

Publisher



African Journal of Social Work

Afri. j. soc. work

© National Association of Social Workers Zimbabwe/Author(s)

ISSN Print 1563-3934

ISSN Online 2409-5605

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License

Indexed & Accredited with: African Journals Online (AJOL) | University of Zimbabwe Accredited Journals (UZAJ) | SCOPUS (Elsevier) | Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) | Society of African Journal Editors (SAJE) | Asian Digital Library (ADL) | African Social Work & Development Network (ASWDNet) | Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) - South Africa | SJR | CNKI - China | Journal Publishing Practices & Standards (JPPS) | EBSCO | DOI

Reflective supervision: An element in the execution of Social Work supervision in the Department of Social Development at the province of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

Sandile N. GUMBI, Mbongeni S. SITHOLE and Sibonisile ZIBANE

ABSTRACT

Social work supervision is the core feature in promoting reflective practice to social workers and, subsequently, delivering quality services to clients. This article argues that reflective supervision, which is a structured support helping social workers think critically, is central to improving social work practice within the Department of Social Development. Without it, the purpose of supervision, which is professional growth and quality service, is undermined. The article adopts a qualitative interpretive approach with an exploratory-descriptive focus to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. Twelve social workers and five social work supervisors were purposively sampled from the service offices under the King Cetshwayo District, the third biggest district in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Data from interviews were analysed through thematic analysis, and findings were presented through two main themes and several related subthemes, respectively. The study found that the lack of reflective supervision contributes to the ineffective implementation of supervision in the organisation under study. The paper recommends addressing systemic, organisational, and institutional factors that include lack of human capital and resources and unmanageable and heavy workloads which negatively affect the execution of supervision.

KEY TERMS: Department of Social Development; reflective supervision, reflective practice, professional supervision, social worker, social work supervisor; South Africa

KEY DATES: Submitted: March 2024; Reviewed: April 2025; Accepted: August 2025; Published: October 2025

KEY DECLARATIONS: Funding: None | Conflict of Interest: None

AUTHOR DETAILS

- Dr. Gumbi Sandile Ntethelelo, University of Zululand, Department of Social Work; Richards Bay, South Africa, Email: gumbisn4@gmail.com (Corresponding)
- Prof. Sithole Mbongeni Shadrack, University of the Western Cape, Department of Social Work; Cape Town, South Africa,
- Prof. Zibane Sibonisile, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Social Work; Durban, South Africa,

Current and previous volumes are available at:

<https://ajsw.africasocialwork.net>



HOW TO REFERENCE USING ASWDNET STYLE

Gumbi N. S., Sithole S. M. and Zibane S. (2025). Reflective supervision: An element in the execution of Social Work supervision in the Department of Social Development at the province of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. *African Journal of Social Work*, 15(5), 14-22. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ajsw.v15i5.2>

INTRODUCTION

Social work supervision is the core feature in promoting reflective practice among social workers and ensuring quality service delivery to clients. Within the Department of Social Development (DSD), reflective supervision is essential for professional growth and accountability; its absence reduces supervision to a bureaucratic exercise, thereby undermining the developmental and supportive purpose of social work practice. Building on this understanding, existing literature depicts social work supervision as having received increasing scholarly attention in South Africa, highlighting its vital role in enhancing effective and ethical practice. However, this article argues that the lack of reflective supervision, which is a structured support helping social workers think critically about their practice, is detrimental to the effective implementation of supervision in social work. To advance the discourse of social work supervision, this article explores the experiences of social workers and supervisors on the role that reflective supervision serves in the implementation of social work supervision at the DSD, with a focus on service offices under the King Cetshwayo District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). This paper sought to address the research objective to explore the role of reflective supervision in executing supervision.

