nel, 2014). Sometimes tasks are given to social auxiliary workers to see whether they can use initiative and complete tasks successfully.

**Shared leadership** is defined as a “dynamic interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (Conger & Pearce in Koccolowski, 2010: 24). In shared leadership, both workers and managers lead one another towards reaching the goals and objectives of the group or organisation.

**Facilitative leadership** emphasises the engagement of people on all levels to facilitate the achievement of an organisation’s goals. Facilitative leadership also focuses on a collaborative way of leadership in which everybody should be involved in the decision-making process (Nel, 2014). According to Cufaude (2004), effective facilitation involves the use of processes and tools to maximise the collective intelligence of individuals in a group to determine the right course of action and then to build a template for acting on the choices they make. Although social auxiliary workers will always work under the supervision of social workers, their tasks include the facilitation of groups and meetings with the assistance of the social workers. This enables social auxiliary workers to become facilitative leaders.

**Appreciative leadership** embraces all contemporary leadership theories, and adds a positive dimension to leadership. It is based on the strengths-based approach, with emphasis on the power of the positive. Whitney, Trosten-Bloom and Kadar (2010) are of the opinion that when leaders engage with people in a positive and caring way, they may collectively transform their organisations and communities. An analysis of the ideas of Whitney *et al.* (2010) reveals that four determinative ideas are embedded in appreciative leadership. These ideas can be described as a relational view, a positive outlook, the realisation of potential, and ripple effects.

- Firstly, appreciative leadership is relational, because all work and actual life takes place in relationships. It shifts from an individualistic view of leadership to relational views on leadership. Leaders need to be appreciative of their followers to get work done successfully as no man is an island. Frontline social

workers and social auxiliary workers can strengthen their relationships when appreciation is shown from both sides.

- Secondly, appreciative leadership involves seeing the world, people and situations as positive and life affirming (of as the glass being half full and not half empty). Appreciative leaders believe that everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, culture, education and experience, has a positive core of strengths and a passionate calling to be fulfilled, and they seek to bring forward and nurture that potential. Using the strengths perspective as a theoretical framework, when frontline social workers give social auxiliary workers the benefit of the doubt it can serve as a way of seeing them in a positive light and of acknowledging their ability to contribute towards reaching the goals of the organisation.
- Thirdly, appreciative leadership turns potential into positive power as these leaders believe that each person has a positive core awaiting discovery, recognition and realisation. In order to be effective, these leaders must feel powerful in their own right in order to bring out the best in them, to voice what matters to them, and to engage with others in a way that creates a world that is acceptable for all. Leadership is also about helping others to know their strengths, to show confidence in them, to create opportunities to share their ideas, to seek support, to learn to collaborate and to contribute their best (Whitney *et al.*, 2010). It is the role of frontline social workers to support social auxiliary workers in their endeavours by helping them to find their purpose in the organisation and to help identify the strengths they need to achieve success.
- Lastly, appreciative leadership creates a ripple effect of positive change in all kinds of situations as these leaders connect with people in their personal and professional lives. Happy workers lead to happy organisations. When social auxiliary workers are treated with respect, when they foster positive relationships with their supervisors, and when they are allowed to explore their strengths, they will surely follow their leaders.

Nel (2014: 65) identified five core strategies that are embedded in appreciative leadership, namely inquiry, illumination, inclusion, inspiration and integrity. These

strategies enable appreciative leaders to mobilise creative potential and turn it into positive power characterised by confidence, energy, enthusiasm and performance.

When people are encouraged through **inquiry** to share their thoughts, feelings, stories of success or ideas for the future, and when leaders sincerely listen to what they have to say, the message is conveyed that these people and their contributions are valued.

The use of **illumination** techniques enables leaders to facilitate the identification of their own and others' strengths, which encourages workers to express themselves and grow their self-confidence. It is important for frontline social workers to value their social auxiliary workers, specifically the contributions they make to achieve organisational goals. Leaders show appreciation when they listen to others, when they encourage them, and when they allow others to express themselves.

By applying the strategy of **inclusion**, people develop a sense of belonging. They create a sense of collaboration and co-creation, which in turn creates an environment that people want to be part of, and consequently care about.

People are **inspired** by the strategy of vision and direction. It gives hope and unleashes energy, which in turn forms the basis for innovation and sustainable high performance.

Through the strategy of **integrity**, people know that they are expected to give their best for the greater good, and to trust others to do the same. People know that they can depend on leaders that lead with integrity. However, it is still important to apply all five strategies to be a successful leader.

Frontline social workers want to belong and be included in what is happening at work. They also need to include and involve social auxiliary workers in building trust and integrity. In that way, appreciative leadership is shown, which leads to supervisees giving their best for the good of the organisation.

### **3.3.3.3 Components of the leading function**

The leading function of managers gives them the right to use authority, power, responsibility, accountability and delegation to influence employees in order to accomplish the organisation's goals (Du Toit *et al.*, 2007; Lazenby, 2016). Frontline social workers can also use these abilities to reach the organisation's goals.

Supervising social auxiliary workers includes the use of authority, power, responsibility and delegation to achieve success. Managers have the ability to influence employees' behaviour to share responsibility for the results of their organisation, unit or group. They can delegate authority and responsibility but they can never delegate their accountability.

Power is seen as the most important component of leading, and this will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

#### **3.3.3.4 Leadership power**

According to Nel (2014), managers should be aware of the role of power in their leadership endeavours. The different sources of power are legitimate power, expert power, referent power, reward power and coercive power. In the development of leadership skills the following questions can be asked to gain an understanding of power:

- What are the different sources of power?
- How can one make sensitive use of all power sources?
- When is it best to draw power from one source as opposed to the other sources?
- How can one achieve balance in one's daily utilisation of the sources of power?
- What are the dangers of power?

Frontline social workers need to be aware of the sources of power in order to use these in an appropriate way. People in a leadership position need to take up the power position when work needs to be done. Although the frontline social workers are the supervisors, they still need to be respectful towards the social auxiliary workers if they want to exercise power successfully. By exploring the five different sources of power, the above-mentioned questions can be answered. The sources of power can pose a challenge to frontline social workers as they not operate on middle management level and nor do they have the authority from management to exercise power.

#### **Source 1: Legitimate power**

According to Nel (2014 and Lazenby (2016), legitimate power comes with a position, regardless of who occupies the position. When somebody is promoted to a position,

that person gains the power that is given to him or her by the organisation. Without this power one will not have the authority to influence followers in terms of organisational goals. Frontline social workers although not in a middle management position, supervise social auxiliary workers and have the power to influence their followers to reach agreed-upon goals. Nel (2014) mentioned some guidelines that might be helpful when utilising legitimate power: true leaders do not need to remind team members that they are in charge; when people respect a manager as a person they are more likely to respect the legitimate power that he or she holds; the best use of legitimate power is to maintain discipline; and legitimate power will only increase if the manager learns how to use it in a sensitive manner from the beginning.

### ***Source 2: Expert power***

Expert power refers to knowledge, specialised skills and distinctive expertise that people have (Lazenby, 2016). People will respect experts as leaders. The fewer the number of people with this expertise, the more power they have. According to Engelbrecht (2014), expert power is the best type of power to demonstrate leadership qualities. The following guidelines can help to increase expert power: increasing one's expertise, as the more one knows and the more skills one has, the more expert power one will have; keeping up with the latest technology; sharing knowledge in one's role as expert; giving clear and complete instructions; making time to find the correct answers when colleagues ask leaders something that they do not know; and acknowledging that practical experience is still an excellent way to gain more expert power.

Frontline social workers need to show expert power to social auxiliary workers, enabling them to also become experts. As saying goes, practice makes perfect. This applies to both the supervisor and the supervisee in terms of gaining expert power.

### ***Source 3: Referent power***

Referent power refers to the potential influence that leaders have because of the strength of their relationships with subordinates (Lazenby, 2016). Referent power is to a certain degree based on friendship, but there is a fine line that should not be crossed. Leaders should be aware of becoming too close with other staff members. Leaders find it difficult to criticise a friend. It is important for frontline social workers to be

assertive in terms of work-related matters because close relationships should not stand in the way of exercising referent power.

Nel (2014:67) stated that the following guidelines can help to increase referent power in the organisation: developing people skills; avoiding arrogance as this is not a favourable trait for managers to have; avoiding autocratic behaviour; addressing problems instead of attacking the person – everybody is on the same side and chases the same goals; trying to get all the facts before jumping to conclusions in case of a crisis; and avoiding negative outbursts or personal attacks on co-workers.

#### ***Source 4: Reward power***

Reward power refers to the ability to influence others by offering something of value in return. It affects performance expectations and achievements. Leaders should therefore be aware of how this source of power can be used. This power can be used in many ways, for instance by motivating people to reach goals by using incentives such as praise, recognition (hats, pins, badges and so on), bonuses and/or promotions (Lazenby, 2016). Engelbrecht (2014) noted the following aspects of reward power: leaders should find out what each of the employees really value and then try to reward people accordingly; leaders should be as fair and sensitive as possible in the evaluation of others in order to allocate rewards in a fair way; leaders should let employees know what the criteria for rewards are; leaders should not promise rewards that cannot be delivered; and rewards should be used as a motivating force and not to manipulate employees. It is clear that reward power is important to all. When social workers use reward power, they should remember to use this power as a motivating force and not as a manipulating force.

