

**CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE  
ON SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION, 1970-1979**

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CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE  
ON SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION, 1970-1979

A thesis

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of  
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## ABSTRACT

A review of literature on social work supervision suggested that there has been no systematic study to date of the literature on social work supervision using the methodology of content analysis. It was thought that this kind of systematic study of the periodical literature on social work supervision would reflect the status of practice and knowledge in social work supervision and that the findings would also help to identify the potential for more research in this area.

Thirty-seven articles were sampled from Social Work Research and Abstracts 1970-1979 under the headings of "supervision" and "supervisor." The contents of the articles were examined under several categories: geographical location, gender status and professional status of authors; target readers and their organizational settings; modes and components of social work supervision; and, research orientation and theoretical perspectives of social work supervision.

Data analysis revealed fewer articles on social work supervision in the periodical literature of 1970-79 as compared with articles on other topics. Over half of the articles in this study were found in five major journals of social work. The authors are mainly

male and are predominantly from the United States. The majority of the articles are contributed by writers with faculty status in a university setting. More attention has been given by the writers to agency-based practice and knowledge building in the interest of front-line workers rather than to issues related to professional education for social work. Individual supervision is still the primary mode of social work supervision. Educational theory is found to be the predominant framework in which the supervisory process is based and explained. Non-empirical studies make up the larger portion of the articles. Two dimensions of supervisory practice are prominently absent from the articles reviewed in the study. These are: the use of audio-visual technology in practice, and, evaluation of supervision as a vehicle to improved practice.



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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### Statement of the Problem

The future of any profession depends not only on its ability to transmit its knowledge and values to new members but also on its being open to new ideas and new knowledge.

(Abels, 1977, p. 1)

From the time social work was first identified as a profession, supervision has been considered an essential and important source of growth and competency in practice. Supervision has served as an arena where much knowledge about social work practice has been articulated and it has long been regarded as a process designed to promote effective and efficient delivery of services (Munson, 1979, p. xix).

The importance of supervision to social workers and other human service professionals is well documented in the literature. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959), Kermish and Kushin (1969), Henry, Sims and Spray (1971), Aikens, Smits and Lollar (1972), Olmstaed and Christensen (1973) are among the authors who call attention to the problems associated with social work supervisory practice within the profession.



Systematic analysis and study of social work supervision is meager when compared with other subjects pertaining to social work practice found in the literature. In addition, there is relatively little study or examination of the social work literature on supervision. Most of the studies on this subject that do appear are basically impressionistic in nature. Little effort has been made to systematically study and review the past and current trends of social work supervision. This is not a new problem. Concern was expressed in 1929 at the Milford Conference. Stiles (1963), more than three decades later, makes reference to the problem: "... Despite the plea of the Milford Conference, almost no studies on social work supervision have yet been undertaken. There are many subjects for investigation in this area. . . ." (p. 25). And more recently Munson (1979) stated: "... Supervision is viewed by most workers as the main channel of accountability, a means of protecting clients, and the chief source of professional development and support for the worker. These are important aspects, but there are few empirical referents as to how the profession is faring in these areas" (p. 240).

Munson suggests that scientifically-based research is needed in supervision to clarify the issues encountered by the supervisors and supervisees in their daily activities. However, before major empirical research is carried out in

this area, it is important to examine and evaluate the social work literature on supervision. Through such an analysis, we may gain some insights and understanding of the nature of supervision as it is conceptualized and addressed by the social work profession. Furthermore, we may determine the status of our practice and knowledge in this area, as a basis for determining the potential areas for further research.

#### Purpose of the Study

"One indicator of change within a profession is the journal literature" (Howe & Schuerman, 1974, p. 279). The purpose of the present study is to determine the content, issues, trends and developments related to social work supervision as they have appeared in the social work periodical literature over the 10-year period 1970-79. This study examines articles on supervision utilizing the research method of content analysis. The distribution of articles appearing in the journal Social Work Research and Abstracts and other journals of social work; the gender, occupational status, and geographical locations of authors; target groups of readers; types of organizational settings in which supervision is taking place; modes and components of social work supervision; and research orientation of the articles are investigated.