BACKGROUND

Supervision in social work remains one of the most fundamental discourses in ensuring the provision of quality and efficient social services while promoting social workers' well-being and development (Schmidt & Kariuki, 2019). In the South African context, social work supervision has evolved within a unique socio-political environment shaped by colonialism, apartheid, and democracy. These historical influences continue to affect how supervision is understood and implemented in practice today (Engelbrecht, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2012; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; Maluleke, 2021; Makoka, 2016). Engelbrecht (2021, p.50) asserts that "differences in understanding and experiences of colonialism, apartheid, and democratisation are shaping the narrative of the evolution of social work supervision in South Africa". As a result, supervision has functioned as a tool to reinforce existing sociopolitical hierarchies and power dynamics within the profession.

Social work supervision in South Africa was conceptualised primarily by scholars such as Botha (1985) and De Bruyn (1985) through their groundbreaking publications. In recent years, several local scholars such as Makoka (2016), Baloyi (2017), Wynne (2020), Gumbi (2021), and Khosa (2022) explored the implementation of supervision and the experiences of social workers and supervisors where comprehensive research reports were generated with recommendations to improve the practice and implementation of supervision, and all either directly or indirectly pointed to the lack on dedicated time and space for reflection on supervision. The significant increase in scholarly attention came after the South African Council for Social Service Profession (SACSSP) and DSD developed the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession in South Africa (herein referred to as the Supervision Framework). The Supervision Framework serves as a policy-related intervention developed as a direct response to challenges resulting from the lack of effective supervision within the social work profession.

As a pivotal activity in delivering social work services, supervision is central to achieving quality assurance but has a particular role in developing a skilled and professional workforce (Bourn & Hafford-Letchfield, 2011, p. 46). Therefore, social work supervision is critical in ensuring that social workers are well-capacitated and skilled to deliver social services to clients to address societal inequalities. Furthermore, South Africa is a spatially diverse country with different contexts where social work supervision should take place to meet the unique needs of each population (Sahabodien, 2016; SACSSP & DSD, 2012). Gumbi et al. (2024) explain that the King Cetshwayo District DSD serves primarily rural communities with a small urban area and is significant in providing social services that empower marginalised and vulnerable populations. Therefore, exploring the experiences of social workers and supervisors in the King Cetshwayo District sought to harness unique and in-depth experiences as social workers in this District mostly service clients from rural areas.

Furthermore, it allowed social workers in this District to dedicate time and space for reflection and the learning that comes with the supervision process. Reflective supervision focuses on experiences, thoughts, and feelings linked with the work. Wonnacott (2014) argues that reflective supervision is a learning process where the supervisor engages with the supervisee to explore their practice, develop a shared understanding of the knowledge informing their analysis, and use this insight to guide future actions. This paper sought to address the research objective of exploring the role of reflective supervision in executing supervision in the KZN DSD under the King Cetshwayo District.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research approach, enabling researchers to examine people's experiences in detail, identify issues from the perspectives of the participants, and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give their experiences (Maree, 2016; Nketia, 2020). Utilizing a constructivist interpretive paradigm, the researchers immersed themselves in understanding and exploring the experiences of social workers and

supervisors by considering their context. Consequently, data interpretation was conducted in ways that are linked to participants' experiences and context. To uncover in-depth participants' experiences and explanations, the exploratory-descriptive research design was employed (Swaraj, 2019; Thomas & Lawal, 2020), allowing the researcher to capture the diverse experiences of participants and present the findings in a manner that closely aligns with the main research questions (Doyle et al., 2020; Chilisa, 2019). A maximum of twelve social workers and five supervisors were purposively sampled from the service office under the King-Cetshwayo District Municipality. Data were collected from participants through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted in IsiZulu and later translated into English transcriptions. Thematic data analysis was adopted as the approach for analyzing and interpreting the collected data from participants, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The familiarization and coding stages allowed the researcher to gain more insights into the data during the thematic analysis process. However, reviewing themes required a reiterative process as there were overlapping and duplicated themes, which allowed for the proper naming and definitions of themes.

