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Understanding Effective Supervision and the Relationship between Supervision Effectiveness and Education

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UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISION EFFECTIVENESS AND EDUCATION

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Abstract

Supervision is a function at the core of the social work profession. The goal of social work supervision is to provide practitioners with the needed support, oversight, and education so that practitioners can ultimately render efficient and effective services. Despite positive outcomes, little is empirically known about effective supervision and its relationship with educational background. Recognizing the lack of empirical evidence regarding effective supervision practices within the social work profession, this study examined the delivery of supervision within a large Pennsylvania human service organization delivering fee for service case management. Using the MCSS-26©, supervisees rated their experiences of supervision; then with SPSS statistical analysis, an overall supervision score was derived. While additional study is warranted, results from this study have wide ranging implications for supervisory practices within the social work curriculum and practice standards, as well as considerations for agency leaders responsible for the implementation of supervision.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The process of supervision is as old as the social work profession itself and remains an integral part of the profession today. Burgeoning social workers experience and engage in supervision throughout their required semester-long field experiences. The purpose of supervision, ultimately, is to develop proficient social workers who are able to provide meaningful, effective, and efficient services to individuals. As a profession, social workers are aware of the numerous positive outcomes associated with the process of supervision when properly administered. Positive outcomes of supervision affect not only workers, but those being served. Despite the positive outcomes, there remain many unanswered questions about supervision because much of the available literature lacks empirical evidence involving the ability of professionals to deliver effective supervision. Therefore, to evaluate social work practice to inform practice standards the profession must understand supervision effectiveness and the potential relationship that education could have on supervision effectiveness.

Although not coined until the early 1920s, supervision had its root in the development of the social work profession. Supervision originated in the early 1800s during the development of the Charity Organization Societies of the time. Committees within the Charity Organization Societies hired agency administrators who were responsible for overseeing, educating, and managing the volunteers who were assigned to deliver casework services to individuals and families. Early writings indicate that the paid agents worked directly with volunteers to ensure that they had the needed skill, education, and support to deliver needed services, often through individual one to one meetings (Munson, 2002). Not until the early 1920s did the term "supervision" as we currently know it today emerged in the literature. Interest in the process of

supervision exploded between 1920 and 1945 as more than 35 published articles were devoted solely to the topic of supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

The interest in studying supervision has remained consistent over time with several hundred articles specific to the study of supervision published. Clearly, many see the value in *and* the need to study supervision as most would agree that supervision remains a necessary and critical component of delivering effective and efficient human services (Dan, 2017; Fennessy et al., 2015; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2013; Vito, 2015; Bedford & Gehlert, 2013; Collins-Camargo & Royse, 2010; Dill & Bogo, 2009). Recent literature involving supervision has found a connection between supervision and positive worker outcomes. Beyond worker outcomes, some studies have even found a connection between the supervision process and positive client outcomes. Several studies include descriptions of what supervision looks like and provide valuable insight into beneficial supervisory practices.

Significance of the Study

Despite these advancements in our understanding of supervision, there remain unanswered questions relating to what is known about supervision and the social work profession. First, according to Kadushin and Harkness, the objective of social work supervision is to educate and monitor the work of the practitioner so that the practitioner has the knowledge, ability, and support needed to deliver effective and efficient services. While recent studies have begun to examine the output of supervision (worker and client outcomes); we have a limited understanding of the input of effective supervision (the ability of the supervisor). There exist a variety of texts outlining the "how-to" of effective supervision. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) developed best practice standards relating to social work supervision

(2013), yet little remains known about the ability of social work professionals to deliver effective supervision.

The supervision process is required throughout a social work professional's training. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires that all bachelor's and master's level degree programs involve some type of internship that is supervised by a master's level social work professional. While specific requirements and internship hours might vary between programs, all must include some form of supervision delivered by a master's level social work professional. Again, little is known about the ability of social workers to render effective supervision.

Beyond the educational realm and into the professional realm, in many states supervision is a requirement to achieve a clinical license. In Pennsylvania, a social worker seeking a clinical license is required to complete 3000 supervised hours of clinical experience. Similar requirements can be found nationwide. Again, if the objective of supervision is to educate and monitor the work of the practitioner so that they have the knowledge, ability, and support needed to deliver effective and efficient services, what happens if the supervision is ineffective? How do we know that social work practitioners deliver supervision that provides workers with the knowledge, oversight, and support needed to deliver effective and efficient services? What does it mean for individuals receiving services if the supervision received lacks the needed knowledge, oversight, and support? Are individuals, then, receiving ineffective and inefficient services? As a profession that is not only grounded in the practice of supervision but uses supervision as a mechanism to develop future practitioners, it is incumbent upon the profession to examine the ability to render effective supervision.

For the social work profession to examine its ability to deliver effective supervision, one also needs to understand the characteristics of effective supervision. Current literature within the field of social work and supervision consists largely of theoretical frameworks of delivering supervision and encourages practitioners to subscribe to the delivery of supervision (Dan, 2017; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002; Munsun, 2002). However, empirical evidence demonstrating effective supervision and factors contributing to effective supervision is lacking. Rather, much of the available literature surrounding supervision focuses on the output of supervision and the relationship between supervision and worker and client outcomes (Barak, Travis, Pyun, & Xie, 2009; Collins-Camargo & Royse, 2010; Fakunmoju, Woodruff, Kim, Lefevre, & Hong, 2010; Selden, 2010; Smith & Shields, 2013; McFadden, Campbell, & Taylor, 2015). In fact, two meta-analysis studies found that positive supervision experiences have led to higher levels of job satisfaction (Onyett, 2011; Barak, et. al., 2009). Onyett (2011) found that negative experiences within supervision led to higher incidents of job dissatisfaction. Bogo, Paterson, Tufford, and King (2011) found that supervision focusing on productivity was viewed unfavorably while Smith and Shields (2013) suggest that supervision has the possibility of positively affecting employee motivation.

Despite the reported positive outcomes of supervision, supervisors often are faced with many challenges and varying demands that prevent the delivery of supervision (Bowers, Esmond, & Canales, 1999). As agencies and supervisors must manage the increasing demands for services coupled with staff turnover and limited budgets, finding the time needed to devote to supervision can be challenging. Few social service agencies have policies and expectations surrounding supervision and therefore offer little to no training in providing supervision. (Hoge, Migdole, Farkas, Ponce, & Hunnicutt, 2011). Moreover, Hoge et al. (2011) note that supervision

is often viewed as a "non-billable" function and therefore is not viewed as a priority within organizations. Instead, the delivery of supervision is based upon the requirements or the expectation of the payer. Supervision delivery based on the requirements of the payer can pose questions about the effectiveness of supervision and the overall benefit of supervision. As O'Donoghue and Tsui (2013) found, supervision that is unstructured leads to dissatisfaction on behalf of the supervisee. Again, if *ineffective* supervision delivered what does this mean for the professional development of the practitioner(s) and the individuals receiving services?

With the objective of supervision in mind to educate, oversee, and support staff so that they can deliver effective and efficient services, the question becomes, *how does effective supervision compare with ineffective supervision*? Again, much of the available literature concerning supervision delivery is theoretical in nature (Dan, 2017; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002; Bedford & Gehlert, 2013, Lynch, 2015, Fisher, 2009; Beddoe, 2012). Many of the available studies are qualitative and lacking empirical evidence of effective supervision (Marc, Makai-Dimeny, & Osvat, 2014; Schoenwald, Mehta, Frazier, & Shernoff, 2013; King & Hodges, 2013; Kadushin, Berger, Gilbert, & De St. Aubin, 2009). While the NASW (2013) describes best practices, the standards are broad and do not specifically address effective or ineffective supervision. Given the responsibility of supervisors – to deliver supervision that educates, provides oversight, and support their staff to deliver effective and efficient services - we must understand the differences between ineffective and effective supervision.

Problem Statement

As discussed, supervision dates back to the inception of the profession. The study of the process is almost as old as the process itself. Over time, the function of supervision has evolved from that of educational to the three-pillar functions we know today: administrative, educational,

and supportive. The purpose, then, of supervision is to provide professionals with the needed education, oversight, and support to deliver effective and efficient services (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). After all, "social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems," (NASW, 2017, p. 7). As a profession that values the tenant of service, we must examine our ability to deliver effective supervision. We know there exists a connection between supervision and both worker and client outcome. We also know that social work practitioners experience supervision throughout their training so they have the needed knowledge, skills, oversight, and support to deliver effective and efficient services. Little, though, is known about the ability of social workers to deliver effective supervision. Failing to examine supervision effectiveness raises concerns about the quality of *services* rendered by social workers.

Research Questions and Overview of Methodology

Given the lack of understanding relating to effective supervision, this study intends to explore the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between education and supervision effectiveness?
2. What factors affect supervision effectiveness?
    a. What is the relationship between supervision requirements and supervision effectiveness?

To answer these questions, this research study examined supervision within a large private, nonprofit, human services agency providing case management services throughout Pennsylvania. The agency provides fee for service case management to individuals involved in several departments of human services within Pennsylvania including, but not limited to, Office of Long Term Living (OLTL), Office of Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Office of Mental Health and

Substance Abuse (MH), Office of Children and Youth Services (CYS), and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (EI). The agency is comprised of approximately 800 employees of whom approximately 450 are employed as case managers (supervisees) and 95 are responsible for supervising case managers (supervisors). Case managers and supervisors all have varied educational backgrounds including, but not limited to, social work, education, counseling, psychology, and criminal justice. Aside from the expectation that supervisors gain some degree of educational experience or course work related to human services, there is no educational degree requirement to be able to deliver supervision.

Each case manager (supervisee) is responsible for ensuring that those that they are assigned receive needed supports and services as well as to assess their ongoing health and safety. Each case manager reports to a supervisor who is responsible for ensuring that case managers meet identified compliance standards, meet quality standards, and provide supervision. Supervisors, in turn, report to agency directors who provide ongoing support, guidance, and supervision. While supervision requirements from the state vary, the agency encourages that supervision is rendered at least twice per month either individually or in group sessions.

Although supervision can vary in definition, for purposes of this study supervision and clinical supervision were viewed as the same and defined as "the formal relationship-based system of support and practice development provided by approved supervisors to staff in human service agencies to maximize the best possible outcomes for their respective clientele," (White & Winstanley, 2014). Measuring effective supervision then involves the use of MCSS-26 © (Winstanley & White, 2017). The survey instrument included two sections totaling 36 questions. The first section consisted of 26 questions measuring key constructs as they relate to effective supervision including the following: normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and

formative (educational). This tool was chosen for two reasons. First, the key constructs measured mirror the three pillars of social work supervision (administrative, supportive, and educational). Second, this tool has shown well-established psychometric properties, including reliability, test and retest reliability, and validity measures in numerous studies throughout several different countries (Kumar, Osborne, & Lehmann, 2015).

Given the size of the organization, the number of supervisees and supervisors with social work backgrounds, and the timeframe available to conduct this study, convenience-sampling method was chosen to conduct this study. Supervisees were invited to participate in the completion of an online version of the MCSS-26 ©. Supervisors were invited to participate in a separate survey that included 10 questions. Once survey information was collected, supervisee and supervisor data were paired so that supervision effectiveness (scoring from the MCSS-26 ©) and educational background could be analyzed using SPSS. Results were also used to explore components of effective supervision.

As a professional social worker, student, and an employee of the agency involved in this study, there existed a need to explore and better understand effective supervision. As a social worker who values not only the process but the *objective* of supervision, there is a need to better understand the profession's ability to deliver effective supervision. Given the lack of empirical evidence surrounding effective supervision and the profession's interest in *service*, we must begin to gather information regarding our professional abilities. Information gleaned is needed not only to inform practice standards and educational practices, but to develop methods and models of supervision within agencies so that practitioners have the needed education, oversight, and support to deliver effective and efficient services to individuals served. The following includes an exploration of recent literature involving supervision including gaps and areas for

future study, an explanation of the methodology for the study conducted, findings, an analysis of the results, conclusions, and recommendations for additional study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Within the social work profession, it is widely agreed that effective supervision is related to positive practice outcomes for both supervisees and clients. In fact, as Kadushin and Harkness (2002) state that the very objective of supervision is to develop the practitioner through education and support so that the practitioner, in turn, can provide individuals with effective and efficient services. Current literature involving supervision and the social work profession is largely concerned with theoretical concepts that shape the *delivery* of supervision. Empirical evidence of supervision is framed in both the *context* of worker and client outcomes, yet falls short of exploring empirical evidence of effective supervision practices, models, and modalities. As this review will show, there exist many benefits in support of supervision and additional study is warranted to better understand *effective* supervision – especially concerning the profession's *delivery* of supervision. The following will review evidence supporting the benefits of supervision from both worker and client outcomes, current models and methods of supervision, supervision delivery in social work, and available literature concerning effective supervision.

Benefits of Supervision: Worker Outcomes

Many studies have explored the relationship between supervision and worker outcomes including a worker's intent to leave or stay job satisfaction, and self-efficacy (Barak, Travis, Pyun, & Xie, 2009; Collins-Camargo, Royse, 2010; Fakunmoju, Woodruff, Kim, Lefevre, & Hong, 2010; Selden, 2010; Smith & Shields, 2013; McFadden, Campbell, & Taylor, 2015). In 2009, Barak, et al. conducted a meta-analysis of the existing literature exploring relationships between supervision and worker outcomes from 1990 to 2007. Using a conceptual model that

defines supervisory dimensions of task assistance, social and emotional support, and supervisory interpersonal reaction as behaviors that can either lead to negative or positive effects. Negative effects include job stress, burnout, worker anxiety, turnover, and worker depression while positive worker outcomes were job satisfaction, organizational environment, worker effectiveness, retention, and psychological well-being. After identifying their search criteria, they secured 27 articles that met identified inclusion criteria. Through their extensive review and analysis of workers within the child welfare field, social work, and behavioral health, they found a positive relationship between supervisory experience and worker outcomes. Workers reporting satisfaction with supervision had higher levels of job satisfaction, a greater sense of self-efficacy, and competency while negative experiences were associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, burnout, and turnover (Barak et al., 2009). Through their work, they bring to light the need to better understand what effective supervision looks like and suggest the need for additional research in understanding how supervision not only affects worker outcomes but how (and if) supervision affects client outcomes.

Fakunmoju, et al. (2010) and Jin and McDonald (2017) both studied supervision and its effect on worker outcomes. Both used a quantitative approach and while Fakunmoju, et al. explored factors that contribute to social workers' desire to leave their employment, Jin and McDonald studied factors contributing to employee engagement. Fakunmoju, et al. studied a random sample of social workers in MD using a cross-sectional survey approach. Surveys were sent to a random, stratified sample of male (250) and female (250) members of the NASW-MD. Of those surveyed, 316 responded, yielding a response rate of 64%. They found that factors such as lower-income, increased job tension, and lower supervisory support all contributed to an increased intention to leave employment. Although their findings contribute to the existing body

of literature supporting the role of supervision and worker outcomes, this study is limited to social workers in MD of which many were not currently employed within the social services sector.

Jin and McDonald explored factors contributing to employee engagement within the public sector. In total, 2,259 state and local government employees employed through the United States participated in the study. Data were collected for three weeks during June and July 2012. Surveys were distributed online and participants were voluntary. Because this study focused on the relationship between supervisory support and worker engagement, only support staff and mid-level managers were included in this study, totaling 1251 individuals. Surveys measured employee perceptions of their "vigor, dedication, and absorption of work engagement," (Jin & McDonald, 2017, p. 887). Results found that the role of the supervisor can be a motivating factor for employee engagement and that with perceived increased supervisory support, work engagement also increases. Jin and McDonald note that their study was limited to the public sector and given the type of study employed, a longitudinal approach might have been more beneficial in understanding employee engagement over time. Although limited to public sector employees, this study contributes to the body of knowledge and how supervisory involvement not only contributes to job satisfaction but can also contribute to levels of worker engagement.

Several studies have found relationships between worker outcomes and supervision within the child welfare field. Collins-Camargo and Royse (2010) were interested in several areas including, the understanding of how supervision affects worker self-efficacy, how supervision can affect the perception of organizational culture including the use of evidence-based practices, and those reporting organizational use of evidence-based practices will exhibit

higher levels of self-efficacy. Using cross-sectional data from an online survey distributed in May 2003 to 2007 child welfare employees in a Midwestern state, researchers analyzed the resulting 1261 valid responses received. Of those 1261 surveys, only 900 were used for this study as researchers were specifically interested in the information obtained from front line case managers and supervisors. The results of this study supported the notion that supervision can have a positive effect on perceptions of organizational culture and on the use of evidence-based practices. While researchers were not able to confirm that supervision can affect worker self-efficacy across all levels of experience, researchers did find that supervision can have a significant impact on worker self-efficacy when involving workers with less than two years of experience. Of course, though, this study was limited to child welfare workers within a Midwestern state, yet adds to the body of knowledge and how supervision can not only affect workers, but also the organizational culture as well (Collins-Camargo & Royse, 2010).

Beyond self-efficacy, Quinn (2017) looked at factors contributing to worker self-value in the child welfare field. Using the Survey of Employee Engagement tool, Quinn examined how the quality of supervision affects an employee's perception of their value, how supervision affects a productive environment, whether or not a productive climate affects an employee's perception of value, and the connection between supervision, a productive climate, and an employee's perception of value. In total, 5720 surveys were received from child protective service employees in Texas. Of the 5720 results, only 5684 could be analyzed due to missing datasets. Results of the surveys indicated that quality supervision has a significant yet small effect on both employee perception of value and perceptions of a productive climate. Moreover, quality supervision, as mediated by productive climate, had a small overall yet significant effect on employee perception. Quinn's work, while limited to child welfare professionals in Texas,

illustrates the connection between quality supervision and employee self-perception and productive climate.