#### ***Source 5: Coercive power***

Coercive power refers to the withholding of rewards. Typical forms of coercive power include reprimands, probation, suspension and even dismissal. Coercive power is appropriate to use in maintaining discipline and enforcing rules, and sometimes the leader will be involved in such actions (Lazenby, 2016). When using coercive power, boundaries must be set, which is usually handled by the human resources department of the organisation (Engelbrecht, 2014).

Referent, reward and coercive power can be a challenge to frontline social workers as there are fine lines when using these powers. It is important for frontline social workers to be aware of their behaviour when dealing with these powers.

### **3.3.4 Control**

Control includes measuring and monitoring the organisation's achievement of its goals and taking corrective steps when goals are not achieved (DuBrin, 2008:509-510; Griffin & Moorhead, 2008:9; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2012). Smit *et al.* (2007:6, 9) described the purpose of the control function more simplistically as "to monitor the actual results against those that were planned", and added that all supervisors are implementing the control function. Control is seen as the final step in the management process, meaning that the process is not complete until a plan for control has been developed (Lazenby, 2016). Control helps to narrow the gap between the planning and the actual achievements of the social service organisation.

According to Weinbach (2008:227), control is often unpleasant for both managers and those that they must control. It can lead to resentment and strained interpersonal relationships, but it is an essential part of the job of a manager. Control is critical for the good of the organisation, and for effective and efficient service delivery to clients as prime beneficiaries of an organisation. It ensures that resources are deployed in such a way that the goals of the organisation can be achieved and service can be delivered. Although control is unpleasant it needs to be done. It serves as a measuring tool for goals to be achieved. Frontline social workers also need to exercise control in their supervision of social auxiliary workers to ensure that work gets done in due time. Supervisees should not see control as negative or personal as its purpose is to help the organisation reach its goals.

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2001:54), all organisations need an element of quality control. However, quality assurance has to be done by means of a collective effort, using a bottom-up approach. It is thus important for frontline social workers to use control as a way of quality assurance, making sure that what was planned is achieved and if not why not. No one likes control but it ensures that people pull their weight for goals to be achieved and services to be accomplished. When frontline social workers take responsibility for the performance of social auxiliary workers, they have



a duty to see that work is done. Control measures should be put in place to ensure effective and efficient service delivery.

#### **3.3.4.1 Quality assurance process**

Social service organisations need a quality assurance process which management and employees can use to ensure that the organisation's goals are accomplished or that the actual performance correlates with predetermined standards. The quality assurance process involves three interconnected steps that will be discussed below.

##### **1. Set quality standards**

Before quality can be measured there should be an understanding of what quality services entail. Development projects should be suitable for their purpose and function in a cost-effective way (Coulshed & Mullender, 2001). For example, service users involved in development projects should all be involved in determining quality standards. These standards must indicate exactly what they need to accomplish, on which level of performance, and the way in which the outcomes will be measured. These quality standards should also be approved by everybody involved (Nel, 2014). Social service delivery is also done according to certain standards. It is the responsibility of the frontline social workers to engage the social auxiliary workers in determining the quality standards when undertaking a project. The standards should be specific and clear, and indicate how the outcomes will be measured.

##### **2. Develop measuring instruments**

Both the quantitative and qualitative elements of a programme or project need to be measured. Various measuring instruments can be used, for example questionnaires for those involved in services, a series of reflection meetings with project members, or focus groups with representative groups (Coulshed & Mullender, 2001). The ultimate test of quality will always be the satisfaction levels of service users with the services provided by the organisation, as well as the independence and self-sustainability of plans or projects. The quality of plans can be measured in terms of the following criteria: appropriateness, equity, acceptability, accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness. Frontline social workers need to use measuring instruments to obtain an idea of what to improve, what worked well, or what needs to change. Measuring



also allows frontline social workers to determine the challenges that the supervisees struggle with, what help they need or what they do well.

### **3. *Compare outcomes with set quality standards and corrective actions***

According to Engelbrecht (2014), the outcomes of measurements need to be compared with the quality standards set in the beginning stages of plans. The following aspects need to be taken into account:

- The measurement must be acceptable for everybody involved;
- It must be cost-effective;
- The measuring instrument and the process should be reliable.

Based on the outcomes of the measurements, corrective actions should be planned for and quality standards adjusted, based on new plans.

The above-mentioned literature emphasises the importance of the involvement of all the staff members, be they senior or junior staff, in the management functions of supervision. Planning must be part of their daily tasks. Although supervisors need to ensure that staff members work towards reaching the organisational goals, the same is expected from the supervisors as they are responsible for the supervision of social auxiliary workers.

The literature refers to supervisors as middle management while frontline social workers operate on a lower level.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

Frontline social workers are regarded as part of the management functions in an organisation, specifically referring to their role as supervisors of social auxiliary workers. However, the work of frontline social workers can be compromised because they themselves are in need of management when the responsibility for supervision is transferred to them. To supervise social auxiliary workers and implement the four management functions can be a challenge for frontline social workers who also need to cope with high workloads, a shortage of staff and other obstacles.

Planning is regarded as the most important management function. It must form part of the daily duties of all staff members of an organisation. It is the responsibility of the

frontline social workers to assist the social auxiliary workers in their planning to ensure that goals are achieved. To have plans without organising is fruitless. The frontline social workers therefore need to do organising with the supervisees to be clear on what needs to happen when, where and with whom.

After organising, leadership needs to be exercised to ensure that tasks are accomplished. In terms of leadership, frontline social workers need to motivate social auxiliary workers to deliver effective services. Finally, control measures must be put in place to ensure that effective and efficient service delivery takes place. Control measures include setting standards, using measuring instruments, monitoring outcomes and taking corrective actions.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EMPIRICAL FINDINGS OF SOCIAL WORKERS' VIEWS ON EXECUTING THE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS IN SUPERVISING SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORKERS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous three chapters explored the origin of social auxiliary work, the training for social auxiliary work, the theoretical framework applicable to supervision and management, and the supervision and management functions. These chapters formed a platform of knowledge from which to understand the importance of the supervision of social auxiliary workers through the execution of the management functions.

The research followed a qualitative approach to explore social workers' views regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers. In this chapter, emphasis is placed on the data collected through the semi-structured interviews. Annexure A contains the interview schedule. The gathered data is discussed in accordance with the literature review in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 to further explain and understand the findings of the empirical study and to extract meaning. The findings were verified against the literature review and were explored in terms of validity and applicability to the social workers' views regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers.

Frontline social workers were interviewed by means of a semi-structured interview schedule. The findings are presented through the themes, subthemes and categories that were identified from the data collected via the semi-structured interviews.

#### **SECTION A**

##### **SECTION A: RESEARCH METHOD**

In this section the researcher presents the research method which was employed to gather data for the analysis and interpretation of the empirical study.

## **4.2 PREPARATION FOR THE EMPIRICAL STUDY**

Prior to the study the researcher obtained the consent of the Research and Ethics Committee of Stellenbosch University (Annexure C) and of the frontline social workers who were selected as participants in this study (Annexure B).

### **4.2.1 Research sample**

The sample of this study consisted of 20 frontline social workers who are registered with SACSSP and who provide supervision to social auxiliary workers in the Western Cape. Except for one, all of the frontline social workers are working for non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The researcher utilised non-probability, snowball sampling because participants were recruited in their personal capacities and no permission was needed from their organisations (Grinnell, 1988; Strydom, 2011). The main criteria for the inclusion of these frontline social workers were as follows:

- Social workers registered with the SACSSP and employed in the Western Cape
- Social workers managing social auxiliary workers in any registered welfare organisation that delivers social services. Social auxiliary workers in the Western Cape are mostly employed by NGOs.
- Social workers with at least one year of work experience.

### **4.2.2 Research approach, design and instrument**

An interview schedule was used to conduct interviews with 20 frontline social workers (see interview schedule in Annexure A). The interview schedule was based on the information gathered from the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3. In addition, the exploratory design was used as it gave the researcher the opportunity to explore and gain new insights into the views of social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95-96). The descriptive design, as suggested by Grinnell (1988:220), was also applied to describe how social workers view themselves regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers and why they are doing the management.

### **4.2.3 Data gathering and analysis**

The researcher conducted semi-structured recorded interviews with a duration of 45 to 60 minutes each. The interviews were conducted between July and August 2017. Interviews with the participants were confidential in order to protect their identities (Rubin & Babbie, 2007). Next, the data gathered during the interviews were interpreted and analysed to reveal the findings of the study.

These findings are presented in tubular and narrative form. First, the profile of the respondents, including their biographical details, will be presented, analysed and interpreted. Thereafter the rest of the research findings will be outlined according to themes, as identified during the interviews, and will be discussed in detail. The narratives of the participants will be used in the analysis of the various themes, which will be further divided into subthemes and categories.

## **SECTION B: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The biographical information will be presented in numbers and percentages. However, this does not turn the research into a quantitative study. In order to gain insight into the data collected, it is important to understand the profile of the study participants as their background and personal experiences might shed light onto how they responded to the various questions.

To uphold confidentiality and the anonymity of participants, numerical codes were used instead of the participants' names. The demographic data of the 20 participants is presented in Table 4.1 below, which reflects the participants' gender, age, work experience, qualifications, training in supervision and the number of social auxiliary workers being supervised. Participants from nine organisations took part in the study; only one organisation was not an NGO.