Ethical consideration

The study adhered to key ethical principles, including securing permission to conduct the research, obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and safeguarding participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Clark (2011) states that it is important to recognize gatekeepers in the research process and describes them as individuals and organizations that grant authority to connect the researcher with participants. The gatekeeper letter for the study that informs this article was granted by the KZN DSD provincial Head of Department (HOD), who gave the researcher access to collect data at the DSD King Cetshwayo District service offices. In addition, the researcher had to liaise with the district director and the respective service office managers to make arrangements for actual data collection. This article is based on ethical approved granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The ethical clearance reference number allocated to the study is HSSREC/00002004/2020.

As it pertains to informed consent and voluntary participation, participants need to have complete knowledge and understanding of the process, complications, and contributions of the study and the power and liberty to choose and decide to participate or to decline at any point (Wa-Mbaleka & Rosario, 2022). Participants in this study voluntarily consented to participate in the study by signing consent forms before being interviewed. Lastly, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured in this study. Gibson, Benson, and Brand (2013) assert that the ethical principles of confidentiality and anonymity are integral in qualitative studies to assure participants that it is safe to share and reveal what they consider to be personal information without fearing that they might be compromised. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to participants to encourage them to share their experiences freely and conceal their real identities through the use of codes. Hence, social workers were coded as SWP 1 to SWP 13, while social work supervisors were coded as SWS 1 TO SWS 4.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings that emerged from the collected and analysed participants' data. The two codes were used to maintain confidentiality (SWP - social work practitioner and SWS – social work supervisor). These findings are presented through two themes and subsequent subthemes, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Themes and subthemes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Factors affecting the execution of supervision in the identified service offices	1.1. Lack of human capital and resources 1.2. Shortcomings related to limited poor planning and organization
2. Experiences of participants on supervision	2.1. Supervision as a demanding and draining process 2.2. Preoccupation with the heavy workload 2.3. Centralizing of administrative function over educational and supportive components

Theme 1: Factors affecting the execution of supervision in the identified service offices

This theme emerged as a participants described the contextual understanding of supervision in their respective service offices. Emerging from this theme were two subthemes that pointed to the lack of human capital and

resources and questionable planning and organisation.

Subtheme 1.1: Lack of human capital and resources

Participants at the DSD in King Cetshwayo District reported a lack of human capital and resources as a major challenge that also impacts the implementation of social work supervision. Below are the narratives of participants as they emerged in this subtheme:

Resources have an impact and are a serious internal factor... By resources, I include human-related resources...we are short-staffed.... (SWS 2)

The greatest challenge we have in this department is that we do not have enough supervisors... how could two supervisors help thirty-two social workers?... it is impossible!... we need supervisors... (SWP 1)

I personally think that if the department can employ more supervisors in such a way that they are enough, there won't be a problem... Supervisors are very much overwhelmed. (SWP 4)

We have high workload... The work becomes too much in such a way that you won't even schedule supervision sessions appropriately... (SWS 1)

Evident from the three participants' accounts is that the shortage of staff members, which includes supervisors, is considered one of the major human capital issues and resources confronting the services offices. The participants' accounts reveal that the shortage of supervisors, in particular, negatively impacts the prescribed outline in the Supervision Framework, particularly the supervisor-supervisee ratio (DSD & SACSSP, 2012). The Supervision Framework prescribes that supervisors with other performance areas are required to adhere to the supervision ratio of 1:6, while a supervisor whose performance area is only supervision is required to adhere to a structured supervision ratio of 1:10. From the supervision experiences of social workers and supervisors it became apparent that the shortage of supervisors negatively impacts the supervision process.