Smith and Shields (2013) explored factors contributing to job satisfaction within the child welfare field. Specifically, Smith and Shields used a quantitative approach and Herzberg's Theory of Motivation to identify and explore factors contributing to worker job satisfaction in the field of child welfare. Respondents included child welfare workers in Missouri who had participated in a training program between the years 2002 and 2004. Of the 292 initially involved, 170 were included in the final analysis as the remaining 122 did not have adequate data. Using logistic regression as a method to assess the relationships between factors relating to job satisfaction, researchers found that both motivation and maintenance factors contributed to overall job satisfaction. Moreover, motivation factors such as creativity, job variety, and self-esteem had more of an effect on worker job satisfaction than maintenance factors. Interestingly, experiences with a supervisor, defined as a maintenance variable, were a strong predictor of worker job satisfaction. Researchers note that additional study is warranted to understand how supervisory relationships affect job satisfaction including specific characteristics of supervisors. Additionally, both Smith and Shields acknowledge the inability to generalize these findings beyond the current sample of participants. Considering the findings of both Collins-Camargo and Royse and Quinn, supervision and supervisors have the potential to positively affect worker self-esteem, thereby becoming an influential factor in both maintenance and motivation factors.

Three additional systematic reviews exploring resilience, job satisfaction, and worker retention within the field of human services include those completed by Webb and Carpenter (2011), Onyett (2011) and McFadden, Campbell, and Taylor (2015). While McFadden, et al. (2015) explored studies specific to the field of child welfare, Webb and Carpenter explored

research involving social work, teaching, and nursing, and Onyett focused her attention on community mental health teams. Despite the differences in the field of study, all had similar results. All covered a similar timeframe from the early 2000s. In fact, Onyett's covered the greatest span from 1997 – 20011 while the other reviews occurred between 2000 and 2009. Despite the differences in the literature reviewed, all studies suggest that organizational factors such as supervision can lead to lower incidences of burnout and higher retention rates as opposed to individual employee factors. Additionally, Onyett found that those who reported negative supervisory experiences had lower levels of job satisfaction. Given the role supervision continues to have on worker outcomes such as resiliency, retention, and burnout, researchers suggest that attention, support, and training should be provided to supervisors (McFadden, et al., 2015; Webb & Carpenter, 2011). Defining what is and what involves effective supervision, though, requires further attention and study.

Although many studies within the human services field have linked job satisfaction and supervision, a study completed by Livni, Crowe, and Gonsalvez (2012) found that supervision was not linked to overall job satisfaction or burnout. Researchers employed a repeated measures design within the field of addictions in Australia where participants consisted of both supervisors and supervisees from the Area Health Service in New South Wales. Initially, 61 professionals of a possible 90 agreed to participate in the study. Final data analyses, though, included a total of 47 professionals of which 10 were supervisors. Researchers administered several surveys including the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory – Supervisee/Therapist Forms, Supervision Evaluation Questionnaire, The Maslach Burnout Inventory, The Intrinsic Job Satisfaction Scale, Scales of Psychological Well Being, and the California Psychotherapy Alliance Scale-Group-Modified assessments. Participants were then randomly assigned to

individual supervision sessions, group supervision, or a combination of group and individual supervision sessions. Supervisors participated in specific training regarding coaching and clinical supervision. Researchers surveyed participants on three separate occasions including initially to collect baseline data, three months later and before the start of the training, and six months following the training program. Although a correlation was found between supervisory alliance and supervision, this study was unable to connect supervision to burnout, wellbeing, and job satisfaction. Researchers discuss several limitations including small sample size, the notion that other factors might have affected results such as burnout, wellbeing, and job satisfaction, and that several of the measurement tools utilized had questionable reliability (Livni et al., 2012). Additional study would be warranted utilizing a larger sample and measurement tools that have known reliability and validity.

In addition to the quantitative studies exploring supervision and worker outcomes, several studies have used a qualitative approach to better understand supervision and the potential effects on worker outcomes. Both Bogo, et al. (2011) and Westergaard (2013) used a qualitative approach to better understand perceptions of supervision within the field of mental health and addictions from the perspectives of front line workers and supervisors in Canada and United Kingdom, respectively. Using an exploratory design, Bogo, et al. used focus groups to better understand the perceptions of front-line professionals. Of the 611 professionals invited to participate, 76 agreed to do so. Thirteen focus groups were held with no more than thirteen participants per session with participants ranging in experience and type of work. Many discussed the challenges in meeting the complex needs of clients given the pressures of time, downsizing, and cutbacks. Several professionals discussed how supervision moved from a weekly meeting to monthly meetings. Additionally, many discussed how supervision was no

longer about the practice and meeting the needs of individuals, but rather how to maximize time and efficiencies in service.

Unlike Bogo, et al., Westergaard used a biographical approach to understanding the perceptions of supervision from the perspective of the supervisor. The sample was much smaller; of the ten invited to participate, only five agreed. Although Westergaard and Bogo, et al. took different approaches in understanding experiences in supervision, participants shared similar concerns of budget cuts, increased attention on efficiencies, and the multiple demands placed on both front line workers and supervisors. Additionally, both studies found that front line managers and supervisors value supervision noting how the process of supervision can build professional skills and allow for an opportunity to process difficult cases and situations. Unique to Bogo, et al.'s study, they found that participants held a negative view of supervision when supervision focused too much attention on productivity. Certainly, both studies help to highlight the challenges faced in the delivery of supervision and the importance of supervision within the helping profession. Both Westergaard and Bogo, et al. suggest that requirements should be set concerning the frequency of supervision.

Wilkins, Forrester, and Grant (2017) and Turner-Daly and Jack (2014) explored supervision within child welfare work in the United Kingdom. While Wilkins, Forrester, and Grant were interested in what supervision looks like, Turner-Daly and Jack were interested in finding out what was helpful within the process of supervision and what, in terms of supervision, needs to be improved from the perspective of the employees. Using a sample of 34 recorded supervision sessions from a total of twelve front line managers as well as four focus group sessions, Wilkins, Forrester, and Grant found that supervision, in most cases, was not supportive of the supervisee and was considered to be task-focused in nature. Additional problems and

issues surrounding caseload sizes and frequent turnover were also identified. Similarly, problems were identified by Turner-Daly and Jack. Researchers analyzed the results of 28 questionnaires provided to professionals within the child welfare field of which all had a minimum of three years of professional experience. Questions were concerned with perceptions of supervision and perceived satisfaction with supervision. Although small in scale and the questionnaires used were not shared, results indicated that only one in four were satisfied with supervision. Additionally, researchers found that supervisory experiences lacked consistency and the perceived quality of the supervision was due to characteristics of the supervisor. Many of the participants involved in the study were dissatisfied with the process of supervision (Turner-Daly & Jack, 2014). While both studies are small in scale and limited to the field of child welfare in regions within the United Kingdom, both studies contribute to the body of literature involving the experiences of providing and receiving supervision within the human services field. Practitioners and supervisors are presented with a variety of challenges and despite the best of intentions and policy, there remains variability in the way in which supervision is delivered and perceived.

Using a slightly different approach, both Gazzola, Stefano, Thériault, and Audet (2013) and Dill and Bogo (2009) explored supervision not from the perspective of the supervisee, but, from that of the supervisor. Dill and Bogo explored the experiences of child welfare supervisors in Canada. Using two focus groups of supervisors involving practitioners from large organizations to small and more urban areas to more rural, nineteen supervisors within the child welfare field participated. Researchers found that despite the supervisors' commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, they felt unsupported with the lack of organizational support and commitment. Moreover, with the varying demands faced by

supervisors, they struggled to prioritize supervision (Dill & Bogo, 2009). Gazzola, et al. specifically explored challenges faced by supervisors as they focused their attention on experiences of supervisors in training within the counseling psychology field in Canada. Ten graduate students who all supervised master level clinicians participated in the study. Supervisors involved discussed their challenges in managing multiple roles, the challenge in developing a specific style of approach to supervision, and their feelings of self-doubt. Certainly, participants involved were new to the role of supervision so concerns of self-doubt are not surprising, however, Gazzola, et al.'s work reflects previous findings that supervisors encounter multiple demands and challenges in the delivery of supervision (Dill & Bogo, 2009; Bogo et al., 2011; Westergaard, 2013). Certainly, as previous studies have pointed to, supervision can have a positive effect on worker outcomes and ensuring that supervisors have the support to conduct supervision is important.

Recognizing the positive effects supervision can have on worker outcomes, several researchers explored different models of supervision and how those models affect worker outcomes. Using a participatory design, Renner, Porter, and Preister (2009) studied an innovative approach within the field of child welfare in Missouri. Leadership within the agency invited supervisors to develop training and supportive measures to improve their performance as part of their strategic plan process. To begin to measure the extent to which this approach had on factors such as job satisfaction and effectiveness measures, employees had all been administered the Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE) since 2002. Annually, child welfare practitioners and supervisors were invited to participate in the 86 question survey. Researchers were able to analyze the results of the SOE from 2003 – 2008. During that period, there was an average of 14687 child welfare practitioners of which 868 participated in the survey and an

average of 224 supervisors of which 153 participated. What they found was that through the strategic plan process, the agency saw an increase in employee retention, an increase in overall job satisfaction, and improved supervisory experiences. Researchers note, though, that results are preliminary and additional study is needed to better understand the effectiveness of the approach (Renner, et al., 2009). Despite preliminary findings, the results of this approach illustrate how supporting supervision and supervisors can lead to positive worker outcomes and have a positive effect within the organization.

Beyond child welfare, Herbert, Byun, Schultz, Tamez, and Atkinson, (2014) explored a training program for supervisors within state vocational rehabilitation supervisors in the United States. Herbert, et al. developed a training program to develop the skills of supervisors within the field of vocational rehabilitation within a mid-Atlantic state in the United States. Additionally, counselors were invited to participate so that researchers could measure the effect the training and subsequent counseling sessions had on the process of supervision. Twenty-four supervisors were invited to participate of which 21 agreed to do so. Seventy-three of the 79 counselors agreed to participate. Data were collected in three phases, shortly before the training and then again at six weeks and five months following the training. Although literature discusses the importance of supervision, Herbert et al. struggled to fully implement the process as many of the participants did not continue with the ongoing consultation, citing high caseloads, turnover, and other competing demands that prevented their commitment. In fact, of the available 12-week consultation sessions, none of the 22 participating supervisors attended all sessions. Moreover, 13 participants attended fewer than three sessions and two participants attended no sessions. Although participants found the ongoing consultation to be important and helpful, many were unable to commit the time. While researchers concluded that the program was not

effective in its implementation, results are not surprising given outcomes of previous studies that cite multiple demands that prevent the process of supervision (Gazzola et al., 2013; Dill & Bogo, 2009; Bogo et al., 2011; Westergaard, 2013).

Benefits of Supervision: Client Outcomes

As discussed, there exists a body of current literature exploring the positive influences supervision can have on worker outcomes. Additionally, a few recent studies have shown how, when implemented well, programs designed to support supervision can lead to positive worker outcomes. Beyond the positive effect on workers, there exist several studies exploring the relationship between supervision and client outcome.

Callahan, Almstrom, Swift, Borja, and Heath (2009) conducted a quantitative assessment exploring supervisors' impact on intervention within the field of psychotherapy. Using available data of 76 clients discharged from a clinic within the South-Central United States, researchers evaluated changes in depression scores at intake and closure or termination. All participants received services at a training facility consisting of 40 therapists in training and nine supervisors. The results of this study found that 16% of the variance of client outcome can be attributed to supervision. While results from this study indicate that the strongest predictor in positive client outcome is the severity of the client at the onset of treatment, the role of supervisor and supervision should not be discounted. The work of Callahan, et al. contributes to the understanding of supervision and the potential effect on client outcome.

Watkins (2011) conducted an extensive review of the literature to determine whether or not supervision contributes to client outcomes. Using available databases including PsycINFO and Google Scholar, Watkins secured 18 articles addressing supervision-patient outcomes from 1981 through 2011. Results from his review proved inconclusive as available literature did not

clearly correlate supervision and patient outcomes. Watkins noted that of the 18 articles reviewed, 40% were incorrectly identified and did not investigate the relationship between client outcome and supervision, but rather addressed the parallel process of supervision and service delivery to clients. Because many of the studies were either poorly implemented or had insufficient sample sizes, Watkins was unable to identify a correlation. Watkins did, though, find areas for future research including an exploration of the frequency and duration of supervision. In fact, he notes that a study conducted by Bradshaw (2007) found that supervisors who received a two-day course in clinical supervision and then held every other week supervision with no more than two supervisees per session, had patients who experienced a greater reduction in psychotic symptoms than those patients not receiving support from staff receiving clinical supervision. As Watkins notes, there is potential for additional research to explore the relationship between supervision and client outcome further cementing the importance of supervision within the helping professions.

Benefits of Supervision: Worker and Client Outcomes

Exploring both the effects on worker outcome and client outcome, several studies illustrate how the process of supervision can affect both the supervisee and the client. Collins-Carmargo and Millar (2010), using a qualitative approach, sought to understand how supervision can be used within the field of child welfare. While this study was part of a larger mixed-methods design exploring supervision and child welfare throughout four states in the United States, this study discusses the experiences of supervisors engaged in clinical supervision and their perceptions on its effect on worker practice as well as client outcome. Participants included 80 individuals who participated in seven focus groups during an initial round of interviews and then another round of eight focus groups involving 57 participants. Those engaged in clinical

supervision felt as though their cases moved faster, children achieved permanency more quickly, and supervisees felt more supported. The results of this study contribute to our understanding of how supervision is perceived and illustrate the perceived benefits of supervisors, supervisees, and clients.

McCarthy (2013), like Herbert, et al. explored supervision in the context of state vocational rehabilitative centers in the United States. McCarthy was interested in understanding the relationship between that of supervisor-supervisee and client outcome. Specifically, whether or not positive supervisee-supervisor relationships affected client outcome, whether or not experience influenced the outcome, and what are the positive and negative attributes of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Included in her study were 166 counselors throughout Nevada, Arizona, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Rhode Island. When assessing the relationship between client outcome and reported relationships with supervisor, no relationship was found; only years of experience of the counselor was shown to have a positive effect on client outcome. The results of this study indicate that newer counselors rated supervision more favorably than more experienced counselors. Additionally, those undergoing regularly scheduled supervision and contact with their supervisor experienced higher levels of satisfaction and improved relationships between supervisor and supervisee. While McCarthy's work contributes to our understanding of the role that supervision has on the supervisor-supervisee relationship, additional study is warranted to identify other aspects of supervision that might affect client outcome.

Using systematic consultation as a guide, Fennessy, et al. (2015) investigated supervision when working with complex cases within the field of intellectual disabilities. Recognizing that case managers are faced with a variety of complex issues when working within the field of

intellectual disabilities including, but not limited to, issues of caregiver stress, complex and multiple medical issues, and self-determination, those working within the field require support in the form of supervision to manage and plan for the varying complexities faced. Using a mixed-methods design, researchers studied the results of 22 face to face consultation sessions occurring from September 2011 through June 2012 involving 24 case managers. Of the 24 case managers, 12 volunteered to participate in a consultation session with a group of professionals while the remaining 12 case managers did not. Researchers found that those participating in the consultation sessions experienced reduced levels of stress and self-reported an ability to effectuate positive change in the lives of the individuals they were supporting. While this study is limited to the population, this study illustrates how a structured approach to supervision can lead to improved worker outcomes and perceived improvement for clients.

Much like Watkins explored supervision and client outcome through a review of available literature within the past 30 years, Carpenter, Webb, and Bostock (2013) reviewed the literature to understand the relationship between supervision and client outcome within the field of child welfare. Like Watkins, Carpenter, et al. were unable to support a finding that supervision affects client outcomes within child welfare. Researchers reviewed a total of 690 studies, of which they were able to include 21. They found that supervision had a positive effect on worker self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Supervision can lead to improved levels of stress, support staff in managing their workload, and support employee retention. Despite the positive worker effects noted, Carpenter, et al. found no evidence to support how supervision affects client outcomes.

Supervision Models and Methods

This review has provided an overview of the various benefits of supervision for both workers and clients served. This portion of the review will explore recent literature involving models and methods in which to deliver supervision. There exist varying models and methods for supervision, the delivery of which can vary based on the setting in which supervision is being rendered. Recent literature concerning models of supervision is largely qualitative and theoretical in nature. This section will review recent literature as it relates to models and methods of supervision.

Models of supervision include but are not limited to developmental models, educational based models, and social role models of supervision. Developmental models of supervision assume that over time, practitioners increase self-awareness and become more autonomous. Supervisors, in turn, must recognize these changes over time and respond accordingly. Most developmental models are linear proposing that practitioners progress through stages over time (Kadusin & Harkness, 2002; Bedford & Gehlert, 2013). On the other hand, educational based supervision models focus on using specific models of therapy through the use of modeling, teaching, and parallel process. Educational models focus on the educational aspect of supervision and the importance of helping the practitioner learn. Those subscribing to educational models of supervision might focus on particular therapeutic methods such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychodynamic approaches, and client-centered approaches, etc. Educational models do not necessarily take into account the development or readiness level of the practitioner (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). In comparison to educational and developmental models of supervision, social role models of supervision assume that supervisors engage in different roles based on the needs of their supervisees. Roles, then, change over time and can be

affected by the needs of the practitioner at any given point in time during the supervisory relationship (Bedford & Gehlert, 2013).