**Table 4.1: Biographical profile of the participants**

Participants: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

<b>Partici- pant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Work expe- rience</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Training in supervision</b>	<b>Total of SAWs super- vised</b>
1	Female	30 - 39	6 - 10	BA Social Work	Undergraduate module	2
2	Female	40 - 49	6 - 10	Honours degree	Formal	1
3	Female	30 - 39	6 - 10	Honours degree	No	1
4	Female	30 - 39	6 - 10	Honours degree	Undergraduate module	1
5	Female	30 - 39	11 - 15	Honours degree	No	2
6	Female	40 - 49	16 - 20	Honours degree	Formal	1
7	Female	40 - 49	16 - 20	BA Social Work	No	1
8	Female	40 - 49	21 - 30	Honours degree	Formal	1
9	Female	20 - 29	0 - 5	Honours degree	Undergraduate module	1
10	Female	30 - 39	16 - 20	BA Social Work	Formal	3
11	Female	30 - 39	11 - 15	Honours degree	Formal	1
12	Female	30 - 39	11 - 15	BA Social Work	No	1

13	Female	50 - 59	21 - 30	Master's degree	Post graduate	1
14	Female	30 - 39	11 - 15	Honours degree	No	1
15	Female	20 - 29	0 - 5	Honours degree	Undergraduate module	1
16	Female	20 - 29	0 - 5	Honours degree	Undergraduate module	1
17	Female	20 - 29	0 - 5	Honours degree	Undergraduate module	1
18	Female	60 - 65	21 - 30	BA Social Work	No	2
19	Female	20 - 29	0 - 5	Honours degree	Undergraduate module	1
20	Male	20 - 29	0 - 5	Honours degree	No	1

- **Gender**

The profile of the participants revealed that the majority were women. A total of 19 of the social workers who participated in the study were female. Only one social worker was male. The gender distribution of participants correlates with a statement made in a General Social Care Council Report that social work is traditionally regarded as a “caring” profession with a majority of women and minority of men (Whalley, 2011). Although this statement was made within a British context, this is also applicable to South Africa. This shows that the field of social work is dominated by women, and this is supported by the literature (Bradley *et al.*, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2014; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). This was not unexpected for the researcher as it is a common observation that the social work profession is mostly dominated by females.

- **Age**

The participants' ages ranged between 20 and 65 years. The participants were asked to indicate what age bracket they fitted into. This is significant because age differences play a role in the supervision relationship and they form an important part of the supervisors' competencies in non-discriminatory supervision practices (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Engelbrecht, 2014). Of the 20 social workers who participated in the empirical study, six were between 20 and 29 years old; eight were between 30 and 39 years; another four were in the 40 to 49 age bracket; one was in the 50 to 59 age bracket and one was in the 60 to 65 age bracket. This means that the majority of the social workers were in an early adulthood or midlife phase.

- **Work experience**

The findings showed that six of the social workers had between one and five years of experience; four had between five and ten years of experience; four social workers had between 10 and 15 years of experience; three had 15 to 20 years of experience and three had between 20 and 30 years of experience. The difference in the number of years of experience translates into different needs, depending on where the frontline social workers are in terms of their career and professional development. Yet, they are expected to supervise social auxiliary workers without being trained to do this or to supervise on a middle management level. Years of work experience do not equip people to supervise; training in supervision is needed for effective supervision (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

- **Qualifications**

All the participants were qualified social workers who completed a degree in Social Work from various colleges and universities. Three of the participants had a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, 16 participants had an honours degree in Social Work and one participant had a master's degree in Social Work. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) prescribes the exit-level outcomes for social workers, which entails completing a four-year Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree at NQF Level 8 in South Africa (SAQA, 2010). This qualification specifies that students must demonstrate an understanding of the roles, functions, knowledge and skills for effective social work supervision and consultation (Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2003:12). The



qualification is not a measurement of social workers' ability to supervise, as they were not trained to be supervisors.

- ***Training in supervision***

Seven of the participants had no training in supervision. As part of their undergraduate training, seven participants did a module on supervision. Only one participant had supervision training as part of her postgraduate studies. A formal supervision course was done by five participants. Three of the five participants attended a five-day course while one attended a three-day course. The other participant could not remember the duration of the course attended. These findings make it clear that frontline social workers are not equipped for supervision according to the requirements of the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa. They have proof of supervision training but no portfolio of evidence (SACSSP & DSD, 2012).

- ***Total of social auxiliary workers supervised***

Three of the participants each supervised two social auxiliary workers. One participant had three SAWs while the other 16 participants each had one social auxiliary worker they supervised. The social workers taking on the responsibility to supervise these social auxiliary workers are not trained supervisors. However, according to the Supervision Framework the supervisor need not be a supervisor as described in the framework (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

- ***Job descriptions of the participants***

The participants were asked to give a description of their job requirements to gain an understanding of the expectations from the social worker within the organisation. Ten participants were responsible for statutory work including child protection, foster care, family reunification, adoption, temporary safe care placement for babies and reunification services. The other ten participants were in specialised organisations that are responsible for intakes, screenings, assessments and interventions with the homeless; individual, group and community work with offenders; the supervision of fieldworkers, training, family meetings, the re-integration of children into schools, therapeutic interventions with groups; referrals of abuse, assessments and family re-integration; psycho-social support to patients and families, psycho-social

assessments, end-of-life care, palliative care training and bereavement as well as group and community work with patients and their families.

Although there is a difference in the care of statutory work and specialised work, both are practising all three methods of social work, namely case, group and community work. In addition, it was expected from the participants to supervise social auxiliary workers. Not all the social workers received supervision from somebody in their organisation. Three of the social workers work on a consultation basis due to work experience. According to the social workers they can discuss the supervision of the social auxiliary workers in their supervision sessions.

- ***Methods of social work***

All the participants, although working in different organisations doing both child protection or specialised services, made use of the primary methods of social work. The individual work formed the biggest part of the frontline social workers' jobs.

#### *Individual work*

All the participants did individual work as part of their job descriptions. The caseload of the participants varied as a result of context and the seriousness of the cases. Certain organisations allocated certain codes to the low, medium and high-risk cases. Although their clients varied, all social workers needed to write reports and practise the administration function that is part of the social work requirements. In addition, they had to work with the social auxiliary workers and take responsibility for them because social auxiliary workers always work as assistants of social workers. It is expected from social workers to fulfil a dual role of frontline social worker and supervisor to the social auxiliary worker.

#### *Group work*

All the participants made use of group work to reach more clients. The group work included life skills groups, non-therapeutic groups for personal development, therapeutic groups and statutory groups. The idea is to cluster together clients with similar challenges to deliver services on a group basis. On the administrative side, the participants found the writing of reports on the individual group members time-consuming. Therapeutic and statutory groups can be high-risk depending on the

issues being addressed. When looking at the experience of the frontline social workers they sometimes need supervision themselves in order to deal with these cases. However, they are expected to supervise social auxiliary workers.

### *Community work*

Community work is done by all participants through awareness programmes focused on early intervention and prevention, statutory requirements, aftercare, re-unification services and family preservation. Observing important days like Youth Day and Women's day, and taking part in HIV/Aids programmes, remembrance walks, 16 Days of Activism and initiatives form part of community work. The participants were involved in all the methods of social work. They took on the role of supervising the social auxiliary workers when they themselves needed supervision at times. Also, they were not formally trained as supervisors even though they had to supervise others.

- ***Job descriptions of the social auxiliary workers***

The participants were asked to describe the social auxiliary workers' job requirements.

**Table 4.2: Job descriptions of the social auxiliary worker as described by the social worker**

<b>Social auxiliary worker</b>	<b>Job description</b>
Saw 1	Assist social worker with bereavement and support groups, day care, case files and administrative duties.
Saw 2	Administrative tasks, intake forms, assist clients with interviews, skills, job applications, writing a curriculum vitae and accompany clients wherever they need to go like SASSA, Home Affairs and clinics.
Saw 3	Parent training, attend all programmes with social worker, assist with birth certificates, and do filing in office and reception if needed.
Saw 4	Supportive role to social worker. Do home visits, group work, spiritual and academic support of Grade 4-7.
Saw 5	Screening of fieldworkers, highlight cases that need urgent attention, referrals, report writing, group, individual and community work.
Saw 6	SAW is a new initiative. Do group work, individual and group interventions and community work.
Saw 7	Applications for grants, identity document, home visits, statistics, make appointments for the social worker, handle enquiries and assist with on-going projects.
Saw 8	Screening, initial assessment on a prescribed format, assist clients to clinics, SASSA, Home Affairs, old age homes.

Saw 9	Assist with the caseload, awareness programmes, non-therapeutic group work, early interventions, intakes, educational groups at schools and with clients.
Saw 10	Supporting day - care programmes of children, life skills groups, soup kitchens, adoption and family programmes, home visits and follow - ups.
Saw 11	Administrative duties, counselling, preparation of documents for court.
Saw 12	Assist social worker with programmes at ECD (early childhood development) and aftercare. Administration and planning.
Saw 13	Follow - ups, discharges, home visits, and responsible for implementing the social work duties. Psycho - social support in in - patient unit. Assessment, counselling, grant application, assist patients with a living will and group work.
Saw 14	Screening of clients, open files, admissions, group and community work.
Saw 15	Assistant to the social worker. The social auxiliary worker handled five files per month as allocated to her by the social worker, re-unification services, individual, group and community work.
Saw 16	Administration, SASSA applications, group and community work. The social worker allocated five files at a time to the social auxiliary worker, for individual work and foster care groups.
Saw 17	Assists groups, minutes of meetings, parent plans, screening, background information on files and contact rehab for information on programmes.
Saw 18	Chronic care, fundraising, day care, HIV and TB, children's programmes, admin, bereavement, basic assessment at care centre, psycho-social assessments and food parcel project.
Saw 19	Early interventions, prevention, safety plans, group work, share SAW, specific tasks on a template.
Saw 20	Support to social worker with non-therapeutic tasks, home visits and group work still in progress.