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The study findings are intended to identify potential areas for future research in social work supervision. There are varying opinions as to how supervision may be best integrated into social work education and service delivery systems. Clarification as to the nature of this problem is needed. As well, the findings may serve as a basis for policy formulation and decision-making in professional practice. Professional considerations such as appropriate timing for initiation and termination of supervision and the determination of technical skills inherent in supervisory activity are of central importance in social work curriculum construction and in the efficient use of limited organizational resources. A systematic study and analysis of the periodical literature can provide a preliminary data base from which to stimulate research activity and guide professionals in their quest for more effective and efficient systems of service delivery.

#### Assumptions of the Study

This study is based on three assumptions. They are:

1. the content of periodical articles reflect the current issues, trends and subjects of concern of the social work profession;
2. the abstracts on supervision appearing in Social Work Research and Abstracts are highly representative of the social work periodical literature on this subject and therefore form an adequate population base for analysis;



3. the articles are accessible to social work professionals and influence their thinking and activity as practitioners.

Regarding the first assumption, it is recognized that information and research studies usually appear in the periodicals before they are published in books. This can be explained on the basis of quicker and less costly access to a wider reading audience. Periodical literature appears to provide a vehicle for the airing of current concerns and ready dissemination of knowledge relevant to the profession.

As to the second assumption, the titles of articles on supervision published in three of the more widely read professional journals of social work were examined. The articles on supervision in Social Work, Social Casework and Social Service Review were all listed in the Social Work Research and Abstracts, except for one article (Getzel, Goldberg & Salmon, 1971). Thus it was found that Social Work Research and Abstracts is highly representative of the periodical literature on this subject.

In support of the third assumption, it is noted that the professional journals of social work are subscribed to by most of the university libraries and social service agencies. Because of this wide distribution, the journals are seen as quite accessible to social work professionals. In reviewing the journals, one can also observe the concern displayed in letters to editors about issues that have

recently been published. Readers' backgrounds vary, and include administrators, agency-based practitioners, and academics. These observations lend support to the third assumption that the articles are accessible to and influential in the social work community.

In this chapter, we have discussed the significance of supervision in social work with respect to accountability and professional development of social workers. It was concluded that there is a lack of systematic studies, on the literature of social work supervision, to indicate the status of practice and knowledge in this area. In this study, periodical literature on social work supervision for the period of 1970-79 inclusive will be analyzed by the research method of content analysis. It is hoped that the findings will provide a data base for identifying the potentials for further research, in this area, as well as a base for policy formulation and practice.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The early history of social work can be traced back to the Charity Organization Society Movement which began in England in 1869 and United States in 1877 (Stiles, 1963, p. 21). The aim of the movement was to support family functioning by carrying out friendly visits and providing guidance from volunteers.

It was gradually recognized that in addition to good intentions, training was necessary. Octavia Hill of the London Charity Organization Society saw "... the need for organizing the visitors for training, oversight and advice along the way so that their efforts might be strengthened and directed..." (Rich, 1956, p. 32). These responsibilities were assumed by supervisors. In the Charity Organization Society Movement, supervision became an important means of transmitting knowledge and skills to the volunteer workers.

Because of the constant need for supervision, training programmes became more institutionalized. In 1891, the Boston Charity Organization began formal training programmes, while in 1904 the New York School of Philanthropy was established (Stiles, 1963, p. 22). Agency-



based training programmes gradually changed to university-based professional education.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, two books, Social Diagnosis (1917) and What is Social Case Work? (1922) were written by Mary Richmond. Her writings presented supervision as basically a remedial measure. Gaps and discrepancies in the worker-client interviews were identified by the supervisors. Steps were then taken to facilitate corrective action whenever possible. The educative function of supervision was emphasized in individual supervision both in the Charity Organization Society Movement and in institutional training programmes.

Psychoanalytic personality theory with a therapeutic emphasis became integrated into the practice of social work supervision during the 1920's. The depression of the 1930's and World War II brought large numbers of new personnel into the profession. The emphasis in supervision changed from "the therapeutic function to more pressing educational and administrative demands" (Burns, 1965, p. 786).