Specific to social role models of supervision, both Bedford and Gehlert and Lynch (2015) suggest the use of situational leadership as a method and framework in which to deliver supervision. Both analyses illustrate the importance of supervision and make an argument for the use of situational leadership theory. Specifically, Lynch details the four behaviors evident in situational leadership including directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating and how the use of those behaviors can contribute to professional development on the behalf of staff while encouraging person-centered care within a residential care setting. Similarly, Bedford and Gehlert make the case that situational leadership style can be applied to supervision given the fact that situational leadership approaches take into consideration the development of each clinician and the fluidity of the learning process over time as this model is neither developmental nor linear. Bedford and Gehlert discuss how the supervisor's ability to assess supervisee readiness and behavior as integral for successful implementation and note that the abilities of a clinician can change over time thereby negating linear models of supervision. Bedford and Gehlert support the notion that supervision is a constant, that learning occurs over time, and that needs and abilities change over time.

King and Hodges (2013) studied a data-driven model for supervision delivery when working with at-risk youth. Using a qualitative design, this study examined the implementation of a data-driven model of supervision using technology to track client outcomes. This data were used during supervision as a means to support, problem-solve, and to keep clinicians focused. Researchers note that the particular environment in which this process was implemented adopted a learning environment that likely helped to support this model and approach to supervision.

King and Hodges caution that this example does not support causation (that data-driven supervision leads to an improved outcome) and recommend this model be compared to "supervision as usual" before considering such a claim. This study does illustrate how aspects of administrative, educational, and supportive components of supervision can be combined using technology. Moreover, a data-driven approach to supervision could be applied to both social roles and developmental models of supervision.

Using an educational approach to supervision, specifically the model adapted from the Multisystemic Therapy (MST), researchers examined the implementation of MST supervision within a specific program (Schoenwald, Mehta, Frazier, & Shernoff, 2013). Researchers used a qualitative observational study design to understand the development and implementation of structured supervision design that uses MST as a framework for service delivery and supervision within and across multiple disciplines. Typically, MST supervision consists of structured every other week sessions that focus on the principles of MST, adherence to the principles, and professional development in supporting individuals and achieving client outcomes. Supervisors within settings (agency, community-based, school, etc.) successfully implemented MST practices with the support of consultants and individual and within team supervision settings yet conducting cross-team supervision sessions proved to be more challenging (Schonewald, et. al., 2013). This study illustrates the ability to implement structured MST supervision within a different setting; additional study is warranted to understand the implementation on a broader scale.

Beyond the one to one supervision model, Rankine (2013) suggests the need to implement the group consult (GC) method of supervision when working with children and families. GC offers an opportunity for practitioners to engage in reflection within a small group

facilitated by the supervisor. All participants are encouraged to participate to offer feedback and creative solutions while the supervisor asks questions and encourages deeper understanding and positive practices. Rankine implemented a small pilot of GC in child welfare practice in New Zealand involving six sessions occurring once every two weeks. Through this project, participants identified an increased ability to engage in reflection, have meaningful discussions about individuals served, and problem-solve more successfully. Rankine makes the case for additional study and implementation of GC in other settings. Certainly, this method of supervision can be used to support developmental and social role models of supervision as the needs of practitioners can change over time and GC can encourage deeper understanding and professional development. Rankine notes additional study and further understanding is needed of GC implementation are needed as well as its use within varying levels of clinicians and in varying settings.

While examining supervision delivery, Bender and Dyheman (2016) explored cyber supervision compared with more traditional in-person models of supervision. Supervision has largely been delivered face to face and in person, however, with the advent of technology, there exists an opportunity to deliver and receive supervision through alternative methods. To understand if there are differences in experiences of supervision when delivered in person or not, Bedner and Dyheman compared experiences of clinicians who received in person and cyber supervision. Participants included 29 clinicians who were currently enrolled in a Master of Science degree program with a focus on counseling. They found that participants experienced no difference in terms of effectiveness between the two methods. Results of this study mirror the results of other studies involving comparisons of online learning and more traditional face to face models of learning (Bender & Dyheman, 2016). This study seems to suggest that the *what* of

supervision is more important than the *how* (mechanics) of supervision, but, additional study is warranted.

As the literature indicates, there exists a variety of methods and models for supervision each with their own positives attributes and drawbacks. Challenges exist with the differing demands of the organizational environment, differing skill levels of practitioners, and time allotted, among others. Despite the challenges, an agreement exists with the need to deliver supervision and researchers agree that additional study is warranted to better understand effective supervision models and methods. The next section includes a review of available literature concerning supervision delivery in social work.

Supervision Delivery in Social Work

Supervision has remained a hallmark of the social work profession dating back to the origins of the profession in the early 1800s during the development of the Charity Organization Societies. Both Munson (2002) and Kadushin and Harkness (2002) detail the history of supervision within the profession and how societal influences of the time shaped the development of the profession and supervision. The process originated from the development of Charity Organization Societies where committees within the organizations hired agents (early supervisors) to manage the volunteers who provided casework services to individuals and families in the community. Early writings illustrate the formation of a one to one relationship between agent and volunteer where the agent was responsible for managing, supporting, and educating the work of the volunteer.

While the relationship between agent and volunteer mimicked the relationship between supervisor and supervisee that we know today, the process and term “supervision” was not prevalent in the literature until the 1920s. Early writings of supervision discussed how the

supervision process served as a mechanism to *educate* burgeoning professionals. By the 1970s the function of supervision evolved to include more *administrative* functions. Supervision was no longer viewed as solely as a method to educate practitioners but now served as a vehicle to "manage the work" and ensure that policy and procedures were followed. In time, practitioners used supervision as an instrument to educate practitioners AND manage the work. It was not until the mid-1990s that the three-pillared approach to social work supervision was adopted. As Kadushin and Harkness note, the nineteenth edition of the *Social Work Encyclopedia* first included the three functions of supervision that we know today: administrative, educational, and supportive. From these three functions, then, the objective of supervision was (*and has been to*) develop practitioners through education, oversight, and support to deliver effective and efficient services (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

As the functions of supervision have evolved, Munson provides additional context involving societal changes that have affected the process of supervision over the past 50 years. One such societal change that directly affected the delivery of supervision included the growth of private practices in the 1970s through the 1990s, which saw the development, and growth of managed care organizations. Managed care organizations, which remain prevalent today, have demanded that professionals be mindful of cost efficiencies and ensure that services delivered focus on providing service that is effective while remaining financially sound (Munson, 2002). Supervisors, then, have been forced to balance the varying organizational demands and pressures as well as provide ongoing support and supervision to supervisees. Given this shift in practice, recent literature involving supervision has largely included theoretical concepts in which to manage and deliver supervision. The following includes a summary of recent literature concerning the state of social work supervision.

Recognizing the demands imposed upon supervisors and the lack of formal framework in which to deliver supervision, Fisher (2009) provided a framework using leadership and motivation theories. Fisher makes an argument for various frameworks including McGregor's Theory X – Theory Y, Likert's System 1 – System 4, Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid, Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership, and Atwater and Bass's transformational leadership. While the evidence presented supports the use of each framework, no evidence is provided that any of the approaches result in effective or ineffective practices within the social work profession; Fisher notes that additional study is warranted.

Specific to the medical field, Kadushin, Berger, Gilbert, and De St. Aubin (2009) explored social work supervision delivery in hospital settings. Using a national listserv and snowballing techniques, researchers recruited 17 social work professionals to participate in this study to understand supervision within the hospital setting. Although the results of this study are not generalizable to the larger population, researchers found that social workers often lacked supervision that consisted of education and support as the constraints of the organization prevented or did not support supervision beyond administrative tasks. When available, supervision was largely delivered on a one to one basis that was focused primarily on administrative tasks with limited to no attention to supportive and educational components. Many of the licensed practitioners involved in this study received supervision on an as-needed basis. Although licensure cements the notion of an autonomous practitioner, many participants indicated a preference for more frequent supervision that involves components of professional development and education. Those not receiving supervision and who were interested in professional development sought supervision from peers and other senior professionals (Kadushin, et al., 2009). As this study exemplifies, supervision is preferred regardless of

experience and helps to support professional development. This study seems to support the importance of educational aspects of supervision so that practitioners can expand upon their skills. Given the constraints of time and organizational pressures, team approaches to supervision might be best able to meet the need for increased professional development while working in a managed care environment.

Recognizing the shift in practice within the public sector and the growing emphasis on compliance standards, Beddoe (2012) explored the changes in social work supervision and the notion that practitioners are sometimes forced to seek professional supervision outside of the organizational context. Beddoe presents a historical conception of supervision and its roots within the social work profession. As services are scrutinized and demands for cost-effectiveness rise, social workers have explored and sought supervision outside of their organizational context. Using available literature and a small qualitative study, Beddoe presents the stories and experiences of six social work supervisor professionals. The results of her work depict four types of supervision including internal managerial, internal reflective, external professional, and external personal. Beddoe makes the argument that as a profession, we must clearly understand and control the art of supervision within our profession, therefore, we need to identify effective supervision practices and identify models that elevate the practice.

In addition to identifying the kind of support and supervision professional social workers need when working in the professional context, Hair (2013) explored the needs of social work professionals in Ontario, Canada through a mixed-methods approach. Social workers with a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in social work and members of the Ontario Association of Social Workers (OASW) were identified as participants (n = 2,590). A total of 636 social workers participated in this study to better understand the needs of social workers practicing in

the field. The results of the study found that participants agreed that supervision should include the opportunity for learning and skill development. Supervision, from the perspective of the respondents, should be provided consistently for practitioners with three years or less experience with the demand for ongoing supervision decreasing over time. Finally, participants agreed that social workers should receive supervision from social workers rather than practitioners from other fields (Hair, 2013). Again, this study illustrates the *importance* of supervision, the need for the process to continue, the need to formalize expectations, but lacks clarity about what effective supervision is.

Marc, Makai-Dimeny, and Osvat (2014) provide additional detail and review of the supervision within the field of social work as they explore skills, roles, and responsibilities of the social work supervisor. Much like the work of Fisher, Marc, et al. articulate the importance of supervision and the skills needed including problem-solving, an ability to provide structure and purpose to the process, and ability to provide feedback, empathy, and self-reflective among other skills. While the authors point to specific skills needed for social work supervisors, there is a question as to whether or not the use of these skills leads to effective supervision. If these skills *do* contribute to effective supervision, there is no evidence that social workers encompass these skills efficiently to effectively deliver supervision.

Dan (2017) conducted an exhaustive review of social work supervision in the literature. Much like Munson and Kadushin and Harkness, he reviews supervision early days and the inception of the three-pillared functions of supervision: administrative, educational, and supportive. He solidifies the importance of supervision and the need to continue to develop practice standards so the future professionals can learn and knowledge can be imparted. He also echoes the concerns of Beddoe and Fischer in that the social work profession lacks clarity in

formalizing a model in which to deliver supervision. Like Beddoe and Fischer, he offers suggestions and stresses the need for the profession to better understand supervision effectiveness.

As presented, social work supervision has been a staple of the profession. The process of supervision has evolved and is recognized as a valuable tool to develop future practitioners. Social work supervision, as a process, involves three inter-related functions including administrative, supportive, and educational aspects. Used together, these functions support the development of practitioners so that they, in turn, deliver effective and efficient services. The following presents recent literature regarding effective supervision.

Effective Supervision

Supervision research has grown from understanding what supervision entails, the benefits of supervision, and ways in which to deliver and administer supervision, to what constitutes effective supervision. Several studies have taken a qualitative approach when trying to understand effective supervision and what effective supervision entails. Pack (2012) examined supervision priorities between supervisors and supervisees through a phenomenological approach and found both similarities and differences. Specifically, supervisees were concerned with safety, trust, and support within the supervisor-supervisee relationship while supervisors were more concerned with quality practice aspects. Supervisees also noted the importance of consistent, constructive feedback in the form of individual sessions, which promoted a sense of trust and safety within the supervisory relationship. Supervisors noted the importance of attending to the individual development of each supervisee to ensure safe practices are employed. As a means of bridging the gap between supervisee and supervisor expectations, Pack suggests the use of supervision contracts to establish clear boundaries and expectations.

While Pack's study was limited to the 22 participants involved, her work contributes to our understanding of supervision and what good or effective supervision looks like from the perspective of both supervisees and supervisors.

Similar to Pack, McPherson, Frederico, and McNamara (2016) also explored the components of effective supervision from the perspectives of supervisees and supervisors. Using a qualitative approach and thematic inductive process, researchers explored perceptions of 10 supervisees and 10 supervisors working within the child welfare field in New Zealand. Participants' educational backgrounds and experience ranged from social work (nine) to psychology, nursing, and teaching. And, much like Pack, McPherson, Frederico, and McNamara found that safety was a primary contributing component of effective supervision. Factors contributing to this trusting relationship were collaboration, accountability, openness, honesty, and a nonjudgmental approach. Moreover, continuity was important in terms of supervision delivery. Supervision that was consistent and reliable contributed to the sense of safety. As researchers note, the ability to create a safe space for supervision can and does contribute to learning and growth within the supervisory-supervisee relationship (McPherson, Frederico, & McNamara, 2016). While the results of McPherson, Frederico, and McNamara (2016) are limited to the participants of this study, results are similar to the findings of Pack (2012).

Another qualitative approach to understanding effective supervision practices was conducted by Benton, Dill, and Williams (2017). Researchers explored perceptions of effective supervision within a human services organization in Northern Ireland. Participants included 36 practitioners of which 16 were front line staff receiving supervision, 19 supervisors, and one administrative assistant. Benton, Dill, and Williams' study mirrored the results of Pack and McPherson, Frederico, and McNamara in that respondents addressed the need to have a trusting

relationship for the experience to be effective. Trust was formed through consistent and structured sessions that addressed both administrative and clinical aspects of the work. Beyond the trusting relationship, participants also addressed the broader environment and organizational culture. For supervision to be effective, supervision itself and the process of supervision must be supported and fostered by the organization. Finally, participants also discussed additional practices to support supervision through peer and group measures that help to strengthen the relationships between workers (Benton, Dill, & Williams, 2017). Again, while research results are limited to the participants involved in the study, this study not only demonstrates the importance of safety in effective supervision but addresses other factors contributing to effective supervision such as organizational context and moving beyond traditional one to one models of supervision.

Beyond qualitative approaches, researchers have begun to explore effective supervision through mixed-method approaches. Egan, Maidment, and Connolly (2018) gathered baseline data of supervision practices across Australia. In total, 675 participants completed an online survey addressing supervision practices of which 199 identified themselves as supervisors delivering supervision. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures, researchers examined current supervision practices including what contributed to effective practices. They found that most received supervision (75%), and the most common form of supervision was individual supervision (71.9%) of which 46.5 % indicating that individual supervision was the most effective and preferred form of supervision. Second, to individual supervision, peer supervision was identified as being effective with 15.1% reporting. While the occurrence of supervision was quite consistent with 75% receiving supervision, the frequency and duration of supervision varied from weekly to four times per year and from less than 30

minutes to over 90 minutes. When assessing effectiveness, 26% reported that their supervision was not effective. Moreover, researchers found that the more trusting the relationship the more likely supervision was rated as effective and vice versa (Egan, Maidment, & Connolly, 2018). This study sheds additional light on what supervision looks like in Australia and makes use of quantitative data to explore and define effective supervision practices. Results of this study echo previous qualitative approaches in understanding effective supervision (Benton, Dill, & Williams, 2017; McPherson, Frederico, & McNamara, 2016; Pack, 2012). Additional study is warranted to understand effective supervision in differing contexts and locations.

Wilkins and Antonopoulou (2019) sought to understand social work supervision in the United Kingdom. Specifically, they were interested in understanding what supervision supports within the social work setting in the UK. Wilkins and Antonopoulou (2019) defined good supervision as supervision that provides six elements including client-focused collaboration, reflection, discussion of client needs, supportive features that address the work, emotional wellbeing of the worker, and clarity concerning expectations. In total 315 practitioners participated in the survey and results of the survey were analyzed. Much like Egan, Maidment, and Connolly found supervision in the UK predominately occurred in one to one sessions with supervision sessions occurring anywhere from weekly to less than monthly and lasting from less than 30 minutes to longer than 120 minutes. Interestingly, when analyzing the frequency and domains of supervision, supervision that was more frequent was viewed as more helpful across all domains. Most indicated that supervision helped with task management (77.5%) and adherence to due dates (64.4%) while areas of emotional support, refection, and quality of practice were cited as not being as helpful within supervision. When considering the experience levels of participants, those that were newly qualified as social workers found their supervision

to be more helpful than those who were more experienced. While most participants indicated that supervision is helpful for more administrative tasks of work, those that participated in and received group supervision and who had more frequent supervision sessions, were more likely to report that supervision was helpful (Wilkins & Antonopoulou, 2019). Wilkins and Antonopoulou provide the groundwork for good supervision in the UK and suggest the need for a further understanding of supervision. Additionally, both Wilkins and Antonopoulou propose that practitioners begin to focus supervision delivery on client outcomes rather than more administrative factors as this will not only support the supervisee in becoming a better clinician but, it will also foster improved client outcomes. Additionally, by incorporating more group approaches to supervision, practitioners could experience greater benefits from supervision that is focused on practice-orientated domains rather than administrative domains (Wilkins & Antonopoulou, 2019). The work of Wilkins and Antonopoulou seems to suggest that there is not a *one-size-fits-all* approach to supervision as it is a dynamic process that includes a variety of factors – factors that warrant additional study and understanding.