It is evident from the job descriptions given by the frontline social workers that they are not always sure what is expected from social auxiliary workers. They used them for what their understanding was of what the social auxiliary workers should do. Some of the frontline social workers had less experience than the social auxiliary workers, and they admitted that in some cases the social auxiliary workers were even better than some of the frontline social workers in, for example, administration. Some admitted

that the supervision responsibility was new to them as they themselves were in need of supervision.

For some of the social workers, this was their first job as a social worker. As a result, they were not sure what the supervision of a social auxiliary worker entailed. Hence, they described it as trial and error. One of the participants mentioned that they were never told about social auxiliary work during their theoretical training and that she was unsure about her responsibilities in the organisation. They were expected to supervise a social service professional without them having adequate information or training.

Social auxiliary workers are mostly involved in home visits to gather background information for the social worker. Individual work includes assisting with SASSA applications, assisting with identity books and birth certificate applications, assisting with visits to clinics or day hospitals, the screening of clients, admissions of clients, psycho-social assessments, counselling and referrals, assisting clients with interviews, writing curriculum vitae, finding jobs and assisting with bereavement and patient files.

Two of the frontline social workers shared a social auxiliary worker and they each give her five case files to handle for individual work. According to the job description of the social auxiliary worker, she was not allowed to function independently or have her own caseload (SACSSP, 2008). This specific social auxiliary worker has been working for the organisation for more than six years while both the social workers have been working there for two years and less. The two frontline social workers mentioned that social auxiliary worker was an asset to the organisation because she has been working in the community for so long.

Group work is done by most of the social auxiliary workers. It takes on the form of prevention, early intervention, foster groups and psycho-social groups in the in-patient unit (IPU), life skills groups, non-therapeutic groups, educational groups in schools, assisting group work with inmates, group work with fieldworkers, spiritual and academic support groups and bereavement support groups. The types of groups differ according to the context of the social auxiliary worker. Once again, the social auxiliary workers are supposed to support the social workers and not to take on sole

responsibility for a group or function (SACSSP, 2008). The emphasis needs to be on assistance and not independence.

Community work is varied, based on the environment in which the organisation operates. It includes day care programmes with patients and children, parent training, programmes with field workers, programmes with the inmates, on-going projects in the shelter, awareness programmes, adoption and family programmes, programmes at ECD and after care, programmes in the IPU, child protection programmes and food parcel projects. According to the job description, community projects always need to be implemented under the supervision of a social worker (SACSSP, 2008). Social auxiliary workers cannot take sole responsibility for such projects as it is not part of their scope of practice.

Social auxiliary workers may feel overwhelmed with what is expected from them. This is made worse when the frontline social worker who is supposed to supervise them is not sure what is expected from the social auxiliary worker or when the social auxiliary worker has more years of practical experience in the field. This can put strain on the supervisory relationship. Some of the social workers mentioned that the social auxiliary workers sometimes provided better support than the social workers with regard to, say, administrative tasks.

#### **4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE THEMES, SUBTHEMES AND CATEGORIES**

This section gives an overview of the various themes, subthemes and categories as they emerged from the analysis of the collected data. After this, the themes, subthemes and categories will be discussed with excerpts from the interviews with participants and a literature control.

**Table 4.3: An overview of the themes, subthemes and categories**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Categories</b>
Theme 1: Supervision	Nature of supervision	Frequency and duration Structured/ formal Unstructured/informal
	Content of supervision	
	Functions of supervision	Administrative Educational Supportive
Theme 2: Management	Management functions	Planning

		Organising Leading Control
Theme 3: Challenges	Time Workload Lack of resources Boundaries Training of social auxiliary workers	

#### 4. 3. 1. Theme 1: Supervision

Individual supervision is one of the primary methods of supervision (Engelbrecht, 2012; Kadushin & Harkness 2014; Tsui, 2005). Supervisors must be competent in all the methods of supervision, but particularly in individual supervision, as it is the primary opportunity to offer administrative guidance, education and support. Individual supervision sessions should follow the cyclic process of supervision (Engelbrecht, 2014), showing that the supervisor is attentive to the supervisee's needs while fulfilling the functions of administration, support and education. Supervision that is not structured or planned tends to be in the mode of crisis management, where supervisees seek help when they experience a specific problem (Bradley *et al.*, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013).

##### 4.3.1.1. Subtheme 1: Nature of supervision

The participants were asked to explain the nature of their supervision to social auxiliary workers, referring to the frequency, duration and supervision style (formal vs informal) of the supervision sessions.

**Table 4.4: Frequency and duration of the supervision sessions with the social auxiliary worker**

<b>Weekly and bi-weekly supervision</b>	<b>P1</b> - focus purely on work, SAW extensive experience, 2 - hour session <b>P2</b> - Mondays, support for work <b>P10</b> - Sometimes Mondays <b>P13</b> - Once a week for an hour, focuses on work <b>P17</b> - Every second week on a Tuesday morning, covering all the supervision functions
<b>Monthly and quarterly supervision</b>	<b>P3</b> - Once a month for 2 hours, covering work-related stuff and educational functions <b>P5</b> - Once a month, focused on supportive function <b>P6</b> - Once a quarter formal



	<p><b>P7</b> - Once a month, support, covering all functions</p> <p><b>P8</b> - Once a month for 1 to 1½ hours, covering all functions</p> <p><b>P11</b> - Once a month for an hour, covering all functions</p> <p><b>P12</b> – 1 x pm, informal, covering all the functions</p> <p><b>P15</b> – 1 x pm, for as long as needed, work related</p> <p><b>P16</b>- 1 x pm for 1½ hours, work related</p> <p><b>P18</b> - 1 x pm for 2 hours, work related</p> <p><b>P19</b> – 1 x pm, not sufficient, an hour on Friday, and work related</p> <p><b>P20</b> – 1 x pm for an hour, covering all the functions</p>
<b>Open door policy</b>	<p><b>P3</b> - Monday's planning, open door policy</p> <p><b>P4</b> - Only one structured session, mostly informal, with the focus on work</p> <p><b>P6</b> - mostly informal, 10-15 minutes, work related</p> <p><b>P10</b> - mostly open door and not structured</p> <p><b>P9</b> - Open door supervision, whenever help is needed</p> <p><b>P14</b> - Supervision on the run</p>

*Category: Frequency and duration of supervision sessions*

From the table above (Table 4.4) it is clear that most of the participants do monthly and quarterly supervision. Five of the participants' supervision is work related while the other seven include the three supervision functions or one of them. The participants who do weekly and bi-monthly supervision focused mostly on work-related aspects. The six participants with an open door policy also focused on work and provided help when needed. One of the participants admitted that supervision was done on the run, coinciding with the notion of Noble and Irwin (2009).

The descriptions given by the frontline social workers reflected their uncertainty about what to do when and what needed to be covered during these supervision sessions. They do not realise the importance of supervision and the impact it can have on effective service delivery. Some of the social workers did not limit the duration of the supervision sessions, which mostly focused on work. The lack of adequate training, structural support and unmanageable workloads impacted on the duration of the supervision sessions (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). Some participants' responses were as follows:

*"Honestly it is very difficult to do supervision with the social auxiliary worker; many times we do it in a lunch time." (P2)*



*“There is no official time that we sit down; if there is time and I am not busy he may ask for help.” (P 7)*

*“Let me say it is open door, it is not structured.” (P 7)*

*“I would say it is an open door policy, whenever they need help they know I will assist them.” (P 12)*

*“Usually it’s quite informal, so it would be a couple of minutes, so ten minutes and then once a quarter we have a more formal thing where the three of us as a team sit down to discuss ...” (P 16)*

The importance of regular meetings focused on all supervision functions are not understood by all frontline social workers. Social workers need to remember that social auxiliary workers deliver a support service; they are not supposed to work on their own (SACSSP; Social Work Act). The added responsibility of supervision and the lack of supervision training leave room for error. According to Carpenter *et al.* (2012), supervision should be geared towards increasing job satisfaction, reducing work stress and burnout, providing assistance with tasks, providing social and emotional support, and retaining workers within organisations, based on positive relationships between workers and supervisors. The experiences of the social workers seem to be the opposite. This is supported by responses from the participants:

*“Current social auxiliary worker was a worker in the organisation before, I can just give him tasks and he will do it.” (P 7)*

*“Both the social worker and social auxiliary worker keep a diary that is signed off at the end of every day by the social worker.” (P 8)*

*“Send a schedule beforehand. Make a list of all the cases we work on, all we struggle with, group work and other aspects.” (9)*

It is evident that frontline social workers do not have time to do supervision. They just hand over tasks to social auxiliary workers with the expectation that they will be able to implement it. Signing off a diary is not evidence that tasks have been done, but is an easy way to say that the social auxiliary worker’s work for the day has been checked. It is expected from the social auxiliary worker to put together a schedule for what needs to be addressed during supervision. It is crucial to include the social auxiliary work in preparation for supervision, because planning and preparation is a responsibility that both supervisor and supervisee need to take on to make the supervision work effectively (DSD & SACSSP, 2012; Kadushin, 1992; Tsui, 2005).