Subtheme 1.2: Shortcomings related to limited planning and organization

Participants' data reveals that a disorganized working environment contributes to the contextual experience of supervision of social workers and supervisors at King Cetshwayo Districts. The narratives participants' narratives recorded below attest to these shortcomings:

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

Our work in this department is disorganized. The work is very disorganised because you will just be called to a meeting that would take the entire day with a lot of unplanned work that is needed on an urgent basis... it messes up your entire plan because you have to stop everything and focus on that work. (SWP 7)

Though the working environment is demanding but our supervisors are trying so hard to enable a conducive workplace... (SWP 13)

Noticeable from the participants' responses is that the challenge of poor planning and a disorganized working environment is attributed to a systemic and institutional issue that is not a result of the functioning of the service office. This finding is in line with the findings made by scholars such as Engelbrecht (2010a; 2013) and Baloyi (2017) where it was asserted that supervision sessions get cancelled or delayed due to supervisors and social workers being preoccupied with duties that participants characterized as abruptly and unplanned. In his study, Makoka (2016, p. 105) explained that social workers and supervisors become "unable to perform their planned activities because of the immediate demand of fulfilling the political mandate." Therefore, political interference in the DSD contributes to the disorganized working environment. The consequences of this issue are that social workers and supervisors lose their autonomy and control to perform their professional duties.

Theme 2: Experiences of participants in supervision

Participants were asked to describe their experiences with supervision, and among the subthemes that emerged

was that supervision was described as a demanding and draining process, preoccupied with a heavy workload, and mainly administrative-centered.

Subtheme 2.1: Supervision as a demanding and draining

Participants described their experience of social work supervision at King Cetshwayo District as a demanding and draining Process. Participants provided the following narratives in relation to this subtheme:

In this office, there are lots of reports you need to read and sign, social workers demanding to consult and have to deal with urgent issues from higher structures in the department... sometimes as supervisors, we do not even have time for our families because we are dealing with so much and have to remain at work for extra hours that we are not paid for. (SWS 3)

My supervision experience can be summarised as "draining". It is draining... even for supervisors when I look at them, it is draining. They are always stressed, and so it is not a kind job that you will see someone excited about... (SWP 3)

In the responses recorded above, participants reveal that their supervision seems to be a process that is not helpful and desirable for social workers and supervisors because of the institutional challenges that their district and respective service offices. Chibaya and Engelbrecht (2022) associate such outcomes with supervision execution that prioritizes managerialism, ultimately causing the experience of supervision to social workers and supervisors to be more harmful than helpful. Emerging amongst participants' data was the description of supervision experience that is negatively impacted by heavy workload.

Subtheme 2.2: Preoccupation with the heavy workload

Heavy workload has been a consistent factor that has featured social workers' experiences for decades. The narratives of social workers and supervisors are narrated:

Supervision should be structured as we are supposed to do it according to the supervision framework that guides us. ... However, because of the high workload and the number of social workers allocated, you end up failing. The work becomes too much in such a way that you will not even schedule supervision sessions appropriately... (SWS 1)

Just like myself, I am still new in the field, but my supervisor does not have time., I will find her very busy and would sometimes tell me to go to any social worker to ask for assistance... (SWP 7)

Supervision ends up not being implemented accordingly because of the workload being too heavy. I can also say that even our supervisors end up having a lot of work to do - they end up failing to organize themselves. I will be very honest here; they fail to organize themselves. (SWP 3)

The participants' responses not only demonstrate how the issue of unmanageable and heavy workloads that participants are confronted with destabilizes their work but also reveal the frustration that this problem brought to their emotional well-being and professional growth. Sithole (2019) explained that implementing social work supervision in the social service should be characterized by a reciprocal process. However, the reciprocity of supervision gets negatively impacted when both the social worker and the supervisor are confronted with unmanageable workloads, which eliminates time for effective supervision. Participants recognize that this problem is not a result of their respective service offices but a result of the institution itself, which is the KZN, DSD. Participants described their supervision experience as mostly characterized by preoccupation with administrative duties.