Finally, in terms of effective supervision, Falender, Shafranske, and Ofek (2014) provide a review of practices and considerations when rendering effective supervision. Falender, Shafranske, and Ofek acknowledge that attitudes of the supervisor are of utmost importance. Specifically, supervisors must value the supervisee-supervisor relationship, the importance of the relationship and process as it relates to practice, education, and supporting positive outcomes for not only the supervisee but for the clients as well. Beyond values, skills such as being mindful, purposeful, reflective, and engaging in the ongoing evaluation are also essential when practicing effective supervision. Effective supervision involves practice improvement, learning, and evaluation. In delivering effective supervision, there must be a sound alliance between

supervisor and supervisee. As was noted by previous studies (Pack, 2012; Benton, Dill, & Williams, 2017; McPherson, Frederico, & McNamara 2016), the relationship between supervisor and supervisee is viewed as paramount when engaging in effective supervision. Falender, Shafranski, and Ofek discuss other factors that contribute to effective supervision such as confidentiality, clear expectations, ethical and legal considerations, and diversity which can also be found and addressed in the NASW Best Practice Standards in Social Work Supervision (2013). Authors note the complexity of the supervision and advocate for ongoing evaluation, training, and research into understanding and administrating effective supervision.

As previously discussed, knowledge of effective supervision and practices has begun to emerge in the literature. Studies exploring effective supervision have provided insight into the elements of effective supervision in differing environments. Of great importance is the acknowledgment that the relationship between supervisor and supervisee is central to effective supervision and that the environment can either support or diminish the importance of effective supervision. Few studies specific to social work, however, have used reliable and valid measurement tools when measuring effective supervision. Most studies have been descriptive in nature.

Gaps, Implications, and Moving Forward

Supervision has been a cornerstone of social work and helping professions. Supervision has been studied from a variety of perspectives using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches. Moreover, several researchers have conducted meta-analyses to understand supervision and suggest a research agenda moving forward.

Bogo and McKnight (2005) reviewed the literature from 1994-2004 and located 22 peer-reviewed articles to understand supervision in the literature. Because Bogo and McKnight were

interested in understanding supervision within the context of social work in the United States, of the originally 22 secured articles, only 13 articles were reviewed. The 13 articles amounted to 11 studies because one of the studies was reported in several articles. Bogo and McKnight found that supervision and its delivery is affected by the organizational context. Specifically, supervision is often dictated by the organization in terms of who provides the supervision and the frequency. Supervision is often limited in the for-profit sector but more frequent in not-for-profit settings. Moreover, social workers employed in the educational or health fields are less likely to be supervised by social workers. Bogo and McKnight note the lack of available literature specific to supervision within social work and they suggest that given changes within agencies and the perception that supervision is not perceived to be a priority, the need to understand and explore supervision is therefore limited.

Focusing on the public sector, Hoge, et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of studies found in the literature from 2000 through 2009 and secured a total of 375 articles that met certain criteria. Disciplines included the profession of social work, behavioral health services, and the field of nursing. From this review, researchers suggest several recommendations for the future of supervision and research. In terms of delivering supervision, researchers suggest that professionals delivering supervision receive ongoing training and support; they also support the notion that minimum standards be set for supervision, and that payers should set standards to ensure that services should be supervised. In terms of supervision research, Hoge, et al. suggest that research should explore skills needed to be an effective supervisor and to better identify what effective supervision is through evaluation and controlled experiments.

O'Donoghue and Tsui (2013) delved into the supervision literature with a review of the literature from 1970-2010. A total of 89 articles were secured from this period with almost half

of the articles being from the 2000s. Throughout the 1970s to the 2000s, published research involving supervision almost doubled over each decade. From their extensive review, O'Donoghue and Tsui found that almost half of the available research is concerned with the experience of supervision and what supervision entails. As stated previously, O'Donogue and Tsui found that supervisees preferred supervision that is focused on learning to supervision that is more task or administratively driven. Additionally, O'Donogue and Tsui found that supervision perceived to be favorable is linked to positive worker outcomes including decreased stress levels, improved job satisfaction rates, and lower instances of employee turnover. Beyond what supervision entails and how it is perceived, researchers also noted that much of the available literature involving supervision is concerned with the field of child welfare. In total, twenty-one articles involved supervision in child welfare. Given their findings, O'Donogue and Tsui suggest a path forward in understanding the role of supervision and building on the existing literature. Similar to Hoge, et al., O'Donogue and Tsui propose that research is concerned with understanding effective models of supervision through the use of a single system and qualitative approaches. Researchers also suggest that future studies begin to consider whether supervision affects client outcomes. As noted, much of the latest research has been concerned with how supervision affects worker outcomes, yet little is known of what the effect is on client outcome. Finally, O'Donogue and Tsui suggest that future literature should begin to expand the study of supervision and to compare supervision across cultures moving from local to international approaches.

The literature also illustrates the attention supervision receives within specific fields of study. Specifically, much of the available literature is concerned with child welfare practices in North America and the United Kingdom (Quinn, 2017; Turner-Daly & Jack, 2014; Renner et al.,

2009; Carpenter et al., 2013; Dill & Bogo, 2009; Collins-Carmargo & Royse, 2010). Several studies reviewed supervision within the fields of mental health and addictions (Bogo et al., 2011; Onyett, 2011; Westergaard, 2013) and only one study focused on supervision and the field of intellectual disabilities (Fennessy et al., 2015). Moreover, many of the studies involving disciplines other than child welfare occurred outside the United States. Certainly, there exists a need to better understand supervision in varying contexts such as mental health, intellectual disabilities, and early intervention within the United States.

As the review of available literature has indicated, supervision remains a prevalent function within social work and the helping and human services professions. Specific to social work supervision, much of the available literature is concerned with the importance of supervision and modes of delivery. In terms of empirical evidence, supervision has been found to positively affect worker outcomes while preliminary results indicate some correlation between supervision and client outcome. Yet, as the literature has indicated, more understanding and empirical evidence are needed concerning effective supervisory practices. As a profession grounded in the process of supervision, it is incumbent of the profession to build empirical evidence surrounding effective supervision practices so that practice standards and models can be developed and enhanced to ultimately achieve service standards for individuals served.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction, Rationale, and Research Questions

The practice of supervision dates back to the inception of the social work profession itself. Despite the historical value of supervision within the profession, the known benefits that supervision can have on employee and worker outcomes, little empirical evidence is available surrounding effective supervision practices, what effective supervision entails, and how effective and ineffective supervision differs. The intent of this study, then, was to understand not only the precepts of effective supervision but also if a relationship exists between effective supervision and educational background, specifically a background in social work. To answer these questions and build upon the existing knowledge of effective supervision, this study used a quantitative relational study design. The following includes a rationale for the study, methods chosen, the research setting and a discussion of the trustworthiness and limitations of the study.

Recent literature and research of supervision has largely focused on understanding experiences of the supervisees or supervisors (Gazzola et al., 2013; Dill & Bogo, 2009; Wilikins, Forrester, & Grant, 2017; Turner-Daly & Jack, 2014) or understanding the relationship between worker outcomes, client outcomes, or both (Fakunmojo et al., 2010; Quinn, 2017; Collins-Carmargo & Royce, 2010; Smith & Shields, 2010; McCarthy, 2013). Studies specifically relating to effective supervision are largely qualitative in nature (Pack, 2012; McPherson, Frederico, & McNamara, 2016; Benton, Dill, & Williams, 2017) and are concerned with supervisory experiences outside of the US (Egan, Maidment, & Connolly, 2018; Wilikins & Antonopoulou, 2019). Certainly, these studies help to illustrate the importance of supervision and illuminate the positive outcomes associated with supervision, yet they lack empirical evidence surrounding effective supervisory practices. Beyond effective supervision, an

understanding of whether a relationship exists between educational background and effective supervision is also lacking.

White and Winstanley (2014) provide additional historical context to the study of supervision and purport the need to quantify supervision within the helping professions. Although White and Winstanley specifically dealt with the nursing profession, they note the contributions of both social workers Kadushin and Munson in the development and understanding of supervision. Despite these contributions, White and Winstanley discuss the challenges of developing empirical evidence in support of supervision within the helping professions and healthcare fields. Hoge, et al. (2011) echo the need for greater understanding and empirical evidence in support of supervision, noting the need to understand effective supervision. And, specific to the social work profession, McKnight and Bogo (2005) suggests that due to the lack of empirical evidence within the social work profession there exists a need to design and implement studies to address supervision within the social work profession.

To build on the existing knowledge of supervision, this study will explore effective supervision. Using the following for the definition for supervision: "supervision is the formal relationship-based system of support and practice development provided by approved supervisors to staff in human service agencies to maximize the best possible outcomes for their respectable clientele," (White & Winstanley, 2014); this study will examine whether a relationship exists between education and effective supervision as well as examine what effective supervision entails by using the MCSS-26 ©. This psychometrically sound tool has proven reliability, test-re-test reliability, and face validity measures (Winstanley & White, 2017). Specifically, this study will answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between education and supervision effectiveness?

2. What factors affect supervision effectiveness?
    a. What is the relationship between supervision requirements and supervision effectiveness?

Research Setting and Participants

The setting of this research took place in a large, private, non-profit human service agency within Pennsylvania. Services rendered include, but are not limited to, case management within the field of mental health (MH), adult and aging (OLTL), developmental and disability (IDD), early intervention (EI), and child welfare (CYS). The agency provides services to approximately 50,000 individuals annually with more than 800 employees of whom approximately 550 employees, including case managers, supervisors, and directors, who are personally responsible for the provision of case management services. Services are rendered from 17 locations across Pennsylvania. Case management services are largely delivered within the surrounding community in which case managers meet with individuals served in their own homes or within an agreed-upon community location.

Case managers work directly with clients and are supervised by supervisors. Supervisors, in turn, are supported and supervised by agency directors. Supervisors are responsible for overseeing groups of case managers. On average, supervisors are responsible for supervising anywhere from four to seven case managers. Most supervisors are responsible for supervising between five and six case managers. Of the supervisory staff complement, 95 employees are responsible for delivering supervision to case managers. Of these 95 professionals, 20 have a background in social work with either a master's or bachelor's degree. The remaining 75 have backgrounds in other disciplines including but not limited to, psychology, sociology, business, education, and criminal justice.

Case managers (supervisees) are primarily responsible for working with individuals to whom they are assigned. Broadly, the work of case managers between departments is similar as all case managers are responsible for the development of an individualized plan that includes, but not limited to, areas of health, wellness, safety, and personal outcomes or goals. Case managers ensure that supports and services are coordinated as needed and that there is adherence to the individualized plan through ongoing monitoring and support. The specific work and caseloads required, though, are largely dictated by the department within which case managers are working and can vary from as few as 15 individuals to more than 60 individuals assigned. The frequency of contact with individuals is largely defined by the state agency responsible for oversight of the program (Pennsylvania Department of Human Services) and the needs of the individuals. For example, within the mental health department and as dictated by the state governing body, caseloads are not to exceed 40 individuals while contact with individuals is once per month minimally. However, the governing body of the intellectual disability field does not dictate caseload sizes, yet does dictate the frequency of contact with individuals which, in turn, directly relates to the amount of funding a person receives from the state. Contact with individuals comprising the intellectual disability system must occur, at minimum, once every other month. Regardless of the work completed in each department, all case managers must meet employment requirements that are set forth by the state governing body. All employment requirements include some combination of educational background and experience. Additionally, each case manager is required to be supervised by a designated supervisor who is assigned by the agency.

Per state regulation, like case managers, all supervisors must attain some level of education and experience to perform at their jobs. Educational and experience requirements are set forth by the state agencies governing each department. Educational backgrounds include, but

are not limited to, social work, psychology, sociology, and education. In some cases, state agencies overseeing the departments also stipulate the number of case managers that supervisors can supervise. The governing body of the mental health department states that supervisors can supervise no more than nine case managers while the intellectual disability system limits the number that a supervisor can supervise to seven. Beyond the number of case managers that supervisors can supervise, the process of supervision is also affected by the overseeing state department. Within mental health and children and youth, supervision frequency is dictated by the length of involvement of individuals served, while within the intellectual disability field no frequency of supervision is mandated. In response to the differences in requirements, the agency has implemented a policy that supervision shall occur minimally twice per month or at the discretion of the state agency. For mental health and children and youth services, supervision is held weekly. In terms of method (in person or not; individually or within groups) there is no requirement.

This agency was chosen for this study for several reasons. First, the agency's size and staff compliment provided the potential for a sample size large enough to explore statistical differences among groups. Second, previous studies involving supervision are largely limited to mental health and child welfare services. In selecting this agency as the study site, programs beyond child welfare and mental health can be explored. Third, staff within the agency have a variety of educational backgrounds. Because this study was specifically designed to determine the relationship between education and supervision effectiveness, selecting a site that employed individuals with different educational backgrounds was ideal. Finally, because previous studies have determined that organizational pressures may affect supervision delivery, one large organization was chosen as opposed to multiple smaller organizations.

Measurement Instruments

Attempting to understand supervision effectiveness and the relationship with education, this study used the MCSS-26© and an online survey for supervisors. Supervisees were invited to complete the MCSS-26© which generated an overall total supervision score by which the higher the score, the more effective the supervision was perceived. In addition to an overall score, each domain (normative, restorative, and formative) generated a score where, again, the higher the score the more effective that domain of supervision was perceived. Beyond the completion of the MCSS-26©, supervisees were asked to identify their educational background as well as other demographic information including age and gender. Supervisors, on the other hand, were not asked to complete the MCSS-26©; rather they were invited to participate in a brief on-line survey to identify demographic information (age, gender, the length of time they have spent supervising), preferences as they related to supervision (method, model, modality), and their educational backgrounds.

Supervisor survey. Supervisors were invited to participate in an online survey that included demographic information and preferences relating to supervision. Questions included gender, age, educational background, experience, and supervision preferences.

Demographics: Gender, age, educational background. In an effort to be inclusive of all genders, supervisors identified as either "male," "female," or "other." Beyond gender, Supervisors were asked to identify their age in years and educational background. Supervisors indicated whether they held a degree in social work (master's and/or bachelor's) and whether they held a master's degree in another field (other than social work).

Experience: Length of time delivering supervision and agency employment. Supervisors were asked to identify their experience in delivering supervision. Specifically,

supervisors were asked to indicate the length of time (measured in years) that they have been delivering supervision. Supervisors were divided into five groups including less than 1, 1 to less than 3, 3 to less than 8, 8 to less than 15, and 15 or more. Using the same five groups, supervisors were grouped by agency employment. Using the survey completion date and agency date of hire, supervisor employment length (measured in years) was determined.

Supervision Preferences: Modality, method, model, and satisfaction with supervision. Supervisors indicated several preferences relating to supervision delivery. Preferences for modality included one of five options, face to face, phone, via computer, some combination of the above, or other. Methods for supervision delivery included one to one, group, some combination of one to one and group, or other. Supervisors also were asked to identify which model (e.g. educational, social role, development, etc) of supervision delivery employed. Supervisors had the option to indicate the specific model, don't know, or no formal model. Finally, supervisors indicated their overall satisfaction with current supervisory practices. Supervisors rated their satisfaction using a Likert five-point scale from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied."

Supervisee survey: MCSS-26©. The MCSS-26© is a 26 question survey that measures three key constructs with two subscales each for a total of six subscales as they relate to effective supervision. The key constructs include normative, restorative, and formative domains. These key constructs, normative, restorative, and formative domains mirror the administrative, supportive, and educational functions maintained by the social work profession (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). The normative domain includes subscales involving compliance and regulatory standards (administrative). The normative domain includes nine questions with a scoring range of 0-36. The restorative domain includes subscales of trust, support, and advice

(supportive). The restorative domain is comprised of 10 questions totaling a scoring range of 0-40. Finally, the formative domain measures areas of improved skill and reflection (education). The formative domain includes seven questions and has a scoring range of 0-28. Together, the domains derive an overall supervision score from 0-104.

The MCSS-26© was chosen as it has been utilized in 13 countries worldwide, translated in nine languages, and has been used in a variety of health care settings including nursing and human services. The tool has withstood rigorous testing including Rasch Analyses which have confirmed psychometric properties, including the validity of the response structures (White, 2017). Reliability testing and Cronbach alpha's for the MCSS-26© range from 0.658 to 0.868 indicating acceptable internal consistency within each sub-section. Additionally, Person Separation Index [PSI] testing was used to measure the internal consistency of the scale. Scores ranged from 0.523 and 0.778 and can be interpreted as Cronhach Alpha results. A value of 0.7 is widely considered to be an accepted value that indicates a reliable scale (Field, 2018). Testing of the questionnaire using intra-class correlation coefficients, while multiple methods found comparable results in terms of test and re-test reliability. The face validity of the MCSS-26 © was examined through a review of results that included both the highest and lowest scores. Results of the case studies found that those with the highest scores had positive attitudes towards supervision and positive relationships with their supervisors. Conversely, those with the lowest scores had more negative experiences with supervision and their relationship with their supervisor. With a scoring range for the MCSS-26© from 0-104, those who report a score of 73 or greater are considered to have experienced effective supervision while those generating a score of less than 73 are considered to have experienced ineffective supervision (Winstanley &

White, 2017). For purposes of this study, effective supervision is defined by a score of 73 or greater.

Participant data used to determine validity, reliability, and scoring metrics of the MCSS-26© included a variety of professionals in the helping professions including nurses and other non-medical professionals. Specifically, participants included nursing professionals and "allied health professionals." Allied health professionals consisted of a variety of professionals including social workers, therapists (speech, occupational), dieticians, podiatrists, physiotherapists, and psychologists. Comparisons between the nursing group and allied health professionals resulted in similar overall scoring with nursing professionals resulting in an overall mean score of 76.5 and allied health professionals with an overall mean score of 74.7 (Winstanley & White, 2017).

The online version of the MCSS-26© also included questions relating to supervisee demographics and experiences with supervision. Demographic information included gender, age (in years), and educational background. To promote inclusivity, participant gender was identified as either "male," "female," or "other." Experiences with supervision included the modality, method, frequency, and length. See Appendix A for the complete survey.

Definition of Variables

What is the relationship between education and supervision effectiveness? This study aimed to determine the relationship between education discipline and effective supervision. Specifically, whether a relationship existed between a social work educational background and effective supervision. To answer this question, data was collected from the MCSS-26© and supervisor survey.