*Category: Structured or formal supervision sessions*

Structured supervision sessions are non-negotiable for social auxiliary workers because they need continuous guidance and control. All the supervision functions are addressed when the sessions are structured (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014, Munson 2002). The structured supervision sessions of the participants mostly focused on work aspects. Some of the frontline social workers focused on only one supervision function while others covered the three functions. It is evident that the frontline social workers did not know what exactly to cover during supervision sessions to ensure that at least the work-related issues are covered. This may also be due to high caseloads, a shortage of staff, burnout and the emigration of social workers (Engelbrecht, 2006).

*Category: Unstructured or informal supervision sessions*

Only a few participants used informal supervision. Informal supervision is mostly done through an open door policy. Some of the participants shared an office with the social auxiliary worker, which made reaching out for help accessible. Other participants did informal supervision whenever needed, focusing only on work-related aspects like case work, group work and community work. The responses of the participants included the following:

*“Every morning you ask them, what is in your diary, can you assist with group work or going to hospital. It is not always planned stuff. For me (the social worker) it is never planned. As it happens you need to respond.” (P 12)*

*“Exceptional year, with staff shortages. Supervision falls by the wayside due to demands of patients.” (P 13)*

*“During the week open door policy, educational stuff not so much, just with cases if she has queries.” (P 15)*

*“Honestly, I started May 2017, had one supervision session, have informal supervision regularly, give tasks for the day, and expect feedback the next day.” (P17)*

Social workers focused only on job-related tasks. The fact that scant attention was given to structured supervision did not seem to be an issue. No specific time was set aside for the social auxiliary workers but they were expected to deliver effective services. Answering a question in parliament in May 2015, the Department of Social Development acknowledged that social workers caseloads were too high (Swanepoel,

2015). Only a few participants mentioned that the social auxiliary workers have development plans in place. The focus was on the direct deliverables and not on development.

According to the Supervision Framework, supervision is mandatory and on-going for as long as the social auxiliary worker is in practice (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). A study done by Naidoo and Kasiram (2003) showed that social workers experienced supervision and management as poorly conducted, ineffectual and a source of stress. However, supervision remains mandatory for social auxiliary workers. It therefore needs to be structured or unstructured.

#### **4.3.1.2 Subtheme 2: Functions of supervision**

The functions of supervision play an important role in balancing supervision. Kadushin and Harkness (2014), Munson (2002), Tsui (2005), Van Dyk and Harrison (2008) and Smith (2005) identified three main functions, namely administrative, educational and supportive. All three are equally important although in South Africa more time is spent on the administrative function. This can be ascribed to the high caseloads and shortage of staff (Botha, 2002).

##### *Category: Administrative function*

The participant responses included the following: *“Admin, admin, admin.”* The high caseloads and accompanying statutory work did not allow time for anything else.

*“Purely work, not that much to offer her, she has extensive experience.” (P 20)*

*“Do reports for other social worker, 6 monthly follow-ups and does process notes for her.” (P15)*

It is clear from these responses that social workers are swamped with work that requires a significant amount of administration. The administrative tasks include court investigations and reports, foster care reports, adoption reports, reports for family reunification, psycho-social reports, quarterly reports for the Department of Social Development, monthly and quarterly stats and planning. The heavy administration burden forms part of the reason why social workers across South Africa migrate to other countries in pursuit of better salaries and working conditions (Alpaslan & Schenck, 2012; Hölscher & Sewpaul, 2006; September, 2007).

*Category: Educational function*

It is important for social auxiliary workers to know what is expected from them. The goal is to improve their knowledge, attitudes and skills so that they can perform optimally (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). Only a few participants gave attention to this function, hence the following responses:

*“They also identify learning and growth areas that need more information and training example legislation.” (P 5)*

*“Cover admin support and education. Education is done according to needs once a month.” (P 10)*

*“Social auxiliary workers don’t know adoptions – it is a new field for them. They first slot in, observe and get training, not formal, just educate them on the process. You modelled for them.” (P11)*

*“Where are we now with your development needs and what should we focus on now.” (P 19)*

It is evident from these responses that social auxiliary workers have educational needs. By addressing these needs their knowledge, attitudes and skills will be improved, allowing them to perform optimally. If the educational function is not adequately addressed, frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers may lose interest in social services field because no growth and development is taking place. According to Todd and Storm (1997), supervisors are not experts; they merely have the knowledge, skills and experience to draw on in order to facilitate the progress of their supervisees. Only a few social workers attended to the educational function.

*Category: Supportive function*

Social auxiliary workers need to be supported to deliver effective services and to be of value to the organisation. The supportive goal is to improve morale, job satisfaction and the quality of work (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). It is evident from the responses of the participants that this function takes the last place. The emphasis stays on the work that needs to be done – the administrative function. The supportive function gets the least attention, as mentioned in the participants’ excerpts:

*“Do not say too much how she feels. Explore personal support.” (P 19)*

*“Look at the person first and own wellbeing. Personal wellbeing impacts on their work.” (P 5)*

*“Organisation is person-centred where staff is concerned. Begin with personal debriefing.” (P 4)*

*“The organisation makes use of private practitioners to do the supportive function.” (P3)*

*“Emotional support for complex situations only.” (P 13)*

Although some of the organisations focused strongly on the supportive function, it still takes a backseat compared to the administrative and educational functions. Some of the participants were mandated to address this function because of the organisation’s policy. However, in most of the cases support referred to work-related issues (as opposed to personal issues). Zutshi and McDonnell (2007:20) stated the following: “By offering support within the supervision context supervisees should be given the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the work upon them and prevent issues adversely affecting them and their work.” Based on the responses, most of the participants experienced the opposite of what Zutshi and McDonnell stated.

#### **4.3.1.3. Subtheme 3: Content of supervision**

Participants did not have planned agendas besides the discussion of cases. The supervision thus had no structure and was done based on the needs of the organisation. The content covered during supervision was mainly work related with the emphasis on administrative tasks. Administration is specifically important for those organisations whose core business is statutory work. It seemed that only the few faith-based organisations fully understood the value of support. Although education is imperative for the profession and the development of the social service professionals, it did not receive sufficient attention. The lack of training in supervision underlines this. The social workers commented as follows on the work-focused the content of their supervision sessions:

*“Discuss clients appointed to her, what is her plan of action. What needs to be done, can it be close. Not long term very short period files.” (P 8)*

*“Content is cases, challenges, statistics on a monthly basis.” (P9)*

*“Ask about patients, if social auxiliary worker has problems for example children that need to be referred to NGO’s. Discuss subject relevant topics.” (P 18)*

*“Purely work not that much to offer her, she has extensive experience.” (P 20)*

The responses reflected that attention is only given to work-related issues. No time was allocated to support or education. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014), all the functions of supervision are equally important. It is evident from the responses that frontline social workers are in need of supervision training to enable them to supervise the social auxiliary workers effectively. It is also clear that social auxiliary workers will not be able to grow and develop, and experience job satisfaction and healthy worker morale if administration is all that is attended to. What is addressed in the content of the supervision sessions can partly be blamed on caseload size, which is one of the reasons why social workers pursue better salaries and working conditions in other countries (Alpaslan & Schenk, 2012; Hölscher & Sewpaul, 2006; September, 2007).

### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Management functions**

Management functions play an important role in the supervision of social auxiliary workers. All staff need to plan their work, organise how they are going to execute it, receive motivation, and put control measures in place to evaluate whether goals are reached, and if not, why not, and what changes need to be made to improve the situation (Hellriegel *et. al.*, 2012; Lazenby, 2016; Nel, 2014).

#### **4.3.2.1. Subtheme 1: Planning**

According to Nel (2014), planning gives direction and defines the actions of interventions. All the participants did planning in a different way that speaks to their organisational cultures. Planning and preparation are a responsibility of both supervisor and supervisee as this will increase the impact of supervision (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). For some planning is done daily. Others do their planning weekly, monthly, quarterly or six-monthly. Some participants expected the social auxiliary workers to do their own planning. One participant felt that planning was unnecessary as the social auxiliary worker knew what was expected of her. Other participants realised the importance of planning together with their social auxiliary workers to ensure alignment in terms of deliverables. Planning was primarily focused on work, as is evident in the excerpts of these participants:

*“Planning is a bit of a challenge due to expectations of cases.” (P 20)*

*“Delegate what she needs to follow up for home visits. Monday and Wednesday is their administration day and Tuesdays and Thursdays they do home visits.” (P 17)*

*“We do monthly planning that entails follow-ups, discuss the cases done before. Plan group and community work. Do statistics together.” (P16)*

*“Planning fits in everywhere, for everything she does she needs planning. She is overly aware of planning.” (P 14)*

*“Discuss the aspects that need to be achieved for the quarter, then diarise it and at monthly meeting check the progress.” (P 12)*

*“Planning does not happen as it should, but we work around it. Try to use diary and statistics, to see what, where and how.” (P 11)*

*“A supervision form they have to complete beforehand with tendencies, needs, what you need more information on, due dates and issues with individual clients.” (P 10)*

*“Plan specifically for clients. Not easy to do other planning.” (P 8)*

*“Plan together as a whole team, he is responsible for on-going projects in the afternoons.” (P 7)*

*Will have yearly programmes, could she meet the goals, what went wrong, reschedule. Sometimes difficult to plan because of sudden changes, huge areas, et cetera.” (P 3)*

The social auxiliary workers' strengths and competencies are evident from these responses. It is clear that they focus on outcomes. At times they are not even aware of how they do things, but they use their strengths to deliver what is expected from them (Healy, 2005). Who is going to do what to reach the planned goals? Planning forms the basis of all management functions as it gives direction to the organisation, community project, group, family and individual service users, and it defines the actions of interventions (Nel, 2014). The participants agreed with Nel, as their planning is focused on the social work methods. Emphasis is placed on the individual's abilities and strengths. Some participants specifically mentioned that the social auxiliary workers were an asset to the organisation.