Subtheme 2.3: Centralizing administrative function over educational and supportive components

The participants conceptualized social work supervision as critical to the provision of support and guidance (Gumbi et al., 2024). Critical in this subtheme was to explore how social workers and supervisors practically experienced supervision in light of their earlier conceptualisation of social work supervision. The narratives of participants are reported:

Well, in this department, supervision is about us supervisors checking whether social workers meet targets, do cases, go to courts, and perform duties required of them... that is all supervision is, and that

is all we are expected to do as supervisors. (SWS 3)

Supervision has never been something that has any positive effect or brings any positivism to me because, like I am saying, it has never been a good thing or helpful to me because I work independently. I am a hard worker, and I am committed. (SWP 8)

Most of the time group supervision dominates in this service office... It helps to provide support... it saves time and that she can share the information with her supervisees all at once... (SWP 3)

Evident from the social workers' and supervisors' responses was that supervision has adopted a managerial approach, as has been clearly stated by Gumbi et al., (2024). Phungwayo (2012) attributed the preoccupation of social workers and supervisors to the Performance Management System of the DSD being politicized by having politicians dictate what should entail the performance of social workers and supervisors. Justifying the preoccupation of social workers and supervisors with administrative duties, Makoka (2016, p. 105) explains that "the political mandates tend to focus on immediate results in terms of quantity rather than quality." Therefore, social workers and supervisors become mainly preoccupied with chasing political targets to safeguard their interests and not lose their jobs, which compromises participants' ability to fulfil their professional and organisational mandates.

DISCUSSION

The findings in this article depict that social workers and supervisors are confronted with various challenges in the effective execution and implementation of social work supervision at King Cetshwayo, which impact the quality of services delivered to clients. These challenges impact the expected contributions of social workers to the country's social development agenda and reduce inequalities. Gumbi et al. (2024) identified the competing demands that coexist in practice as a result of managerial and professional supervision and how these impact the conceptualisation of supervision in the DSD. The findings reflect that the competing demands of managerial and professional supervision impact the implementation of supervision and, as a result, impact the experiences of social work practitioners. Notable from these findings is that they are not dissimilar to those that generally impact the practice of supervision in different contexts, as found by several local scholars. The evidence of similar findings as those outlined in the study was shared by several local scholars such as Baloyi (2017), Chibaya and Engelbrecht (2010; 2013; 2022), Makoka (2016), Gumbi (2021), Ramabulana-Ndzuta (2022) and Tsimba and Ncube (2023). The significance of these findings is that they relate to the findings made by other scholars who researched social work supervision in other contexts. The factors that negatively impact the social workers' and supervisors' experiences of social work supervision remain the same despite the context. This is demonstrated by similar narratives of social workers and supervisors across different research outputs on social work supervision in South Africa.

Supervision is context-specific (Bongo 2015, Tsui, O'Donoghue & Ng 2014). The organisational systems and culture within which supervision occurs become fundamental in how supervision is implemented and experienced. When the organisation is influenced by neoliberalism, supervision becomes a management function concerned with measuring implementation processes to ensure that planning, organising, and leadership can achieve the set targets by the organisation (Rosalina, Mulyono & Wahyono, 2023). Therefore, the purpose of professional social work supervision becomes impeded and results in inefficiencies in the practice of social workers. "Supervision in all contexts is intended to ensure that risks are effectively managed; those interventions are based on accumulated knowledge (evidence-based practice) and that social workers are supported to enable them to carry out their work effectively, (Spolander, Engelbrecht, Martin, Strydom, Pervova, Marjanen, Tani, Sicora & Adaikalam, 2014, p. 308). However, as social work is a unique profession that seeks to empower and advocate for the vulnerable population, supervision should be used to strengthen the mandate of social work practice.

Lastly, the findings reported in this article reflect that the challenges to social work supervision in this particular district have fundamental challenges to the ecology of supervision. The ecology of supervision focuses on mapping the interlinks between clients, social workers, supervisors, and the organisation within which they work (Engelbrecht, 2019). Therefore, the supervisor does not only seek to benefit social workers but also their clients, organisations, and the social work profession (Khosa, 2022). The negative experiences of both social workers and supervisors on supervision affect not only them but also how services get delivered to clients while posing challenges for the department to fulfil its mandate. Mathonsi and Makhubele (2016) mention that the lack of supervision and resources affects social workers' job performance, job satisfaction, and the quality of social services rendered to clients. Effective reflective supervision that empowers social workers to perform their roles effectively requires deliberate interventions from the DSD to address systemic, structural, and institutional issues that negatively impact the practice of supervision and social work in general.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings discussed above the following recommendations are made:

- The DSD should address human and capital resource issues, political interference, and heavy caseloads faced by social workers and supervisors.
- The DSD should invest in technological systems that innovate and simplify systemic and institutional operations.
- More research on social work supervision underpinned by Afrocentric paradigms and theories, should be conducted to make it more relevant in traditional African contexts.
- DSD should prioritise continuous professional development programmes aimed at strengthening supervisors' competencies in reflective supervision. Training should focus on reflective practice skills, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and the integration of theory and practice.
- Reflective supervision should be formally embedded within the DSD's monitoring and evaluation systems to shift the focus from narrow compliance and output measures toward assessing the quality of supervisory relationships, reflective practice processes, and social workers' professional development outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The central theme that recurs in this article is the importance of professional supervision over managerial supervision in social work, providing social workers with support, expertise, and skills to deal with practice-related challenges. The key findings highlighted in this article indicate that lack of human capital and resources, poor planning and disorganised work are some factors that affect the execution of supervision. As a result, social workers and supervisors in this district characterise their experiences of social work supervision as primarily managerial, demanding, draining, and preoccupied with heavy workloads. The article recommends that the DSD addresses human resource issues, political interference, and heavy caseloads, invest in technological systems, and conduct more research on Afrocentric social work supervision. The incorporation of reflective supervision will assist in providing space and time for this role. Additionally, the incumbents can reflect and learn from supervision processes.

REFERENCES

- Baloyi, T. (2017). *Experiences of Social Work supervisors in supervising inexperienced social workers in the Department of Social Development Malamulele Area Office*. MA diss., University of Limpopo.
- Botha, N.J. (1985). Onderrigmodel vir doeltreffende supervisie. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 21(4): 239-248.
- Bourn, D., and Hafford-Letchfield, T. (2011). The role of social work professional supervision in conditions of uncertainty. *The international journal of knowledge, culture and change management.*, 10(9), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9524/CGP/v10i09/50038>
- Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2): 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Chibaya, N.H., and Engelbrecht, E. (2022). What is happening in an individual supervision session? Reflections of social workers in South Africa. *Social Work*, 58(4): 520–545. DIO: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1830-7185>.
- Chilisa, B., (2019). Decolonising research: An interview. *The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (1), 12-17.
- Clark, T. (2011). Gaining and maintaining access: Exploring the mechanisms that support and challenge the relationship between gatekeepers and researchers. *Qualitative Social Work*, 10(4): 485–502. DOI:10.1177/1473325009358228
- De Bruyn, M. (1985). *Opleiding en toerusting van supervisors. Paper presented at a symposium on supervision*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Department of Social Development and South African Council for Social Service Professions. (2012). *Supervision framework for the social work profession in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Doyle, L., McCabe, C., Keogh, B., Brady, A. and McCann, M. (2020). An overview of the qualitative descriptive design within nursing research. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(5): 443–455. DOI: 10.1177/1744987119880234
- Engelbrecht, L. (2013). Social Work Supervision Policies and Frameworks: Playing Notes or Making Music? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 49(4): 456–468. <https://doi.org/10.15270/493-34>
- Engelbrecht, L. (2021). Supervision of social workers within a social development paradigm: A South African perspective. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Social Work Supervision*, edited by K., O'Donoghue and L.K. Engelbrecht. New York: Taylor and Francis Group
- Engelbrecht, L.K. (2010). Yesterday, today and tomorrow: Is social work supervision in South Africa keeping up? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 46(3): 324-342. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15270/46-3-162>
- Engelbrecht, L.K. (2012). Coaching, mentoring, and consultation: The same but different activities in the supervision of social workers in South Africa? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 48(3): 357-368.
- Gibson, S., Benson, O. and Brand, S.L., (2013). Talking about suicide: Confidentiality and anonymity in qualitative research. *Nursing ethics*, 20(1):18-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733012452684>
- Gumbi, S.N. (2021). Exploring the Experiences of Social Work Practitioners and Supervisors on the Implementation of Social Work Supervision in the Department of Social Development: A Case Study of King Cetshwayo District Municipality. MA diss. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.
- Gumbi, S.N., Mazibuko, N.M., and Sithole, M.S (2024). Social work practitioners' and supervisors' conceptualisation of supervision at the Department of Social Development, King Cetshwayo District: A polity dualism. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 60(1): 194-213
- Kadushin, A.D. and Harkness, D. (2014). *Supervision in Social Work. (5th Ed.)*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Khosa, P. (2022). Implementation of the supervision framework for the social work profession in South Africa by a designated child protection organisation. PhD diss., Stellenbosch University.
- Makoka, L. (2016). *The Experiences of Social Work Supervisees in Relation to Supervision within the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Region*. MA diss. University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Maree, K. (2016). *First steps in research (2nd ed.)*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- O'Donoghue, K. and Engelbrecht, L. (2021). Introduction. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Social Work Supervision*, edited by K., O'Donoghue and L., Engelbrecht. New York: Routledge.
- Phungwayo, M. (2012). The Performance Management System of the Department of Social Development in enhancing the delivery of social services. MA diss., University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- Ramabulana-Ndzuta, J.S. (2022). Exploring the state of social work supervision in South Africa. PhD diss., University of Western Cape, Cape Town.
- Rosalina, D., S., Mulyono, and Wahyono, G.B. (2023). Influences of Supervision and Organizational Culture on Performance through Work Discipline. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 6(3): 207-220.
- Sahabodien, R. (2016). The real cost of low-income settlements: experiences in varied spatial contexts within the same municipal boundary. MA diss., University of Cape Town.