Dependent variable: Effective supervision. While practitioners define supervision differently, this study used the following definition, "supervision is the formal relationship-based system of support and practice development provided by approved supervisors to staff in human service agencies to maximize the best possible outcomes for their respectable clientele," (White & Winstanley, 2014). With this definition in mind, effective supervision, then, was defined as achieving a combination of administrative, educational, and supportive functions in the context of a helping relationship (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

Independent variable: Educational background. In order to determine the relationship between educational background and supervision effectiveness, participants (both case managers and supervisors) self-reported whether they held a bachelor's and/or master's degree in social work. Participants were then grouped as either having a background in social work or not.

What factors affect supervision effectiveness? Beyond the relationship between education and supervision effectiveness, this study attempted to determine effective supervision practices to inform practice guidelines. In doing so, data from the MCSS-26© was used to identify supervision that was perceived as effective and ineffective. Those who reported an overall supervision score of less than 73 (ineffective) and those who reported a score of 73 and greater (effective) were grouped separately. To discover differences, attributes of the mechanics or *how* (frequency, method, length, modality) and *who* (years' experience at the agency and years' assigned to current supervisor) of supervision were compared.

Dependent variable: Supervision effectiveness. Supervision is defined as "the formal relationship-based system of support and practice development provided by approved supervisors to staff in human service agencies to maximize the best possible outcomes for their respectable clientele," (White & Winstanley, 2014). Supervision that is considered effective was

defined as achieving a combination of administrative, educational, and supportive functions in the context of a helping relationship (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). Using the MCSS-26© scoring metrics effective and ineffective supervision were operationally defined. Effective supervision was operationally defined as supervision scoring 73 or greater while those scoring supervision less than 73 were considered to be ineffective supervision.

Independent variables: ***Factors affecting supervision.*** Supervision can vary in form including duration, frequency, and method – whether face to face or through the use of technology. Perceptions of supervision also vary by the supervisee. Previous literature has suggested that preferences of supervision are related to the individuals receiving supervision. Kadushin et al. (2009) found that regardless of experience, professionals interviewed generally were interested in receiving supervision, while the work of Wilkins and Antonopoulou (2019) determined that individuals with less experience found supervision to be more effective. In an effort to examine these differences, participants were asked to describe aspects of supervision delivery and experience with their current supervisor. Therefore, the following factors of supervision were used to determine the differences between effective and ineffective supervision.

Modality. Modality refers to the manner or delivery in which participants experienced supervision. Participants were asked to identify how supervision was conducted. Participants identified if supervision occurred in one of three styles: face to face, over the telephone, or some combination of both telephone and face to face.

Method/Type. Method or type refers to the style of supervision received, whether individual or in group sessions. Participants identified if supervision primarily occurred in one to one sessions, in group sessions, or some combination of both one to one and group sessions.

Frequency. Frequency refers to the rate in which supervision was delivered. Participants identified how often supervision occurred. For purposes of this study, supervision frequency included one of the following options: every week, every 2 weeks, monthly, every 2-3 months, or more than 3 months.

Length. The length refers to the duration of supervision. Participants identified the duration of supervision received. The length was organized into one of three categories including less than 30 minutes, 30 to 60 minutes, or more than 60 minutes.

Years assigned to supervisor. Years assigned to the supervisor include the length of time that a participant was assigned to their current supervisor. Participants were asked to indicate the length of time assigned to their supervisor on the survey. For each length of time, supervisees were grouped into one of five groupings. Groupings were as follows (in years): Less than 1, 1 to less than 3, 3 to less than 5, 5 to less than 10, and 10 or more.

Duration of agency employment. The duration of agency employment refers to the length of time that an individual was employed at the agency. Participant date of hire and date of survey completion were used to determine the duration of agency employment. Once employment length was determined, each participant was divided into one of five groups. Groupings were as follows (in years): Less than 1, 1 to less than 3, 3 to less than 5, 5 to less than 10, and 10 or more.

What is the relationship between supervision requirements and supervision effectiveness? As discussed previously, several of the departments have supervision (frequency) requirements that are dictated by the governing state department. As previous research has indicated, required supervision can be perceived as not useful and seem to be ineffective.

Therefore, this study wanted to examine whether current state requirements imposed on the process of supervision affected the overall effectiveness of supervision.

Independent variable: Supervision requirements. Two of the agency departments (children and youth and mental health) require that supervision occurs at specified frequencies per month as stipulated by the state governing body, while the other three agencies (intellectual disabilities, aging, and early intervention) do not require specific frequencies for supervision. Supervisees were grouped by those who have required supervision and those who do not have supervision requirements.

Dependent variable: Supervision Effectiveness. Available supervision scores from the MCSS-26 © including the overall and subsequent domain scores (normative, restorative, and formative) were used to measure supervision effectiveness. Again, the higher the scores, the more effective supervision (and subsequent domains) are perceived. A score of 73 is the threshold at which supervision is determined to be effective (Winstanley & White, 2017).

Sampling, Power Analysis, and Data Collection

With the consent of both the agency and the university's institutional review board, convenience sampling methods were instituted by which all supervisees (case managers) and supervisors were invited to participate in this study. All supervisees and those delivering supervision were identified through the use of agency organizational charts. All supervisee staff members within each department including Office of Long Term Living (OLTL), Office of Children, Youth, and Families (CYS), Office of Developmental Program (IDD), Office of Child Development and Early Learning (EI), and Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (MH) were sent an electronic link through *Survey Monkey* to complete an online version of the MCSS-26©. A total of 447 supervisees were invited to participate in the survey.

Those responsible for rendering supervision to supervisees (supervisors) were invited to participate in a brief survey that measured educational background, number of years' experience in the human services field, number of years' experience in delivering supervision, and preferences as they related to the delivery of supervision. In total, 92 supervisors were invited to participate in this portion of the study.

Using G Power statistical analysis, it was determined that a minimum of 27 respondents were needed for each group under study for a total of 54 to assess for a large effect at the 0.05 significance level with 80% confidence. Both the significance and confidence levels were chosen as they are common levels selected for studies within the human services field (Faul, et. al., 2007).

Participants were notified that the principal researcher was an employee of the agency and that any willingness (or unwillingness) to participate would not affect their current or future employment. All participants were provided with informed consent and were made aware that while their information remained confidential, their responses would not remain anonymous given the nature of the study. Participants were informed that no identifying information would be used in the completion of the study; rather, each respondent would be assigned a unique numeric code, known only to the researcher. To entice potential participants, those who participated in the survey were eligible to receive one of eight $25 gift cards. All surveys were administered online via *Survey Monkey* between October 29, 2019, and November 16, 2019.

After all of the survey data was collected and using available agency organizational charts, supervisees who completed the MCSS-26 © were matched to their respective supervisors. Their respective supervisors, if they chose to participate, were identified by their educational

background, experience with delivering supervision, and preferred methods and models for delivering supervision. Using the statistical package provided with the purchase of the MCSS-26 © and SPSS, the results of the MCSS-26 © were entered into a spreadsheet for each respondent of the MCSS-26 ©. Subsequent scores were generated for each respondent. The higher the score indicated the more effective supervision. With the scoring range of the MCSS-26 © being 0-104 those with a score of 73 or greater were identified as receiving effective supervision. Each respondent who completed the MCSS-26 © then was linked to a score and supervisor. Respondents were grouped accordingly to answer each research question and subsequent hypothesis.

Hypothesis and Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1: Supervisors with an educational background in social work will deliver more effective supervision when compared to supervisors without an educational background in social work. Given the prevalence of supervision within the profession of social work, it is hypothesized that those with a degree in social work will deliver supervision that is more effective than their non-social work counterparts. In order to analyze this hypothesis, supervisee respondent supervision scores were paired with their respective supervisor. Associated supervision scores and supervisor educational background, then, were divided into one of two groups: supervisors with a degree in social work and supervisors without a degree in social work. Using available statistical analysis through SPSS, mean supervision scores including supervision domains of normative, restorative, and formative were analyzed. The expectation was that those with a degree in social work would have higher mean scores those without a degree in social work.

Hypothesis 2: Supervisees with an educational background in social work will rate supervision as being more effective when compared to supervisees without an educational background in social work. Much like the supervisors, it was hypothesized that a supervisee with a background in social work would generate a higher supervision score than their non-social work counterpart. Again, given the social work profession's close ties to supervision, it was hypothesized that supervisees with a degree in social work will rate supervision more favorably than supervisees without a background in social work. Supervisee scores were divided into two groups: those with a degree in social work and those without a degree in social work. Mean supervision scores were compared using SPSS statistical analysis.

Hypothesis 3: Supervisees with few years of agency employment will experience more effective supervision than supervisees with numerous years of agency employment. Past research has indicated that newer supervisees report greater effectiveness with supervision than supervisees who have more experience (Wilkins & Antonopoulou, 2019; McCarthy, 2013; Egan, Maidment, & Connolly, 2018). Available research has yet to examine the relationship between supervision effectiveness and the mechanics of supervision. Therefore, supervisee overall supervision scores were grouped into one of two groups: those with a score of 73 or greater (effective supervision) and those with a score of less than 73 (ineffective supervision). Using SPSS differences in the supervisee length of time (years with agency and years with current supervisor) and mechanics (length, frequency, method, and modality) of supervision were assessed.

Hypothesis 4: Supervisees required to be supervised at specified frequencies will find supervision to be less effective than supervisees not required to be supervised at specified frequencies. Previous research has found that when supervision is required by an

outside department or funder, the process is perceived as less effective or useful (Hoge et al., 2011; Bogo et al., 2011; Westergaard, 2013). To examine this using available supervision scores generated from the MCSS-26©, supervisee respondents were grouped by those who are required to have supervision (mental health and children and youth departments) and those who are not required to have supervision (intellectual disabilities, early intervention, and aging). Subsequent statistical analysis was computed by using SPSS software.

Trustworthiness

Before engaging in research regarding supervision effectiveness, this researcher secured approval from the Kutztown University's Institutional Review Board. The approval included a review of all survey tools, informed consent procedures, and consent from the participating agency. In addition, the principal research completed required training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative regarding social and behavioral research.

The purpose of this study was to understand the administration of effective supervision including the relationship between education and supervision effectiveness. Allowing for the number of definitions for the term supervision and the unique experiences of supervisees relating to the process of supervision, it was critical to choose a reliable and valid tool for measuring supervision effectiveness. Given its rigorous testing, the MCSS-26© was chosen to measure effective supervision. The MCSS-26© allowed for consistent measurement of supervision while permitting participants to rate their own unique experiences within supervision. To determine the educational background, respondents were asked to self report their level of education (bachelor's and/or master's degrees) and areas of study.

As an employee of the organization, this researcher had access to current organizational data including contact information for all staff and hierarchal structure of staff within the

organization. Specifically, this researcher had access to staff email, date of hire, assigned department, assigned location, and assigned supervisor. Available information is maintained by organization leadership and updated as changes occur. For purposes of this study, agency data as of October 2019 was utilized.

Given the dual role as agency leader and researcher, additional considerations to safeguard participants were employed when initiating this study. As a leader within the agency under study, this researcher was responsible for rendering supervision to agency supervisors and agency case managers. Given this relationship, supervisees assigned to this researcher were excluded from participating in the study. All participants, excluding those supervised by this researcher, were provided with informed consent. Participants were informed that their willingness to participate in this research study would in any way affect current or future employment with the agency.

Limitations

This study presented several limitations. Because this study was specifically designed to determine the relationship between educational background and supervision effectiveness, ensuring that a representative sample responded to the survey was of concern. Approximately one-quarter of the managers surveyed reported educational backgrounds in social work while the remaining three quarters indicated educational backgrounds in other fields. Not having a representative sample would affect outcomes and pose questions as to the significance of determined results. As previously noted, to detect a large effect a sample size of 27 was needed for each group under comparison. Without a minimum sample size of 27, only descriptive statistics were used to compare groups.

While the MCSS-26 © has been used to measure effective supervision in a variety of settings, its use specific to social work and effective supervision is limited. Social work studies involving effective supervision have relied on other measurement tools and have been more descriptive. Despite the credibility, reliability, and validity as determined in other fields and settings, this tool might prove ineffective while measuring supervision within the context of community case management services.

Considering the use of convenience sampling methods, any ability to generalize the results beyond this study is limited. Participants who completed the survey might not be representative of the agency staff opinions and experiences. Moreover, not achieving a representative sample would also prevent the ability to generalize results (Ruben & Babbie, 2017).

Summary

Given the lack of empirical evidence regarding effective supervision within the social work profession, this study was interested in understanding what, if any, relationship existed between educational background and supervision effectiveness. Additionally, given the broad and varying standards relating to supervision, this study attempted to identify effective supervision practices that contribute to effective supervisory practices. To answer these questions, a large human service organization that provides case management services in Pennsylvania was selected to conduct this study. Participants included supervisors and supervisees within one of five agency departments including mental health, intellectual disabilities, early intervention, aging, and long term services, as well as children and youth services.

All 447 supervisees and 95 supervisors within the aforementioned departments were invited to participate in an online survey. While the supervisors participated in a brief online survey summarizing their supervisory experiences the supervisees completed the MCSS-26 © in addition to answering descriptive questions relating to their supervisory experiences. Power analysis was then determined by using G Power and with the resulting sample required testing for significance at the 0.05 level, a minimum sample size of 27 was needed for each group. Using results of the MCSS-26 © and SPSS, overall supervision scores were tabulated where the higher the score, the more effective the supervision. After obtaining their scores the participants were grouped by educational background (social work and non-social work) after which mean scores were compared using SPSS to test for statistical significance. Overall supervision scores were then grouped by effective and ineffective supervision while attributes of supervision (frequency, length, modality, method, etc.) were compared by using SPSS to assess for any statistically significant differences. Finally, supervisee data were grouped by those required to experience supervision and those not required to experience supervision. An analysis with the SPSS, groups were then compared to determine a statistically significant difference in overall mean supervision scores between the groups.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

To assess the relationship between educational background and supervision effectiveness as well as to better understand the tenets of effective supervision, 92 supervisors and 447 case managers were invited to participate in an online survey addressing different aspects of supervision based upon an on-line version of the MCSS-26. Participants were employees of a large Pennsylvania human services organization rending fee for service case management. The agency employs more than 800 individuals of which approximately 500 of whom are supervisors or supervisees (case managers) who render service within one of five case management departments including children and youth services (CYS), aging and long term living (OLTL), early intervention (EI), intellectual disability (ID), and mental health (MH). Services are rendered within one of the agency's 17 locations throughout Pennsylvania. Each supervisee (case manager) is assigned a supervisor that is determined by agency leadership. Supervisors, in turn, are responsible for the oversight of the supervisee's work and service rendered.

Of the 92 supervisors invited to participate, 47 supervisors responded for a response rate of 51%. Only 35 ff the 47 supervisor respondents had corresponding supervisee data. Because the current study focused on the relationship between the educational background of the supervisor and the effectiveness of their supervision, only those supervisors linked to supervisees who completed the MCSS-26 © were included in the analyses. Therefore, the final sample included 35 supervisors. Within the group of 35 supervisors, five identified as having an educational background in social work while the other 30 supervisors did not identify as having an educational background in social work. A majority of the participating supervisors were female (83%) with an average age of 41.69 years. Also, a majority (80%) of the participating

supervisors were within either the intellectual disability (ID) or mental health (MH) departments with the remaining supervisors working within the departments of children and youth (CYS), early intervention (EI), and aging and long term services (OLTL). Most of the supervisors had been employed with the agency between three and less than eight years (34%) or between eight and less than 15 years (29%). The remaining supervisors had been with the agency for less than one year (6%), one to less than three years (14%), or 15 and more years (17%).

Supervisors provided a variety of information specific to areas of supervision. This information included their years of experience in delivering supervision and their preferences in delivering supervision which included modality (face to face or not), method (one to one, group, or some combination), model (developmental, combination, don't know /none, other), and their overall level of satisfaction with their process of supervision (dissatisfied, neither satisfied or dissatisfied, or satisfied). Most of the supervisors have been delivering supervision between three and less than eight years (34%) or between eight and less than 15 years (32%). Most of the supervisors (77%) delivered supervision face to face with most using some combination of one to one and group sessions (53%). In terms of the model used by the supervisor, 85% reported either not knowing or not using a formal model in which to deliver supervision. Only 6% of supervisors reported using a formal model (developmental) while delivering supervision. Finally, 88% of the respondents reported being satisfied with their current process for supervision.

Table 1 lists all 35 supervisor responses organized by educational background (social work and non-social work).