Workload planning is important for frontline social workers as well as social auxiliary workers. The implementation of the planning is the responsibility of both the supervisor and supervisee. The supervisor needs to explore and use the strengths,



competencies, capabilities, capacities and resilience of the team members to facilitate effective service delivery (Healy, 2005).

#### **4.3.2.2. Subtheme 2: Organising**

Organising must be seen as an on-going process through which managers create structure (Lazenby, 2016). Organising helps to ensure that what was planned will be implemented. Most of the participants tried to organise their work but unforeseen happenings often led to rescheduling and working around challenges. The type of organisation (for example a child and family organisation, or a specialised organisation) has an impact on its organising culture. The child and family organisations that deal with statutory work are impacted the most and thrive on crisis interventions, as the responses of the participants reveal:

*“The whole team must be involved. Then we name the task and who need to do what.” (P3)*

*“Record decisions made in supervision and E-mail it to the social auxiliary worker and she must bring that to the next supervision. Check if everything was done. It works at the moment. I am new at this.” (P5)*

*“Next month use old supervision form as a measurement. They have to be practical to keep up with everything in the field. Follow up is continuous.” (P10)*

*“We sit together to discuss progress. Most important who, by when and your tasks so that everybody will know what they need to do.” (P 12)*

*“There is no problem with that, she does reporting and follow-ups on a calm base.” (P 16)*

*“Organising important, filing done immediately after visit, put in file and put away.” (P 17)*

*“It’s difficult, cannot be like a teacher and looking through her work, but we discuss it. Taught her how to prioritise.” (P 18)*

*“She needs to organise how she is going to carry out the work. If the work is to demanding, look at the cause.” (P20)*

The participants’ responses show how they organise their work. According to Smit *et al.* (2007), organising refers to the systematic coordination of different tasks that need to be executed, as well as the relationships between those who execute the tasks. Some of the participants sit together as a team to decide on who is responsible for



what task. Others shift the responsibility of organising to the social auxiliary worker. This is not necessarily a negative as the social auxiliary worker should draw on her strengths, competencies, abilities and knowledge base to succeed (Healy, 2005). Follow-up forms an important part of the participants' responses, emphasising the need to execute what was planned and organised. Prioritising also helps to create focus.

#### **4.3.2.3. Subtheme 3: Leading**

Leading can be a challenge for frontline social workers as they themselves need leadership at times. Some try to lead by example or execute leadership but are not sure whether they are doing it correctly. Some participants are aware of certain leadership aspects but are not always in a position to implement these. Motivation plays an important role in leadership as it helps to ensure successful implementation. Leadership is about influencing people to get the work done successfully (Weinbach, 2008).

Some of the excerpts expressed the opposite:

*"I try to lead how it should be done and when time comes she makes excuses." (P2)*

*"Social auxiliary workers need a lot of support for leading. A big challenge is to keep people motivated." (P 10)*

*Still learning herself, social auxiliary worker more experienced in community. You cannot lead if you do not set the example to lead." (P 16)*

*"Still learning how to do this, it is trial and error." (P 20)*

The participants struggled to lead the social auxiliary workers. This can partly be ascribed to a lack of leadership knowledge or experience. Leadership in this context requires the ability to communicate, build interpersonal relationships, motivate and influence followers towards goal attainment, identify and nurture the strengths in others, care about people, help people to learn, grow and develop, and work effectively in groups (Lazenby, 2016; Nel, 2014). Workers perceive supervisors' requests as reasonable, trustworthy and with clear motives when there is trust between them (Weinbach 2003:242). A lot still needs to be done to build more trust between frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers. High caseloads, a lack of resources,

shortage of staff and poor working conditions are some of the reasons that undermine trust relationships (Engelbrecht, 2014).

#### **4.3.2.4. Subtheme 4: Control**

Control forms a very important part of the success of any organisation. It includes the measurement and monitoring of the organisation's achievements of its goals (DuBrin, 2008; Griffin & Moorhead, 2008; Hellriegel *et al.*, 2012). The expectation is that the frontline social workers use control during the supervision of the social auxiliary workers to ensure that what was planned is executed.

According to Coulshed and Mullender (2001:54), all organisations need an element of quality control, but quality assurance has to be a collective effort, using a bottom-up approach. Control should include all staff, not just top management. If not work has not been executed, the reasons for this need to be investigated to get back on track again.

*"Task list serves as a control measure. Currently still need to think of something else."* (P 20)

*"Use a weekly template to measure what was given and what is done. Proud if they have achieved the things that has been asked. They must take internal control."* (P 19)

*"File audits once a month, monthly planning, process notes, statistics and monthly reports are all control measures."* (P18)

*"Process notes, verbal feedback, quarterly report and statistics for the organisation and government serve as measuring tools."* (P15)

*"Diary is very important and gets signed off daily. A message book for the use of all staff, is available."* (P 8)

*"Bringing them back, to decisions made. Very clear on the organisations principles."* (P5)

*"Previous supervision, critical cases discussed, revisits them for progress. Writing everything down and rechecking."* (P 4)

*"I am not a policeman. Being like a mother, need to follow up the whole time. She has been spoon fed, and then she would say I know."* (P 2)

*"The right policies and procedures to be followed, quality meetings, report writing ..."* (P 1)

The participants' responses all have a measure of control, but the participants do not know how to use control when supervising the social auxiliary workers with regard to the management functions. The responses reflect the measures used but nothing is captured on corrective actions when goals are not achieved. According to Smit *et al.* (2007:6, 9), the purpose of control is "to monitor the actual results against those that were planned". The participants did not indicate that they experienced difficulty with monitoring the results against what was planned. Control is seen as the final step in the management process, meaning that the process is not complete until a plan for control has been developed (Lazenby, 2016).

File audits, monthly reports, quarterly reports, statistics, recordkeeping and quality meetings are some of the plans of control used by the participants. In addition to this, organisations also need a quality assurance process whereby all staff help to ensure that the organisational goals are accomplished or the actual performance compares with the predetermined standards. The participants all have control measures but lack a quality assurance process. They are not aware of quality standards and they do not know how to develop measuring instruments and compare outcomes with set quality standards and corrective actions, which encompass the three interrelated steps of the quality assurance process (Nel, 2014). The social workers are so goal-driven that quality assurance processes get neglected.

#### **4.3.3. Theme 3: Challenges**

The participants have a lot of challenges that impact their supervision and the management of the social auxiliary workers. High caseloads are only one of the reasons why social workers leave the profession. Other reasons include poor working conditions, insufficient safety and security, poor salaries, staff shortages and high staff turnover, lack of resources, inadequate supervision and a lack of office space, equipment and vehicles (Engelbrecht, 2014: 101). Some of these reasons also apply to social workers who supervise social auxiliary workers.

Next, the five key challenges will be unpacked.

#### **4.3.3.1. Subtheme1: Time**

Job demands often prevent frontline social workers from spending enough time with social auxiliary workers. This leads to feelings of guilt, but not because time is wasted but purely because there is no time. This is highlighted by the following excerpts:

*"Do not have time to sit with the social auxiliary worker." (P1)*

*"The whole thing of time scarcity." (P5)*

*"Time is a huge challenge, social worker is overloaded, all work must be up to standard." (P6)*

*"Time is a challenge." P9)*

*"I just wish there was more time." (P10)*

*"Feel guilty has no time for social auxiliary worker." (P11)*

*"Spend too little time with social auxiliary worker." (P 12)*

These excerpts confirm the findings mentioned in the literature, namely that social workers have high caseloads, resulting in them doing supervision on the run (Noble & Irwin, 2009). It is not that the social workers do not want to do the supervision; there is just no time to do it. Once again, high caseloads, shortage of staff, work-related stress and a lack of structured supervision are some of the reasons why social workers emigrate (Department of Social Development, 2006).

#### **4.3.3.2. Subtheme 2: Workload**

Frontline social workers have huge workloads to manage, which makes it difficult to allocate sufficient time to the social auxiliary workers. High workloads are also one of the reasons why social workers leave the country to work abroad. After so many years, social workers still struggle to cope with the volume of work at hand (Engelbrecht, 2006). They expressed themselves as follows:

*"Huge amount of cases." (P 5)*

*"Caseload quite substantial, has to change." (P 20)*

*"Too much work." (P 17)*

*Sometimes you get to busy with your own work." (P12)*

*"I am sometimes drowning in my own work, imagine how she feels." (P11)*

*“Big workload, do not have time to sit with the social auxiliary worker.” (P 1)*

It is difficult for the frontline social workers to set aside time for the social auxiliary workers when they themselves struggle with huge workloads. It is evident from the responses that the social workers are overburdened, which impacts their supervision of the social auxiliary workers. The South African Supervision Framework is based on “the perceived need for effective supervision within the social work profession in order to improve quality social work services offered to service users” and “it is informed by amongst other things, lack of adequate training, structural support and manageable workloads” (DSD & SACSSP, 2012: 14).