- Schmidt, G. and Kariuki, A. (2019). Pathways to social work supervision. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 29(3): 321-332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2012.680426>
- Sithole, M.S. (2020). The first-time supervisors' experiences of power relations in social service professions: Case study of Social Work supervisors in the public sector. *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives*, 5(2), 68-80. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-jpada-v5-n2-a6>.
- Spolander, G., Engelbrecht, L., Martin, M., Strydom, I., Pervova, P., Marjanen, P., Tani, A., Sicora, & Adaikalam, F. (2014). The implications of neoliberalism for social work: Reflections from a six-country international research collaboration. *International Social Work*, 57(4): 301-312.
- Swaraj, A. (2019). Exploratory research: purpose and process. *Parisheelan Journal*, XV(2): 666-670.
- Swaraj, A. (2019). Exploratory research: Purpose and process. *Parisheelan Journal*, 15(2), 665-670.
- Thanh, N.C. and Thanh, T.T. (2015). The interconnection between interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods in education. *American journal of educational science*, 1(2): 24-27.
- Thomas, O.O. and Lawal, O.R. (2020). Exploratory Research Design in Management Sciences: An X-Ray of Literature. *Annals of the University Dunarea de Jos of Galati: Fascicle: I, Economics & Applied Informatics*, 26(2): 79-84. DOI <https://doi.org/10.35219/eai15840409109>
- Tsima, D. L. and Ncube, M. (2023). Implementing the Supervision Framework for the Social Work Profession: Supervisors' Views and Experiences. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*, 35(3): 01-21.
- Tsui, M.S., O'Donoghue, K, and Ng, A.K.T. (2014). "Culturally Competent and Diversity-Sensitive Clinical Supervision." In *The Wiley International Handbook of Clinical Supervision*, edited by C.E. Watkins, Jr. and Milne, D.L. London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Wa-Mbaleka, S. and Rosario, A.H. (2022). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in the Asian Context*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Wynne, T.T. (2020). "Potential factors contributing to harmful supervision of social workers." MA diss., Stellenbosch University.