Table 1

Supervisor Demographic Information

Variable	Social Work (n=5)		Non-Social Work (n=30)		Total (n=35)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex						
Male	0	0	5	17	5	14
Female	5	100	24	80	29	83
Other	0	0	1	3	1	3
Age Mean [SD]	42.80 [11.41]		41.50 [12.11]		41.69 [11.91]	
Agency Dept						
CYS	2	40	1	3	3	8
EI	0	0	2	7	2	6
ID	1	20	16	53	17	49
MH	2	40	9	30	11	31
OLTL	0	0	2	7	2	6
Years with Agency						
Less than 1	0	0	2	7	2	6
1 to < 3	2	40	3	10	5	14
3 to < 8	2	40	10	33	12	34
8 to < 15	1	20	9	30	10	29
15 and more	0	0	6	20	6	17
Years Delivering Supervision						
Less than 1	0	0	2	7	2	6
1 to < 3	1	20	4	13	5	14
3 to < 8	1	20	11	37	12	34
8 to < 15	2	40	9	30	11	32
15 and more	1	20	4	13	5	14
Modality						
Face to face	5	100	22	73	27	77
Some combination	0	0	8	27	8	23
Method Used						
One to one	2	40	13	45	15	44
Group	0	0	1	3	1	3
Some combination	3	60	15	52	18	53
Model Used						
Development	1	20	1	3	2	6
Don’t Know/ None	4	80	26	87	30	85
Other	0	0	3	10	3	9

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

Supervisor Demographic Information

Variable	Social Work (n=5)		Non-Social Work (n=30)		Total (n=35)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Satisfaction with Supervision	1	20	1	3	2	7
Dissatisfied	1	20	3	10	4	11
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	3	60	26	87	29	88
Satisfied						

In addition to the supervisor respondents, 143 of the 447 supervisees (case managers) participated in the survey either in part or in full resulting in a response rate of 32%. A final sample of 136 supervisees sufficiently completed the survey to successfully generate an overall supervision score including scores for normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational) functions of supervision. Table 2 illustrates all supervisee respondents grouped by educational discipline (social work and non-social work). In total, there were 23 supervisees with a degree in social work and 113 supervisees with a non-social work degree. Like the supervisor group, most respondents were female (90%) with an average overall age of 37.55 years. Supervisees with a degree in social work were about four years younger than those without a social work degree. Most of the respondents (82%) worked within the intellectual disability (ID) and mental health (health) fields while the remaining 18% worked within the children and youth (CYS), early intervention (EI), and aging and long term services (OLTL) departments. While supervisees' length of time at the agency (measured in years) varied from less than one year to 10 ore more years, most (44%) of the supervisees reported that their time with their current supervisor (measured in years) was less than one year. Another 35% reported

being assigned to their current supervisor for one to less than three years with the remaining 21% being assigned to their current supervisor from three to more than five years.

Table 2

Supervisee Demographic Information

Variable	Social Work (n=23)		Non-Social Work (n=113)		Total (n=136)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex						
Male	2	9	10	9	12	9
Female	21	91	102	90	123	90
Other	0	0	1	1	1	1
Age Mean [SD]	34.39 [10.92]		38.21 [10.79]		37.55 [10.87]	
Agency Dept						
CYS	4	17	9	8	13	10
EI	0	0	5	4	5	3
ID	10	43	59	52	69	51
MH	7	31	35	31	42	31
OLTL	2	9	5	4	7	5
Years with Agency						
Less than 1	8	35	31	27	39	29
1 to < 3	4	17	34	30	38	28
3 to < 5	2	9	13	12	15	11
5 to < 10	8	35	26	23	34	25
10 and more	1	4	9	8	10	7
Years with Current Supervisor						
Less than 1	13	57	47	42	60	44
1 to < 3	7	30	40	35	47	35
3 to < 5	2	9	10	9	12	8
5 and more	1	4	16	14	17	13

The Relationship between Education and Supervision Effectiveness

Hypothesis 1: Supervisors with an educational background in social work will deliver more effective supervision when compared to supervisors without an educational background in social work. To determine the relationship between education and the effectiveness of supervision delivery, supervisor and supervisee data were paired. As previously

noted, only 35 of the 45 supervisor respondent had corresponding supervisee data and qualified for subsequent scoring; similarly only 71 of the 136 supervisee respondents had corresponding supervisor data and also qualified for subsequent scoring. Therefore a total of 71 unique supervisor-supervisee pairs generated overall supervision effectiveness scores as well as scores for normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational) functions of supervision. Results generated from the MCSS-26 © provided an overall supervision effectiveness score of which a higher score indicated more effective supervision. The three domains of supervision, normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational), each generated results that comprised the overall supervision score. As determined by Winstanley and White (2017), effective supervision is achieved by a score of 73 or greater.

While the supervisors' sample exceeded initial projections from power analysis testing, the number of supervisees with a supervisor having a social work degree did not achieve the requirement 27; rather, only 10% or seven supervisees paired a supervisor with a degree in social work. The remaining 64 pairs included a supervisor with a non-social work degree and statistical analysis using *t*-testing, therefore, was not conducted due to insufficient and unequal sample sizes between groups. Only descriptive statistics including a comparison of supervision scores and scores for normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational) aspects of supervision were utilized.

Because needed sample sizes were not achieved, hypothesis testing was not completed for hypothesis 1. Instead, Table 3 includes descriptive statistics of supervision scores for both supervisors with and without degrees in social work. As depicted within Table 3, supervisors without degrees in social work achieved greater overall mean and median supervision scores.

However, the standard deviation for supervisors without social work degrees was 15.68 while the standard deviation for social work supervisors was 5.26 indicating greater variability in scoring for the non-social work supervisors. Supervisors without degrees in social work generated higher scores for all tested domains of supervision including normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational) than the supervisors with social work degrees.

Table 3

Supervision Scores for Supervisors With and Without Social Work Degrees

Scores	Social Work Supervisor (n=7)	Non-Social Work Supervisor (n=64)	Total (n=71)
Overall			
Mean	71.00	77.78	77.11
Median	72.00	80.00	79.00
Mode	78.00, 72.00	76.00	76.00
[SD]	[5.26]	[15.68]	[15.11]
Normative			
Mean	22.00	24.81	24.54
Median	22.00	26.00	26.00
Mode	22.00	27.00	27
[SD]	[3.85]	[6.62]	[6.45]
Restorative			
Mean	29.71	31.89	31.68
Median	30.00	33.00	32.00
Mode	30.00	39.00	30.00
[SD]	[2.55]	[6.81]	[6.54]
Formative			
Mean	19.29	21.08	20.90
Median	21.00	21.50	21.00
Mode	21.00	21.00	21.00
[SD]	[2.55]	[5.41]	[5.22]

Scores for non-social work supervisors ranged from 21 to 104 while scores for social work supervisors ranged from 64 to 78. While non-social work supervisors had greater scoring ranges, 47 of the 64 (73%) scores achieved the benchmark of effective supervision with a score

of 73 and greater. With only seven scores were available for social work supervisors, only two of the seven (29%) scores were identified as achieving effective supervision. The remaining five scores (71%) did not achieve effective supervision compared to the 17 (27%) scores of the non-social work supervisors.

Hypothesis 2: Supervisees with an educational background in social work will rate supervision as being more effective when compared to supervisees without an educational background in social work. To determine whether supervisees who have a degree in social work rated supervision more effectively than their non-social-work counterparts, overall supervision scores including normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational) scores were compared. No statistical analysis beyond a comparison of supervision scores was conducted. Original power analysis testing required a minimum sample of 27 participants in each group; because this threshold was not met, additional statistical analysis was not completed. When comparing overall supervision scores between supervisees with degrees in social work and those without degrees in social work, supervisees with degrees in social work rated supervision less effectively than their non-social work counterparts. Supervisees with degrees in social work had overall lower scores than supervisees without degrees in social work, however, the standard deviation between scores for supervisees without social work degrees was greater indicating greater variation in scoring. When comparing the three domains of supervision including normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational), both groups scored formative functions nearly identical while normative and restorative scores exhibited greater differences. Supervisees without social work degrees reported higher normative scores than supervisees with social work degrees. Regarding

restorative functions, there exhibited greater variation in scoring for supervisees with social work. Table 4 includes a summary of supervision scores.

Table 4

Supervision Scores for Supervisees With and Without Degrees in Social Work

Scores	Social Work Supervisee (n=23)	Non-Social Work Supervisee (n=113)	Total (n=136)
Overall			
Mean	74.74	76.62	76.31
Median	76.00	78.00	78.00
Mode	68.00, 78.00	82.00	82.00
[SD]	[12.53]	[14.53]	[14.22]
Normative			
Mean	24.13	24.26	24.24
Median	24.00	25.00	25.00
Mode	22.00	27.00	27.00
[SD]	[5.14]	[6.18]	[6.02]
Restorative			
Mean	29.91	31.48	31.21
Median	30.00	32.00	32.00
Mode	38.00	34.00	34.00
[SD]	[5.78]	[6.50]	[6.38]
Formative			
Mean	20.70	20.89	20.86
Median	21.00	21.00	21.00
Mode	21.00	21.00	21.00
[SD]	[4.15]	[4.67]	[4.59]

Exploring Education and Effectiveness of Supervision. To examine differences in education and the effectiveness of supervision, additional comparisons were conducted. Specifically, of the five supervisors with degrees in social work, three had a bachelor's degree while two had a master's degree. For those supervisors without social work degrees, 24 had no master's degree while six had a master's degree in another field. All groups were of similar age range 41 and 43 years of age. Not surprising, those with master's degrees were older at 43 years of age while those without master's or social work degrees were the youngest at 41 years of age.

Supervisors with a bachelor's degree were in the mid-range at 42 years of age. Overall supervision scores between groups including scores for the supervision domains of normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational) were computed. Supervisors without degrees in social work and master's degrees had the overall highest supervision scores with non-social work/non-master's degrees supervisors reporting higher scores than both groups of social work supervisors. Both groups of supervisors without social group degrees also had the greatest variation in scoring. Supervisors without degrees in social work but with master's degrees exhibited the highest scores in all areas except for the restorative (supportive) function of supervision. Supervisors without degrees in social and without master's degrees had the highest restorative scores while supervisors with degrees in social work had lower scores. Supervisors with bachelor's degrees in social work had the lowest overall scores. Table 5 includes scores for each group and each domain.

Table 5

Supervisor Education and Supervision Scores

	Social Work		Non-Social Work	
Scores	BSW (n=4)	MSW (n=3)	No Master's Degree (n=50)	Master's Degree (n=14)
Overall				
Mean	68.75	74.00	76.70	81.64
Median	66.50	72.00	80.00	79.50
Mode	N/A	72.00	83.00	96.00
[SD]	[5.54]	[2.83]	[16.04]	[13.62]
Normative				
Mean	21.00	23.33	23.86	28.21
Median	21.00	22.00	25.00	27.50
Mode	N/A	N/A	27.00	27.00
[SD]	[4.30]	[2.62]	[6.99]	[3.32]

(Continued)

Table 5 (Continued)

Supervision Education and Supervision Scores

	Social Work		Non-Social Work	
Scores	BSW (n=4)	MSW (n=3)	No Master's Degree (n=50)	Master's Degree (n=14)
Restorative				
Mean	29.75	29.67	32.06	31.29
Median	29.00	30.00	33.00	30.00
Mode	N/A	30.00	38.00	39.00
[SD]	[3.34]	[0.47]	[6.58]	[7.53]
Formative				
Mean	18.00	21.00	20.78	22.14
Median	18.50	21.00	21.00	22.50
Mode	N/A	21.00	21.00	23.00
[SD]	[2.74]	[0.00]	[5.70]	[4.02]

One final quantitative comparison between the educational background of the supervisee and the educational background of the supervisor was conducted. The 71 supervisor-supervisee pairs were divided into four groups as follows: supervisor with a social work degrees/supervisee with a social work degree (Sup SW/Visee SW), supervisor with a social work degree/supervisee without a social work degree (Sup SW/Visee NonSW), supervisor without a social work degree/supervisee with a social work degree (Sup NonSW/Visee SW), and supervisor without a social work degree/supervisee without a social work degree (Sup NonSW/Visee NonSW). When comparing overall supervision scores and the normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational) domains, supervisor pairs without degrees in social work recorded higher supervision scores while supervisors with degrees in social work recorded the lower scores. Supervision was viewed as being more effective when delivered by supervisors without social work degrees. Supervisees with social work degrees appear to experience supervision that is more effective when the supervision is delivered by a supervisor

without a degree in social work than one holding a degree in social work. Restorative (supportive) functions of supervision were lowest for supervisors and supervisees with degrees in social work. Table 6 provides scores for all groups and domains of supervision.

Table 6

Supervisor-Supervisee Supervision Scores

Scores	Sup SW Visee SW (n=2)	Sup SW Visee NonSW (n=5)	Sup NonSW Visee SW (n=9)	Sup NonSW Visee NonSW (n=55)
Overall				
Mean	73.00	70.20	77.33	77.85
Median	73.00	72.00	80.00	80.00
Mode	N/A	72.00	N/A	96.00
[SD]	[5.00]	[5.15]	[10.04]	[16.41]
Normative				
Mean	24.50	21.00	25.22	24.75
Median	24.50	21.00	26.00	27.00
Mode	N/A	N/A	26.00	27.00
[SD]	[2.50]	[3.85]	[8.82]	[6.97]
Restorative				
Mean	28.00	30.40	30.33	32.15
Median	28.00	30.00	31.00	33.00
Mode	N/A	30.00	38.00	39.00
[SD]	[2.00]	[2.42]	[6.24]	[6.87]
Formative				
Mean	20.50	18.80	21.78	20.96
Median	20.50	21.00	22.00	21.00
Mode	N/A	21.00	21.00	21.00
[SD]	[0.50]	[2.86]	[4.39]	[5.55]

Effective and Ineffective Supervision

Hypothesis 3: Supervisees with few years of agency employment will experience more effective supervision than supervisees with numerous years of agency employment. In addition to understanding the relationship between the effectiveness of supervision and educational background, this study aimed to compare aspects of effective supervision with ineffective supervision. To meet this goal, results from the 136 supervisee respondents were

divided into two groups effective supervision and ineffective supervision. As suggested by Winstanley and White (2017), overall supervision scores of 73 and greater correlate with effective supervision. Conversely, for purposes of this study, scores of less than 73 are considered to be ineffective supervision.

Of the 136 respondents, 90 reported scores of 73 and greater while 46 reported scores of less than 73. Areas compared included years of employment with the agency, years with current supervisor, the frequency of supervision, modality (in person or not), method (one to one, group, etc.), and length of supervision. Having achieved the desired minimum sample size of 27, a statistical analysis using Fisher's exact test was conducted. As Table 7 shows, the only area proving to be significantly different between effective and ineffective supervision was years with the agency (p=0.001). Results indicate that supervisee duration of agency employment demonstrated a significant relationship with supervision whether or not supervision while the frequency, modality, method, and length of supervision did not have a significant relationship with supervision effectiveness.

Table 7

Comparison of Effective and Ineffective Supervision

Variable	Effective Supervision (n=90)	Ineffective Supervision (n=46)	Total (n=136)	*p*-value
Years With Agency				
Less than 1	32 40	7 27	39 29	
1 to < 3	28 16	10 30	38 27	0.001
3 to < 5	11 8	4 13	15 12	
5 to < 10	13 32	21 23	34 24	
10 and more	6 4	4 7	10 7	

(Continued)

Table 7 (Continued)

Comparison of Effective and Ineffective Supervision

Variable	Effective Supervision (n=90)		Ineffective Supervision (n=46)		Total (n=136)		*p*-value
Years With Current Supervisor							
Less than 1	42	60	18	42	60	45	
1 to < 3	33	28	14	36	47	34	0.286
3 to < 5	8	8	4	9	12	9	
5 to < 10	6	4	9	12	15	11	
10 and more	1	0	1	1	2	1	
Frequency of Supervision							
Every Week	22	24	6	13	28	21	
Every 2 Weeks	30	33	17	37	47	35	0.328
Monthly	33	37	19	41	52	38	
Every 2-3 Mon	3	4	4	9	7	5	
More than 3 Month	2	2	0	0	2	1	
Modality							
In-person	73	81	38	83	111	82	
Phone	1	1	1	2	2	1	0.845
Combination	15	17	6	13	21	16	
Other	1	1	1	2	2	1	
Method							
One to One	68	76	36	78	104	76	
Group	3	3	5	11	8	6	0.090
Some Combination	19	21	5	11	24	18	
Length of Supervision							
< 30 minutes	12	13	7	15	19	14	
30 to 60	53	59	28	61	81	60	0.901
> 60 minutes	25	28	11	24	36	26	

Given the significant relationship between supervision effectiveness and supervisee period of employment with the agency, additional statistical analyses were completed to determine the overall relationship between the duration of agency employment and the effectiveness of supervision. By using SPSS, Cramer's V score was calculated and determined to be 0.361. The degree of freedom (df) was calculated to be 4. Dividing the square root of

0.361 by 4 generated an effect size of 0.15, which, per Cohen, indicated a medium effect size at 4 degrees of freedom (Field, 2018). Table 8 provides a closer look and comparison of the median supervision scores for supervisees' employment duration at the agency. Overall, supervisees who have been employed at the agency for less than five years reported supervision scores greater than 78 while supervisees employed at the agency between five and less than 10 years reported the lowest scores at 68.00. Supervisees employed at the agency for 10 or more years developed an overall supervision score of 73.00. Within all scoring domains including normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational), supervisees employed at the agency for less than five years and 10 or more years report higher scores than supervisees who have been employed at the agency between five and less than 10 years. Supervisees at the agency between five and less than 10 years reported the lowest scores in all domains.

Table 8

Supervisee Employment Length and Median Supervision Scores

Year(s) Employed	Overall Score	Normative	Restorative	Formative
Less than 1 (n=39)	80.00	26.00	32.00	21.00
1 to < 3 (n=38)	79.00	26.50	32.00	21.50
3 to < 5 (n=15)	80.00	25.00	34.00	21.00
5 to < 10 (n=34)	68.00	21.50	29.50	19.50
10 and more (n=10)	73.00	25.50	32.00	20.50

The one-sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test attempted to validate the hypothesis that supervisees with fewer years' agency employment will report greater supervision effectiveness

when compared to supervisees with more years' agency employment. The overall median supervision score was 78. Each supervisee group median score was tested by using the median score of 78. Only the group of supervisees employed by the agency from five to less than 10 years reported a result with a significance score of p=0.000. Because the remaining four groups did not report a score with a significant difference from the median score of 78, the null hypothesis was accepted. Results of this study indicate that supervisees with an employment duration of fewer than five years AND more than ten years experience effective supervision not significantly different from the median score of 78.