#### **4.3.3.3. Subtheme 3: Lack of resources**

Frontline social workers themselves are struggling with a lack of resources and have to share available resources with the social auxiliary workers. The lack of resources is one of the reasons why social workers leave the country to work abroad (Alpaslan & Schenk, 2012; Holsher & Sewpaul, 2006; September, 2007). This leads to frustration as everybody wants to finish their work in time. NGOs specifically are struggling with a lack of resources and have to make do with what they have. This impacts the service delivery as well as outcomes. The responses of the participants highlight their frustration:

*“Training and guidance on how to supervise a social auxiliary worker.” (P 2)*

*“Social auxiliary worker does not have a driver’s license, no landline.” (P4)*

*“Lack of office space, especially for the social auxiliary workers (chair, desk and computer). Social auxiliary workers do not know if they can use the telephone. Realise that there is no solution at the moment.” (P 11)*

*“Finance always a problem. Internet more off then on, cars are an issue.” (P 17)*

*“New born (newly appointed social auxiliary worker) don’t cope, high turnover in social auxiliary workers.” (P19)*

The lack of resources differs from organisation to organisation. For some office space, the use of telephones and training are a challenge. Others experience the lack of finances, poor internet access, the lack of vehicles and the lack of driver’s licences among social auxiliary workers as obstacles compromising effective service delivery. The high turnover of social auxiliary workers also impacts effective service delivery.

#### **4.3.3.4. Subtheme 4: Boundaries**

Boundaries are an important aspect of the relationship between the frontline social worker and the social auxiliary worker. The latter needs to be cautious not to overstep boundaries. One of the responses of the social workers on boundaries was: *“When they get comfortable they think they know everything and can do everything.”*

This response emphasises the danger of assuming that you know without the necessary training. The following are some responses of the participants around boundaries:

*“Social auxiliary worker has its own perceptions. She needs to focus on how things work and not compare to previous jobs.” (P19)*

*“A lot of social workers do not know what a social auxiliary worker needs to do. The social auxiliary worker just except being misuse/abuse due to a lack of education. Type reports that is not part of their job description.” (P16)*

*“Need to stress that SAW will always be under the supervision of a social worker, never be on their own. When they get comfortable they think they know everything and can do everything.” (P 8)*

It is pivotal for the frontline social workers to know the scope of practice of the social auxiliary workers to ensure that the social auxiliary workers stay within their boundaries. The fact that some social auxiliary workers have more experience than the frontline social workers does not mean that the social auxiliary workers can cross boundaries. The frontline social workers need to be assertive and know their roles and responsibilities. The social auxiliary workers fulfil a support role – under supervision (DSD & SACSSP, 2012)

#### **4.3.3.5 Subtheme 5: Training of social auxiliary workers**

The frontline social workers had different views on the training of the social auxiliary workers. Some experienced the social auxiliary workers as an asset to the profession while others saw them as a burden. When frontline social workers understand the scope of practice of the social auxiliary workers it will make working together easier. Social auxiliary workers are there to support the frontline social workers and to work under ongoing supervision (DSD & SACSSP, 2012).

*“Need to be better trained, Skill level too low for what is expected.” (P5)*

*“Proper training, some social auxiliary workers can do more support for social worker and families.” (P 17)*

*“Difficult to see eye to eye because of the training difference. Social auxiliary workers are train to assist.” (P 15)*

The frontline social workers are of the opinion that the one-year social auxiliary course does not provide adequate training compared with the four-year Social Work degree. The frontline social workers see the social auxiliary workers as on a different intellectual and training level, even though the social auxiliary workers at times want to do more than what is expected from them (Social Work Act).

#### **4. 4 CONCLUSION**

Frontline social workers are not fully equipped to take on the responsibility of supervising social auxiliary workers. They are familiar with the requirements of a supervisor as described by the Supervision Framework and they are taking on this responsibility over and above their regular duties. It is mentioned in the Supervision Framework that the supervisors of social auxiliary workers need not be supervisors – they can be social workers.

It is pivotal for all frontline social workers to receive training in supervision to be able to supervise social auxiliary workers. Frontline social workers need to be aware of the boundaries and job description of social auxiliary workers. Social auxiliary workers can be a real asset to an organisation.

Organisations should have clear guidelines in place on who should do supervision, what qualifications these supervisors should have and what training is available to them. Supervision in organisations should be contextual.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This exploratory and descriptive study investigated the views of frontline social workers regarding their supervision of social auxiliary workers through the execution of the management functions. The research problem is based on the researcher's observations and literature, while facilitating the social auxiliary course at an accredited service provider. The study was guided by a range of questions on how frontline social workers are supervising social auxiliary workers through the execution of the management functions.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Describe social auxiliary work as a social service profession in South Africa;
- Explain the execution of management functions by social workers in their supervision of social auxiliary workers;
- Empirically investigate the views of frontline social workers on the execution of management functions in their supervision of social auxiliary workers;
- Draw conclusions and make recommendations to social workers on the execution of their management functions when supervising social auxiliary workers.

#### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The conclusions and recommendations will be presented in an integrated manner based on the literature review and the empirical study. This chapter will therefore explain what the results, as presented in Chapter 4, mean to the profession of social work. Challenges experienced by the researcher in conducting the study will also be evaluated.



### 5.2.1 The research process

The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of the views of frontline social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers. A total of 20 frontline social workers were interviewed, at which stage the researcher reached a point of saturation. This means that the interviews no longer brought new information to light, as the participants' responses became repetitive and did not introduce new ideas or themes to the research (Brod *et al.*, 2009; Mason, 2010). This ended the data collection phase, allowing the researcher to proceed with the data analysis. It can be concluded that frontline social workers wanted to have their voices heard as they believe in the importance of supervision for social auxiliary workers. Also, the support of the social auxiliary workers enabled the frontline social workers to successfully execute their management functions.

It is therefore **recommended** that a more extensive study be conducted which could include frontline social workers in government facilities to reach the majority of the social work population in the Western Cape.

### 5.2.2 Profiling of participants

The majority of the social workers interviewed are females based in non-governmental organisations in the Western Cape who supervise social auxiliary workers without being trained for the task. The findings revealed that the frontline social workers are not trained or appointed as supervisors on a middle management level. However, they are expected to supervise social auxiliary workers as part of their job. Most of the frontline social workers are receiving supervision themselves, and some of them are on a consultation level due to their years of experience.

The findings also revealed that frontline social workers are not sure what to expect from the social auxiliary workers, and what they are supposed to do. It is **recommended** that a research study be done to develop a training course to equip social workers with the skills to supervise social auxiliary workers. Frontline social workers are not familiar with the job descriptions of social auxiliary workers. Hence, they use them (the social auxiliary workers) as they deem necessary. Frontline social workers admitted that they do not set aside sufficient time for their social auxiliary

workers due to their own huge workloads, time pressure, lack of resources and difficulties with boundary setting. Hence, it is also **recommended** that time should be allocated to frontline social workers to supervise social auxiliary workers if applicable.

Although there are variations in the frequency and duration of the supervision sessions, frontline social workers are executing supervision, even if not in the most effective way. They tried to supervise the social auxiliary workers in the way they know how or in the way they were supervised. Some of them expressed a need to also be supervised and admitted that some of the social auxiliary workers have more work experience than they do. The findings confirmed that supervision mainly focused on direct work-related aspects. Only a few social workers included the educational and supportive functions of supervision. Frontline social workers in the statutory field acknowledged their lack of time and their work pressure. It is thus **recommended** that a study be done on the supervision functions and the importance of this for the effective supervision of social auxiliary workers. Furthermore, every organisation employing social auxiliary workers should have a supervision policy, indicating in detail what the scope of supervision functions should be.

According to the findings the content of supervision is mainly focused on administrative aspects. The education and supportive supervision functions take a backseat. There are a few organisations that incorporate the supervision function of support, especially those that are faith based. For some it is trial and error because they are learning as they go along.

Based on this, it is **recommended** that all aspects of supervision as well as the role, responsibilities and job description of the social auxiliary workers form part of undergraduate social work training. In order to use auxiliary workers as assistants, social workers need to understand where auxiliary workers fit into their service rendering. Social workers need to be made aware of the benefits of social auxiliary workers. This should be the responsibility of training institutions, social service organisations as well as the SACSSP.

### 5.2.3 Supervision

The research found that supervision is important to frontline social workers. However, not being appointed as supervisors on a middle management level and not being trained as supervisors compromise the supervision. The findings revealed that the frequency and duration of the supervision sessions differed according to context. Most of the sessions focused on administrative aspects. Only a few social workers focused on the educational and supportive functions of supervision. Half of the frontline social workers are doing statutory work which requires a significant amount of administration (which includes report writing), hence the limited attention to education and support. It is therefore **recommended** that organisations determine what exactly they need in terms of the context-specific functions of supervision in order to implement a relevant supervision model in the organisation.

### 5.2.4 Management functions of supervision

The findings are clear that the frontline social workers did not really give thought to the management functions, and specifically their use during supervision. They all know that the management functions are important but they do not execute these fully. One reason for this is a lack of understanding of the management functions. It is therefore **recommended** that specific opportunities are created in undergraduate curricula to accommodate the employment of management functions, specifically within the context of frontline social workers supervising social auxiliary workers. In addition, organisations expecting frontline social workers to supervise social auxiliary workers should include the employment of management functions in the supervision training of frontline social workers.

Planning is one of the functions clearly understood by the frontline social workers. The findings revealed that they all used planning even if not in the most effective way. Planning focused mainly on work and administrative related aspects. Frontline social workers working with statutory cases were often overburdened by the amount of administration required. Planning was done according to the context of the organisation with preference to daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly planning. Some social workers worked according to task lists with priority items. Some found it difficult to plan because of sudden changes and huge areas to cover. It is thus **recommended** that undergraduate social work education and personal development

plans for frontline social workers incorporate planning as a management function, and specifically planning within a workload and time management context.