Hypothesis 4: Supervisees required to be supervised at specified frequencies will find supervision to be less effective than supervisees not required to be supervised at specified frequencies. The final goal of the current study attempted to determine the relationship between supervision requirements and supervision effectiveness. Specifically, supervision requirements included the frequency of supervision. The governing state departments for children and youth (CYS) and mental health (MH) mandate that supervision occurs at a required frequency per month. State departments governing early intervention (EI), intellectual disability (IDD), and aging and long term services (OLTL) impose no such requirements. Supervisees were divided into two groups: supervision "required" and supervision "not required". Fifty-five supervisees saw required supervision frequency while the remaining 81 did not.

Because sample sizes exceeded 27 in each group, the data were tested for normality by using the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine appropriate statistical analysis. With Shapiro-Wilk results of 0.091 and 0.008 for supervision required and supervision not required respectively, data were not normally distributed and therefore the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was

conducted. Table 9 depicts resulting significance testing using the Mann-Whitney U. While there was no significant difference in overall supervision, normative (administrative), or formative (educational) scoring between groups, a significant difference in scoring within the normative (administrative) domain did result. Specifically, exact two-tailed significance was achieved at the 0.05 level (p=0.024). To determine the effect size, small (.01), medium (0.3), or large (0.5), Z (2.260) was divided by the square root of N (136) thus achieving an r-value of 0.194 or small effect size (Field, 2018).

Table 9

Mann-Whitney U Testing Supervision Required and MCSS-26 Score

	Overall Score	Normative	Restorative	Formative
Mann-Whitney U	1830.500	1719.000	1970.000	2025.500
Z	-1.761	-2.260	-1.144	-0.905
Exact Sig. 2-tailed	0.078	0.024	0.254	0.368

Table 10 includes mean rank supervision scores for both groups. Generally, supervisees who were not required to participate in supervision reported higher scores for supervision including all three domains of supervision. Also, satisfaction with supervision was compared between both groups. Of the supervisees not required to participate in supervision, 87% reported being satisfied with supervision while only 72% of the group required to participate in supervision reported being satisfied with supervision. Despite these differences, overall scoring was not statistically different. Because the overall scores for supervision proved to be not statistically significant between the groups, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 10

Supervision Required and Mean Rank Supervision Scores

Variable	Supervision Required (n=55)	Supervision Not Required (n=81)
Total MCSS Score Mean Rank	61.28	73.40
Normative Mean Rank	59.25	74.78
Restorative Mean Rank	63.82	71.68
Formative Mean Rank	64.83	70.99

Summary

The current study aimed to determine if a relationship existed between an educational degree and supervision effectiveness. Specifically, the intent was to determine the relationship between having a social work degree and supervision effectiveness. While significance testing to compare groups was not performed due to small sample sizes, supervision scores for overall supervision effectiveness were quantitatively compared between groups (supervisors with and without a social work degree and supervisees with and without a social work degree). Generally, mean supervision (effectiveness scores) tended to be higher for both supervisors and supervisees *without* social work degrees. Both supervisors and supervisees with degrees in social work had *lower* mean supervision scores for all three domains of supervision including normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational). When comparing differences between supervisors with master's degrees in social work and supervisors with bachelor's degrees, the supervisors with master's degrees had reported higher overall mean supervision scores. However, though, both groups of supervisors *without* degrees in social work

recorded higher supervision scores while the supervisors with *non-social work master's degrees* reporting the highest overall supervision scores.

Beyond education and supervision effectiveness, this study also aimed to gain a more complete understanding of effective supervision. When comparing effective supervision with ineffective supervision, only the duration of employment with the agency proved significant. Specifically, supervisees who had been employed at the agency from five to less than 10 years scored supervision as least effective when compared with colleagues who had been with the agency either less than five years or 10 or more years. Additional testing indicated time with the agency had a moderate effect size on supervision effectiveness. Supervisees employed at the agency for five to less than ten years scored supervision the least effective.

Another area of supervision effectiveness explored involved required supervision frequencies. To determine if there was a relationship between required supervisory frequencies and supervision effectiveness, supervision scores between supervisees required to engage in supervision and supervisees not required to engage in supervision were compared. Mann-Whitney U testing proved that the only significant difference between groups was for normative (administrative) functions of supervision and not for overall supervision effectiveness. Given this result, the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between supervision requirements and the effectiveness of supervision was accepted.

This study intended to determine if a relationship existed between educational background and supervision effectiveness as well as to gain greater insight into effective supervision practices. Due to small sample sizes, significance testing which compared educational groups and supervision effectiveness was not conducted; however, descriptive statistics indicate that social work supervisors infrequently achieved effective supervision scores

compared with their non-social work supervisor counterparts. The obtained results suggest opportunities for growth within the educational process of social work practitioners, particularly as relating to the process of supervision. In addition, results indicating effective supervision as it relates to supervisee employment duration provides vital information to agency leaders, which might be used to create opportunities for growth within the organization. The remaining chapters include an analysis of findings and offer recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 5: Analysis

Introduction

This study aimed to gain greater insight into the process of effective supervision as well as to evaluate the connection between achieved levels of education and supervision effectiveness. Previous literature focusing on the role education plays in supervision is rare, especially as related to the social work profession. While the social work profession recognizes the value of supervision and the role it plays in developing efficient practitioners, there is little understanding of the practices by which social workers deliver effective supervision. In addition, although qualitative studies exploring effective supervision are numerous, few have utilized empirical evidence to determine effective supervision practices. Therefore, this study attempted to address an in-depth understanding of effective supervision, as well as an empirical determination of education level and the effectiveness of supervision. Using the MCSS-26 © as a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of supervision, supervisors and supervisees were invited to participate in an online survey. Results from 35 supervisors and 136 supervisees were combined into 71 supervisor-supervisee pairs to better understand the relationship between educational levels and the effectiveness of supervision. Following is an in-depth analysis of this study's results including its connection with previous research and implications for practice.

Discussion: The Relationship between Education and Supervision Effectiveness

The purpose of this study was two-fold: to better understand effective supervision and to determine the relationship between educational background and the effectiveness of supervision. As previously stated, much of the literature concerning the profession of social work and supervision is largely theoretical in nature. Both Munson (2002) and Kadushin and Harkness (2002) discuss the development of supervision within the social work profession in their texts

Handbook of Clinical Social Work Supervision and *Supervision in Social Work*. The authors include information ranging from Robinson's (1936) text, *Supervision in Social Casework* in which supervision served an educational process, to Towle's (1945) viewpoint that supervision served an administrative purpose, to the profession's current stance on supervision in which the process of supervision involves three separate yet inter-related functions of supervision: educational, administrative, and supportive. The objective of social work supervision is to improve supervisees' abilities so they, in turn, will be able to deliver effective and efficient services to those in need (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). Subsequent studies involving supervision have examined the process from a qualitative perspective and proposed models in which the process of supervision is beneficial not only to supervisees but, also to individuals served.

Clearly, the social work profession has demonstrated great interest in the process and evolution of supervision. Given this extreme interest, it was hypothesized that supervisors with educational backgrounds in social work would deliver more effective supervision when compared to their non-social work counterparts. Although hypothesis testing was prevented due to insufficient sample sizes, scores were compared using descriptive statistics of central tendency. The results of this study indicated those *without* degrees in social work delivered more effective supervision. With overall scores ranging from 64-78 and a standard deviation of 5.26, social work supervisors inconsistently achieved the benchmark of "effective supervision" (73) as defined by Winstanley and White (2017). In fact, of the seven scores derived from supervisors with social work degrees, effective supervision (scores of 73 and greater) were only achieved twice (28%). Supervisors without degrees in social work achieved scores ranging from 58-104. Of the 64 scores derived from supervisors without degrees in social work, effective supervision

occurred 47 times (73%). In fact, *non-social work supervisors* consistently achieved *higher* scores in all three domains of supervision measured. The smallest difference occurred within the formative (educational) domain, while the normative (administrative) functions of supervision recorded the greatest differences.

Given these results, one might question the experience of both groups in terms of age or years delivering supervisory services. Those who are older or have more experience in delivering supervision should be more likely to deliver effective supervision. When comparing both groups by age and by years' experience in delivering supervision, the group having backgrounds in social work (on average) were one year older than the group without backgrounds in social work. In addition, as Table 1 depicts, experience in delivering supervision between both groups remained similar.

Perhaps the score anomalies were due to the educational level of the supervisors, or perhaps a difference existed between supervisors with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees in social work. Table 6 provided a closer look at the degree level for each supervisor (three bachelor level social workers (BSW) and two master level social workers (MSW) and subsequent scoring. Of the non-social work supervisors, 24 had bachelor's degrees and six had master's degrees. Those with non-social work degrees had higher supervision scores. When comparing scores of supervisors with MSW degrees and those with non-social work master's degrees, supervisors with non-social work degrees scored higher in all aspects of supervision. Supervisors with non-social work master's degrees reported 14 overall supervision scores ranging from 51 to 103. Of the 14 scores, they achieved a score of effective supervision (73 or greater) on 12 occasions (86%). Supervisors with MSW degrees included three scores and achieved effective supervision once (33%). When comparing scores of supervisors with BSW

degrees and those with non-social work bachelor's degrees, supervisors with non-social work degrees scored higher in all aspects of supervision. Non-social work supervisors with bachelor's degrees included 50 overall supervision scores ranging from 21 to 104. Of the 50 scores, effective supervision (73 and greater) occurred 35 instances (70%). Supervisors with BSW degrees included four overall supervision scores ranging from 64-68. Scoring available indicated that supervisors with BSW achieved did not achieve the threshold of effective supervision. In fact, when comparing supervisors with MSW and BSW, supervisors with master's degrees reported higher scores in each domain.

What could account for the difference in scoring? Perhaps the additional training and education MSW supervisors receive contributed to the differences in scoring between supervisors with BSW and MSW degrees. While the additional training supervisors with an MSW receive might explain the difference in scoring for a supervisor with a BSW, the extra training does not explain the difference in scoring between an MSW supervisor and a non-social work bachelor's level supervisor. The difference might be explained by a relationship factor. Several qualitative studies have determined that some supervisees viewed supervision more positively when they maintained a positive relationship with their supervisor (Benton-Dill & Williams, 2017; Pack, 2012; McPherson, Frederioc, & McNamara, 2016; Egan, Maidmont, & Connelly, 2018). In that case, the social work supervisors involved in this study might have had difficulty developing relationships with their supervisees.

Another consideration for the difference in scoring might be related to the expectations of the supervisee. Perhaps there is a connection between shared educational backgrounds regarding supervisor-supervisee and supervision scores. Table 6 addressed this relationship. Results from the 71 pairs of supervisors/supervisees were divided into four groups (supervisors/ supervisees

with and without educational backgrounds in social work). Much like with overall scoring, non-social work supervisors achieved higher overall supervision scores than their social work counterparts, even when examining supervisee educational background. In fact, the group having nine supervisors without social work background/supervisees with social work background pairs scored supervision delivery more favorably than the group having two supervisors with social work backgrounds/supervisees with social work backgrounds. More importantly, the group of supervisors without social work backgrounds/supervisees with social work backgrounds scored higher in *all* three domains than the group of supervisors-supervisees with shared social work educational backgrounds.

An analysis of both groups of social work supervisors indicates two pairs of supervisees with social work backgrounds and five pairs of supervisees with non-social work educational backgrounds. While the supervisees with social work educational backgrounds rated the domains of normative (administrative), formative (educational), and overall supervision higher, the supervisees without social work educational backgrounds rated restorative (supportive) functions higher. Interestingly, the supervisor with social work educational background/supervisee with social work educational background pairs reported the *lowest* overall score for the restorative (supportive) domain of supervision, a surprising result given the values of the social work profession.

The NASW Code of Ethics (2017) outlines the value and importance of relationships. Specifically, "social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities," (p. 7). Beyond the NASW Code of Ethics, the NASW Best Practice Standards in Social Work Supervision (2013) address self-care. Social workers

delivering supervisory services should be mindful of job-related stress and ensure that supervisees have the needed support and resources to address this issue. Despite the value of human relationships and best practice standards relating to self-care, it would appear that individuals with social work educational backgrounds had more difficulty developing relationships and providing opportunities for self-care given the lower scores for restorative (supportive) functions of supervision.

This result also poses questions of awareness. How aware were the social work supervisors of the NASW Standards in Social Work Supervision? How aware and connected were the social work supervisors to the NASW Code of Ethics? Again, any ability to conclude is limited given several mitigating factors including the small and unequal sample sizes, the design of the study (a singular point in time and quantitative approach), and the lone organization within which the study was conducted. Or perhaps the differences were caused by some other untested factor not previously considered? Perhaps, MCSS-26 © is an ineffective tool for measuring social work supervision effectiveness. Had this study included follow-up participant interviews, the answers to these questions might have been determined.

In addition to assessing supervision scores based upon supervisor educational background, this study also analyzed the differences in supervision scoring based upon supervisee educational background. Supervisees having social work educational backgrounds were compared with supervisees not having social work educational backgrounds. As Table 4 demonstrates, supervisees without social work educational backgrounds rated normative (administrative) and restorative (supportive) aspects of supervision higher than the supervisees with social work educational backgrounds. While scores for the formative (educational) domains were identical, the largest difference between both groups occurred within the

restorative (supportive) domain. Kadushin, et. al. (2009) found that social work supervisees favored supervision which addressed supportive and educational domains but were less satisfied with the administrative aspects of supervision. Perhaps social work supervisees with backgrounds in social work feel they need more support than their counterparts, the supervisees without social work educational backgrounds. Given their experiences and educational background, perhaps social work supervisees expect that supervision should entail more supportive features. While these questions cannot be answered within the confines of this study, it should be noted that *both* groups, supervisees with educational backgrounds in social work and supervisees without educational backgrounds in social work reported experiencing effective supervision at similar frequencies. Supervisees with social work degrees reported effective supervision 15 out of 23 instances (65%) and supervisees without social work degrees reported effective supervision 75 out of 113 occurrences (66%).

Discussion: Understanding Effective Supervision

Another goal of this study was to better understand effective supervision practices including frequency, duration, modality (in person or distance), and method (one-to-one or group). Outcomes from the 136 supervisees' scores provided similar results to the work of Egan, Maidment, and Connolly (2018) as well as Wilkins and Antonopoulou (2019); their studies took place in Australia and the United Kingdom, respectively. Similar to the results from these previous research this study determined that most supervisees (94%) responded they experienced supervision minimally once per month or a variation of weekly/bi-weekly. Only 6% of the supervisees participated in supervision less than once per month. Most supervisees (82%) had in-person supervision sessions, while many (76%) participated in one-to-one sessions with their supervisors. Also similar to the findings of Egan, Maidment and Connolly and Wilkins and

Antonpolou, this study found that most supervisees (60%) experienced supervision that lasted 30 to 60 minutes in duration, while some supervisees (24%) reported supervision lasting longer than 60 minutes and even fewer supervisees (16%) lasting less than 30 minutes. Given these similar results, it would appear that uniform supervisory practices are carried out in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

Table 7 provided a comparison of supervisees reporting effective and ineffective supervision. Frequency, duration, modality, and method of supervision scores were compared to determine any statistical difference between groups. A results analysis indicated that frequency, duration, modality, and method had no significant relationship regarding supervisory effectiveness. Ramifications of frequency, duration, method, and modality on the effectiveness of supervision appear to reflect the *what,* not the *how* of supervision. The results of this study mirror the findings of Bedner and Dyheman (2016). When exploring the effectiveness of cyber supervision, researchers generally have found no significant difference in the effectiveness of supervision that was carried out face to face or by utilizing some form of technology. This finding would seem to imply that supervisory effectiveness depends upon *what* is discussed during the sessions and not on the mechanics (*when/where/how*) of supervision.

A belief that the *what* is more important than the *how* of supervision is further exemplified by the results regarding supervisee duration of agency employment. While no statistical difference was found between effective and ineffective supervision when measuring the mechanics of supervision, a statistical difference was found when measuring the supervisee's duration of agency employment. In addition to the comparisons of frequency, duration, method, and modality, groups were also compared by the duration of agency employment and duration with the current supervisor. Most supervisees (80%) reported being assigned to their supervisor

for less than three years, while about half (56%) were employed at the agency for less than three years. As Table 8 depicts, these results imply that the longer individuals were employed at the agency, the less time they had been assigned to their current supervisor. While not addressed in this study, this result could be due to staff turnover or other organizational changes not captured in this study. Regardless, when examining both aspects - the length of time assigned to the supervisor and the duration of employment at the agency - only the duration of employment at the agency resulted in a significant difference between effective and ineffective supervision.

Additional statistical analysis of the duration of agency employment and supervision scores resulted in a significant difference for supervisees employed by the agency from five to less than 10 years. While supervisees employed at the agency less than three years resulted in the highest overall supervision scores, supervisees employed at the agency between five and less than 10 years had the lowest overall average supervision scores. In fact, the difference in duration of employment at the agency resulted in an overall moderate effect on supervision scores. Table 9 includes scoring for each group: employed less than one year, one to less than three years, three to less than five years, five to less than 10 years, and 10 or more years. Scoring for each domain of supervision (normative/administrative, restorative/supportive, formative/educational) calculated about four points lower for supervisees employed at the agency from five to less than 10 years. Unexpectedly, effective supervision scores *increased* for supervisees employed at the agency for more than 10 years. After all, previous research has found that supervision effectiveness decreases with professional experience (Wilkins & Antonopoulou, 2019; McCarthy, 2013; Egan, Maidment, & Connolly, 2018). When analyzing scores for supervisees employed at the agency fewer than five years, the scores are relatively consistent

among the groups of supervisees employed at the agency for less than one year, one to less than three years, and three to less than five years.

As Wilkins and Antonopoulou determined, recently hired supervisees found supervision to be more effective than experienced supervisees. Their finding could explain the results for supervisees employed at the agency from five to 10 years; however, their finding does not support the higher supervision scores reported by supervisees employed at the agency longer than 10 years. Supervision that decreases in effectiveness over time would seem to indicate that supervision effectiveness is linear in nature - the less experience a supervisee has, the more effective the supervision becomes. However, that is not the case with this current study. Instead, perhaps these results are due to a combination of factors including not only the *years' experience* of the supervisee but, the *needs* and *perceptions* of the supervisee as well. Bedford and Gehlert (2013) contend since abilities and needs change over time, the process of supervision should evolve as well. Rather than using linear models of supervision (like developmental models), the researchers suggest the use of more dynamic models, such as social role models of supervision. In doing so, supervisors adjust their practice and delivery of supervision to the changing needs, abilities, and competencies of the supervisee. Of course, to determine if a social role model impacts the effectiveness of supervision would require additional research and analysis.

Another result of this study is to consider the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. As several studies have indicated, the effectiveness of supervision is largely connected to the relationship between supervisor and supervisee (Pack, 2012; Benton-Dill & Williams, 2017; Egan, Maidmont, & Connolly, 2018; Falender, Shafranske, & Ofek, 2014). When examining domain scores of supervision, the restorative (supportive) score was the *highest* score for each group. In fact, the restorative (supportive) scores calculated about seven points

greater than normative (administrative) scores and nearly 12 points greater than formative (educational) scores for supervisees employed at the agency less than five years. For supervisees employed at the agency for 10 and more years, the difference is similar to restorative (supportive) scores being nearly seven points *higher* than normative (administrative) and nearly 12 points *higher* than formative (educational) scores.

With a closer analysis of the scores, the supervisees employed with the agency less than one year, one to less than three years, and three to less than five years had similar overall supervision scores (79-80) as well as similar normative (administrative), restorative (supportive) and formative (educational) scores. Conversely, while supervisees employed five to less than 10 years and those employed more than 10 years had about a five-point difference in overall supervision score (68 and 73, respectively), the scores for formative (educational) domains of supervision were fairly close. In fact, there was only a one-point difference in formative (educational) scoring, while the differences between normative (administrative) and restorative (supportive) domains were larger (4 and 2.5 points, respectively). If the normative score had been four points higher and the restorative score one point higher, the overall supervision score for supervisees employed at the agency between five and less than 10 years would have reached the threshold of effective supervision (a score of 73). Perhaps, through social role models of supervision in which supervisors adjust their delivery according to the needs of the supervisees, their relationships with their supervisors will be improved and they subsequently will experience more effective supervision. Additional research would be needed to determine any connection or impact on supervision outcomes. These questions could be explored using a mixed-methods study design.

In addition to examining supervision scores for supervisee length of time, it is also of importance to examine the number of respondents within each group. Specifically, Table 8 includes scoring for each group and the total number of participants for each group. The greatest number of respondents included supervisees employed less than one year with a total of 39 respondents. Supervisees employed at the agency between one and less than three years included 38 and three to less than five totaled 15 participants. Supervisee respondents employed between five and less than 10 years included 34 while the number of supervisee respondents employed 10 or more years included only 10 participants. Recognizing the relationship between worker intent to stay or leave and supervision (Collins-Camargo, Royse, 2010; Selden, 2010; Smith & Shields, 2013; McFadden, Campbell, & Taylor, 2015), these results are concerning given the low supervision scores for supervisees employed between five and less than 10 years. If supervisees employed at the agency between five and less than 10 years perceive supervision as ineffective, are they more inclined to leave the agency? Although this question is beyond the scope of this study, this finding has implications for agency practice. How, then can the agency improve supervision delivery to support supervisees throughout their employment?

The final objective of this study was to explore the relationship between supervisory requirements and the effectiveness of supervision. Previous research had determined that required supervision was ill-received (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2013). The current study included 55 supervisees employed by departments that had supervision frequencies imposed upon them by the payer of services and 81 supervisees who had no such supervision frequency requirements. Analysis of results determined that while the supervisees who were required to participate in supervision had lower supervision scores than those who were not required, the overall difference was not significant. While a significant difference in normative (administrative)

functions between both groups was found, the difference resulted in only a small overall effect on scoring. Also, most respondents in both groups reported being satisfied with their supervisory experiences, which could imply that requirements imposed on supervisory frequency have less impact on overall effectiveness than the issues discussed during the supervisory session. Given the differences in normative (administrative) functions of supervision, perhaps the difference in scoring relates to the *type of work* requirements specific to the department, rather than the supervision itself. Of course, additional study is needed to determine if this is the case.

Implications

Implications of this study are wide-ranging from practice implications to implications for social work education. First, as a result of this study, questions arise concerning the effectiveness of supervision delivered by a social worker. As a profession that relies on the process of supervision to develop autonomous professionals, how is this being accomplished if supervision delivery is ineffective? Employed in a profession that is grounded in the practice of supervision, a participant must be willing to further understand current supervisory practices, to determine their effectiveness, and to support practitioners in the delivery of effective supervision.

Implications for social work practice. Additional implications exist for agency leaders delivering human services. Recognizing the demands and challenges that agencies experience due to staff turnover and the relationship between supervision and a worker's intent to remain or leave employment, agency leaders should be concerned about the effectiveness of delivered supervision (McFadden, et al., 2015; Webb & Carpenter, 2011; Onyett, 2011; Smith & Shields, 2013; Fakunmoju et. al., 2010). As the results of this study indicated, experiences with effective supervision were statistically significant based on the supervisee's duration of employment at the agency. Specifically, supervisees with five to less than 10 years' experience found supervision

to be least effective – even compared to supervisees with 10 and more years' experience. In an effort to address and prevent turnover, agency leaders should consider and explore different models of supervision that are reflective of the needs of the supervisees. For example, models of supervision as proposed by Bedford and Gehlert or Lynch (2015) suggest the use of social role models that adapt to the changing needs of the supervisee rather than linear models of supervision.

Implications for social work education. Beyond practice, implications exist for social work education as well. Specifically, whether or not future social workers are pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree, they are required to participate in an internship. The internship must be supervised by a degreed social worker where the degreed social worker delivers supervision at an established frequency. If the results of this study are any indication of the effectiveness of supervision delivered by a social worker, questions arise to the quality and effectiveness of supervision received by future social workers. What oversight is provided to ensure that future social workers are receiving effective supervision? What are social workers learning about supervision in the classroom so that effective practices can be implemented in the field? What other ongoing training and evaluative programs should be considered to ensure effective supervision practices?

Gursansky and Le Sueur (2012) echo the ubiquity of internships within the social work profession and also suggest the need to better evaluate supervision experiences. As Maynard, Mertz, and Fortune (2015) suggest, social workers who supervise interns are faced with varying challenges in terms of time and support simply to be able to provide the required supervision frequency to social work interns, to have to be concerned about the supervision effectiveness. Some researchers have begun to explore field education and experience through qualitative

designs (Nordstrand, 2017; Canavera & Akesson, 2018; Tanga, 2013). Studies illustrated the experiences of both interns and supervisors and the challenges faced by supervisors. Supervisors were faced with agency challenges, such as lack of time and resources as well as practice challenges, including supervisors' belief that they lacked the needed competency to support interns. Certainly, these challenges pose questions to the effectiveness of delivered supervision. Additional studies from Maynard et. al. and Tadem and Munwenyu (2016) have proposed models by which to deliver supervision within the context of field education, yet both suggest that additional study is needed.

As a profession defined by the importance of service, human relationships, integrity, and competence, one must consider how to evaluate current practices as they relate to effective supervision. One must be willing to question current supervisory practices and consider methods of improvement so that one may continue to develop and support autonomous social work professionals. In order to do so, one must evaluate current practices within the classroom and the field.

Summary

This analysis provided an in-depth examination of the results of this study and their connection to available literature regarding supervision and effective practices. The outcomes of this study seem to indicate that supervision practices are similar among various countries and even continents. To some degree, results support the notion that younger, less experienced supervisees find supervision to be more effective than their more experienced counterparts. This study also appears to support previous research suggesting the relationship between supervisor and supervisee is connected with overall supervision effectiveness. While certain questions were answered and previous literature supported, additional questions arose necessitating future study

that could affect social work educators and agency leaders as well. Given the implications discussed, the following chapter will provide recommendations for social work practice and submit a conclusion.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of effective supervision to better inform and guide practice standards within the social work profession. As discussed in previous chapters, the process of social work supervision has evolved. The practice of supervision began as a way to educate practitioners; over time the function of supervision has been transformed to include not only educational but also administrative and supportive aspects as well. The objectives of supervision have evolved to provide the education, support, and oversight needed by practitioners to deliver effective and efficient services. This three-pillar understanding of supervision remains the hallmark of social work supervision for which numerous works of literature present the value and importance. What remains unknown, however, is the social work profession's ability to deliver effective supervision. After all, supervision has been linked not only to positive worker outcomes but also to client outcomes as well. If the goal of social work supervision is to develop professionals who can deliver effective and efficient services, should there not be an understanding of our ability to deliver effective supervision? After all, if practitioners deliver *ineffective* supervision, what does that mean for individuals served?

To better understand the tenets of effective supervision and the relationship between education and supervision effectiveness, supervisors and supervisees employed by a large human service organization in Pennsylvania were invited to engage in a research project survey. Participating supervisees completed an on-line version of the MCSS-26 © which has proven to be a valid and reliable measure for assessing supervision effectiveness because it is grounded in research and has been tested in a variety of social service settings. More importantly, the measured domains include three areas that mirror the hallmark functions of social work supervision: normative (administrative), restorative (supportive), and formative (educational).

Participating supervisors completed an online survey that included information regarding their educational backgrounds. Their results were analyzed by utilizing SPSS. Although the statistical analysis was limited due to insufficient sample sizes, the results provided some insight into effective supervisory practices. The results also presented considerations for the future of effective supervision for agency leaders within the framework of social work education.

Recommendations

This study produced several implications for the future of social work practice and effective supervisory education. Given the results, additional study regarding supervision effectiveness is warranted.

This study explored effective supervision within the context of a single agency. Considering the implications for social work education, future studies should examine the effectiveness of supervision received during an internship process. As noted by Gursanky and Le Sueur (2012), social work practitioners need to better understand the effectiveness of supervision received during the internship process. Maynard et. al. (2015) described the various challenges faced by supervisors which, in turn, could impact the effectiveness of their supervision. Several researchers have begun to evaluate internship supervisory experiences through qualitative methods (Nordstrand, 2017; Canavera & Akesson, 2018; Tanga, 2013). By incorporating quantitative analysis through mixed-method designs and by utilizing the MCSS-26©, social work professionals may begin to discover if future social workers are receiving effective supervision within their respective field placements. Through mixed-method approaches, social work professionals can better understand the effectiveness of supervision as experienced by student interns. Information gleaned via mixed-method approaches may potentially improve internship experiences and increase the level of education and support

received by interns. Such information also might be used to develop additional programming to support supervisors so that social work supervisors may continue to provide the needed support, education, and oversight to aid professionals in delivering effective and efficient services.

Further study also is warranted to assess the effectiveness of supervision delivered by supervisors within social work practice settings. Due to the insufficient sample size of this study, a statistical analysis was not conducted. This study relied on convenience sampling which was ineffective in securing the needed sample sizes. Future efforts to secure the needed sampling size should consider employing snowball sampling techniques. The use of snowball techniques would likely secure the needed sample size and provide the ability to conduct additional statistical analysis. This method could be utilized in other organizations that employ both social and non-social workers.

In addition to exploring the effectiveness of supervision by social workers, future studies should consider utilizing specific models of supervision. As this study demonstrated, there exists a statistical difference in supervisory effectiveness as reported by participants based on their duration of employment at the agency. This seems to imply that perceptions of supervisory effectiveness vary over time, especially since individuals employed at the agency for 10 and more years found supervision more effective as compared to individuals with five to less than 10 years of employment at the agency.

As researchers have suggested and as supported by findings in this study, future supervision research also should explore models of supervision that reflect the changing needs of the supervisee. Traditionally, the profession has adopted educational (linear) models of supervision, rather than dynamic (non-linear) models, such as social role models of supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002; Dan, 2017; Bedford & Gehlert, 2013). Considering that supervisee

needs change over time, exploring the effectiveness of dynamic (non-linear) models of supervision is recommended.

Within the context of the agency for which this study was completed, there exist several recommendations for agency practice. Supervision perceptions and delivery varied within the organization. To address these differences, agency leaders should consider developing supervisory practice guidelines and expectations for both supervisors and supervisees. Once developed, training sessions are needed to ensure that supervisors not only understand the objective of supervision but also, possess the skills needed to deliver effective supervision. Supervisors should be provided with ongoing training that supports effective practices and skill development. Supervisees should be provided with training regarding the purpose of supervision and how they can (and should) take an active role in the process of supervision so that they have the needed support, oversight, and knowledge to deliver effective and efficient services.

Conclusion

This study attempted to determine the relationship between education, specifically a degree in social work, and the effectiveness of delivering supervision. Given the social work profession's history of the supervisory practice, it was hypothesized that supervisors with social work backgrounds would deliver more effective supervision than supervisors without social work backgrounds. However, the results of this study indicated otherwise. Supervisors without social work backgrounds delivered supervision that was rated more effective than supervisors with social work backgrounds. While this study was limited in size and scope, the outcomes indicate a need for further study to understand the tenets of effective supervision. As a profession, social workers must blaze a path forward detailing effective and efficient supervisory practices so that social work professionals may deliver effective and efficient services.

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APPENDIX A: MCSS-26 ©

Respondent Code: _____**Date: __/__/____**

You are invited to participate in this confidential survey, which aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Supervision* provided to you at your workplace. There are two sections that will take about 10 minutes to complete. This investment of your time will provide unique and valuable insights, to help inform the future development of Supervision.

Drawing on your current experience of receiving supervision at your workplace, please indicate your level of agreement with the following 26 statements, by selecting the box which best represents your answer. Do not spend too long thinking about each question; your first response is probably the best one.

	SECTION A	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**No opinion**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1	Other work pressures interfere with CS sessions	○	○	○	○	○
2	It is difficult to find the time for CS sessions	○	○	○	○	○
3	CS sessions are not necessary/don't solve anything	○	○	○	○	○
4	Time spent on CS takes me away from my real work in the clinical area	○	○	○	○	○
5	Fitting CS sessions in can lead to more pressure at work	○	○	○	○	○
6	I find CS sessions time consuming	○	○	○	○	○
7	My supervisor gives me support and encouragement	○	○	○	○	○
8	CS sessions are intrusive	○	○	○	○	○
9	CS gives me time to reflect	○	○	○	○	○
10	Work problems can be tackled constructively during CS sessions	○	○	○	○	○
11	CS sessions facilitate reflective practice	○	○	○	○	○
12	My supervisor offers an unbiased opinion	○	○	○	○	○

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
13	I can discuss sensitive issues encountered during my clinical casework with my supervisor	○	○	○	○	○
14	My CS sessions are an important part of my work routine	○	○	○	○	○
15	I learn from my supervisor's experiences	○	○	○	○	○
16	It is important to make time for CS sessions	○	○	○	○	○
17	My supervisor provides me with valuable advice	○	○	○	○	○
18	My supervisor is very open with me	○	○	○	○	○
19	Sessions with my supervisor widen my clinical knowledge base	○	○	○	○	○
20	CS is unnecessary for experienced/established staff	○	○	○	○	○
21	My supervisor acts in a superior manner during our sessions	○	○	○	○	○
22	Clinical supervision makes me a better practitioner	○	○	○	○	○
23	CS sessions motivate staff	○	○	○	○	○
24	I can widen my skill base during my CS sessions	○	○	○	○	○
25	My supervisor offers me guidance with patient/client care	○	○	○	○	○
26	I think receiving clinical supervision improves the quality of care I give	○	○	○	○	○

Which of the following terms best describes your overall level of satisfaction with the Supervision you currently receive?

- O Very dissatisfied
- O Moderately dissatisfied
- O Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied
- O Moderately satisfied
- O Very satisfied

You have reached the end of Section A; please continue with Section B.

Section B: This section relates to different aspects of your current Supervision arrangements. Please answer the questions by selecting the appropriate option, or by entering a number.

About yourself:

1. Are you: ○ Male ○ Female ___ Other

2. What is your age? [years] _____

3. Do you have a master's degree? _____ Y or _____ N
3.a. If yes, do you have a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW)? _____Y or _____ No

3.b. If no, what is your master's degree in?
____Education
____Counselling
____Business
____Public Health/Administration
____Other _____

4. Do you have a Bachelor's degree? ___Y or ____ N

4. a. If yes, do you have a Bachelor's degree in Social Work (BSW)? ____Y or ____ N

4.b. If no, what is your bachelor's degree in?
___ Psychology
___Sociology
___Criminal Justice
___Education
___Other _____

5. How long have you been assigned to your current supervisor?
____Less than or equal to 6 months
____More than 6 months and less than or equal to 1 year

____More than 1 year and less than or equal to 3 years
____More than 3 years and less than or equal to 5 years
____More than 5 years and less than or equal to 10 years
____More than 10 years

About your Supervision sessions

6. Usually, how often are your Supervision sessions?
   - o Weekly
   - o Every 2 weeks
   - o Monthly
   - o Every 2 to 3 months
   - o Over 3 months apart

7. Where do your Supervision sessions usually take place?
   - o In person
   - o Over the phone
   - o Over the computer (GoTo Meeting, Zoom, etc)
   - o Combination of the above
   - o Other [Please describe] _____

8. Usually, are your Supervision sessions:
   - o One-to-one
   - o Group
   - o Combination of one-to-one and group
   - o Other [Please describe] _____

9. Usually, how long are your Supervision sessions?
   - o Less than 30 minutes
   - o 31 to 60 minutes
   - o More than 60 minutes