Organising was also important as the planned tasks need to be implemented. The findings confirmed that the execution of plans was a challenge as a result of organisational circumstances and contexts. Most of the social workers tried to organise but unforeseen happenings regularly led to rescheduling. Specifically, organisations delivering statutory services struggled to stay organised as they were thriving on crisis interventions. Some of the frontline social workers expected the social auxiliary workers to organise their own work, while others followed a team approach. The findings confirmed the necessity of organising, but also showed that there is a lack of understanding of what organising entails. Therefore it is **recommended** that undergraduate social work education and personal development plans for frontline social workers incorporate organising as a management function, with a special focus on how to assert authority, assign a command structure, facilitate coordination and leverage mechanisms for delegation.

Leadership is exercised to a lesser extent as some frontline social workers do not know how to lead. Some led by example and motivated the social auxiliary workers to implement the tasks planned. It is clear from the findings that social workers are uncertain of the leading function. They do have some understanding that a leader needs to influence and motivate the staff to execute the plans needed to reach the organisation's goals. Most of the social workers do not have the characteristics of a leader and are still in need of being led. It is therefore **recommended** that undergraduate social work education should include the leadership development of social workers as a graduate attribute, and that leadership should be incorporated in the personal development plans of frontline social workers.

Although control forms an integral part of the management functions it was not well understood by the frontline social workers. They referred to control measures but not with regard to supervision. Diaries, process notes, different kinds of reports and statistics are some of the control measures used by the frontline social workers, but they lacked understanding of the quality assurance process. The purpose of control – which is to monitor the actual results against those that were planned – was not clearly understood. Social workers' context and high caseloads also impacted the control

function. They are caught up in their work and time is a scarcity. It is important for social workers to understand control and its place in supervision, as control is seen as the final step in the management process. It is **recommended** that undergraduate social work education and personal development plans of frontline social workers incorporate the control function of management, focusing specifically on how to set quality standards, develop measuring instruments, compare outcomes with set quality standards and implement corrective actions.

### 5.2.5 Challenges

The findings revealed five challenges that stood out for the frontline social workers because these challenges compromised the effectiveness of the supervision. The challenges are time, workload, lack of resources, boundaries and training. Due to high workloads, frontline social workers do not have the time to spend with the social auxiliary workers. Limited resources – like transport, office space and technology – impacted on supervision and the quality of social services. Both frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers were unsure of what the job description of the social auxiliary worker entailed, which at times lead to the overstepping of boundaries. Some frontline social workers felt that the skills levels of the social auxiliary training courses were inadequate while others experienced the training as good. It is thus **recommended** that structural challenges posed by the supervision of auxiliary workers should be acknowledged and addressed by management structures who expect frontline social workers to do supervision. If structural challenges are not acknowledged and addressed, the supervision of auxiliary workers is reduced to merely a compliance check, which will not be to the benefit of the social auxiliary worker or service users.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research focused on gaining an understanding of the views of frontline social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers. The findings confirmed that the supervision of social auxiliary workers is necessary specifically regarding the execution of the management functions. Frontline social workers who have not been trained in supervision found it difficult to do effective supervision. Supervision was mainly focused on work and administrative tasks. Due to high workloads frontline social workers do not spend

enough time with the social auxiliary workers. The lack of resources like transport and office space also impacted on work performance and supervision. This study targeted frontline social workers only. Further research could explore the views of the supervisors on middle management levels who supervise social auxiliary workers with regard to the execution of the management functions.

Training in supervision is needed for any social worker in a supervision position. A study to investigate the training needs of social work supervision is thus essential. This study only focused on social service organisations in the Western Cape which required the supervision of social auxiliary workers. A study focusing on government organisations where social auxiliary workers are supervised are also recommended.

A study on the relevance of social auxiliary work training versus application in the field after training is also recommended. Social workers need to have knowledge of social auxiliary work training and social auxiliary work job descriptions. Research can also be undertaken on the time that social auxiliary workers spend on theory versus practice – and the outcomes of this.

Lastly, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to include the broader social work population within social service organisations in the Western Cape because this is a qualitative study. A study on the supervision of social auxiliary workers encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies is recommended to engage a larger group of social workers from governmental as well as non-governmental organisations. It is imperative that frontline social workers understand that social auxiliary workers must be supervised for as long as they are practising. Frontline social workers on all management levels thus need to be equipped with supervision skills.

#### **5.4 KEY FINDINGS**

Frontline social workers lacked a thorough understanding of the job description of social auxiliary workers. They do supervision without knowing what is expected from the social auxiliary workers. The supervision sessions focused mainly on the administrative function with less emphasis on education and support. The importance of the management functions was not fully understood, and hence the management

functions were not executed effectively, as confirmed by the findings of the study. The frontline social workers acknowledged the need to implement the management functions but were not sure whether they were executing the functions correctly.

Further training of social workers in the execution of the management functions is imperative for effective service delivery. The findings confirmed legislative prescripts that the supervision of frontline social workers and social auxiliary workers is mandated by the South African Council for Social Service Professions' Code of Ethics (SACSSP, 2007) and the Social Work Act (RSA, 1978) which explicitly state that social workers and social auxiliary workers must be supervised by social workers. A person supervising a social worker/social auxiliary worker must be qualified and registered to practice social work, with relevant experience in supervision (NDSD, 2012:22).

The key finding of this study is that social work supervision should include the execution of management functions, which are essential to equip, educate and support social auxiliary workers in their service delivery as assistants to social workers.

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## **ANNEXURE A**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

The goal of this study is to gain an understanding of the views of frontline social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers.

*All the information recorded in this interview will be regarded as confidential.*

*Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to refuse answering any question. Please answer questions as honestly as possible. For the purpose of this study the focus will be on social worker's views of supervision of social auxiliary workers through the use of the management functions.*

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**Interviewer:** Justine Goliath

**Date of interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant number:** \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Indicate your gender:

MALE	FEMALE
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2. Indicate your age:

20 – 29 years	30 – 39 years	40 – 49 years	50 – 59 years	60 – 65 years
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3. How many years have you been practicing social work?

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40
Years of experience						

4. Highest qualification related to occupation:

Diploma	
Degree	
Honours Degree	
Master's Degree	
Doctor's Degree	
Other, example short courses	

5. What does your current job description entails?

6. What kind of training do you have in supervision? Describe.
7. How many social auxiliary workers do you supervise?
8. What does the job description of the social auxiliary worker entails?

## **SECTION B: SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORKERS**

1. What is the nature of your supervision? (in terms of mandate, frequency, duration, and functions such as administration, support and education)
2. What is the content you cover during supervision?

## **SECTION C: MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS, (PLANNING, ORGANISING, LEADING AND CONTROL) USE IN THE SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORKERS.**

1. **PLANNING:** How do you operationalize planning in your supervision of social auxiliary workers? Give specific examples?
2. **ORGANISING:** How do you operationalize organising in your supervision of social auxiliary workers? Give specific examples?
3. **LEADING:** How do you operationalize leading in your supervision of social auxiliary workers? Give specific examples?
4. **CONTROL:** How do you operationalize control in your supervision of social auxiliary workers? Give specific examples?
5. **CHALLENGES:** What challenges do you experience with the management functions in the supervision of social auxiliary workers? Give examples.

***Thank you for taking part in this study.***

## **ANNEXURE B**

### **CONSENT FORM**

#### **STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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#### **MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS OF FRONTLINE SOCIAL WORKERS IN SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL AUXILIARY WORKERS**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by J. Goliath, a master's student from the Social Work department at the University of Stellenbosch. The results of this study will become part of a research report. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a frontline social worker in a family care organisation in the Western Cape.

##### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to gain an understanding of the views of frontline social workers regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers.

##### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

A semi-structured interview will be utilized to gather information confidentially. You need not indicate your name or any particulars on the interview schedule.

##### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Any uncertainties on any of the aspects of the schedule you may experience during the interview can be discussed and clarified at any time.

##### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND / OR TO SOCIETY**

The results of this study will allow insight into the frontline social workers views regarding the execution of their management functions in supervising social auxiliary workers. This information could be used by welfare organisations to explore other avenues of supervision.

##### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment in any form will be received for participating in this study.

##### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as

required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coding where each questionnaire is numbered. All questionnaires will be managed, analysed and processed by the researcher and will kept in code-word protected folder on a computer.

## 7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study.

## 8. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT- RESEARCHER

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: Professor LK Engelbrecht (Supervisor), Department of Social Work, University of Stellenbosch, Tel. 021-808 2070, E-Mail: [lke@sun.ac.za](mailto:lke@sun.ac.za)

## 9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Malene Fouche ([mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021- 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development.

## SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me the participant by \_\_\_\_\_ in English and the participant is in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to him / her. The participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to his / her satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of subject/participant]. [He / She] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_



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**Approval Notice  
New Application**

19 Apr-2017  
Goliath, Justine *JE*

Proposal #: SIH-HSD-003475

Title: Management functions of social workers in supervising of social  
auxiliary workers

Dear Ms Justine Goliath,

Your New Application received on 24-Mar-2017, was reviewed  
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **19-Apr-2017 -18-Apr-2020**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (SU-HSD-003475) on any documents or correspondence with the RFC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration *number* REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents:

DESC Report

RRC: Humanities New Application

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator

Research Ethics Committee; Human Research (Humanities)