In 1942, Reynolds wrote Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work. Her main focus was the educational component of supervision. Robinson in her book The Dynamics of Supervision Under Functional Controls (1949) incorporated a functional approach to the supervisory relationship, that is, a description of the supervisory

process itself, with its own particular functions and dynamics. Later, Towle's book The Learner in Education for the Profession (1954) applied Freudian ego psychology to the dynamics of the supervisory relationship.

During the 1950's, the focus of supervision was on "organizationally sanctioned role positions and job responsibilities" (Munson, 1979, p. 55). Questions related to "authority" and "autonomy" were supervisory concerns at the time. Thus, the "administrative" function was added to the supervisory role of teaching.

At the same time, group work was increasingly practiced in response to worker shortages. Interest in supervisory approaches other than the traditional individualized arrangement was developing. Journal articles began to appear on group supervision, peer group supervision as well as consultation. These articles reflected efforts to integrate the skills and techniques of groupwork into the method of supervision.

During the 1960's and the 1970's, the delivery of social services was expanding on a large scale. The literature of this period reflects an interest in the effects of organizational variables on supervision, as well as an increasing interest in group supervision. As pointed out by Miller (1977), these concerns include the relevance of organizational theory to the supervisory roles, the strains and conflicts arising from the combination of administrative

and educational functions in a supervisory role, as well as innovations in supervisory practice (p. 1546).

Most social work practice is conducted in large formal organizations. Thus, theories concerning bureaucracy, roles, systems and communication are very much relevant to the understanding of supervisory practice and theory. While organizations and workers share common agency objectives, they represent different group interests (Miller, 1971, p. 1499). Their professional expertise is often restricted by the presence of bureaucratic structure and "red-tape". These problems are seriously addressed by a number of authors (Epstein, 1973; Finch, 1976; Munson, 1976, 1979; Wasserman, 1971). Each advocates the value of professional autonomy and its importance to social work practice.

The combination of administrative and educational functions in a supervisory role causes a concern in social work supervision. Social workers in direct practice are often formally supervised throughout their professional careers. It was pointed out by Leader (1957) and Stevens and Hutchison (1956) that supervision often sustains endless dependency in social workers. This subject has been a concern since the early 1950's. Wax (1963) saw a resolution to the problem in a time-limited model of supervision where, under proper conditions, individual supervision can and should be terminated at the end of two



years, when the three objectives of supervision are achieved. The three objectives are seen as the socialization of the worker to the agency and community, the development of service skills, and the development of professional judgment. The proper conditions for the realization of these objectives include the qualification and incentive of the supervisee, the presence of a competent supervisor, and the availability of a planned staff development programme to meet the ongoing needs of the staff (p. 37).

The advantages of group supervision over individual supervision are discussed by a number of authors including Moore (1970, 1971), Abels (1970), Mayers (1970), Cowan (1972) and Allen (1976). To summarize their views, group supervision is seen as offering supervisees opportunities for rich and valuable group experience, increased information, emotional support from group members and easier internalization of independence.

Consultation usually takes place when supervisees want knowledge or expertise which is available within or outside the agency. Consultation is seen as useful when an agency needs help with self-evaluation. This method of supervision is a more recent development when compared with the other methods of supervision. Kadushin's book, Consultation in Social Work (1977) is a comprehensive treatise on the subject of social work consultation. It

contains an historical review of social work consultation and identifies five basic types of consultation. He also details the process and the essential elements of consultation.

Kadushin's book on Supervision in Social Work (1976) represents the first effort at compiling a comprehensive review of contemporary knowledge and theories about social work supervision. The book presents a general history which is followed by a detailed account of the components of social work supervision, namely, administrative, educational and supportive. Kadushin also discusses the important areas of evaluation, group supervision, supervision of paraprofessionals and innovative supervisory practice.

Learning and Supervision by Briscoe and Thomas (1977) discusses skill development for community workers. They discuss staff development, supervision, consultation and group training, illustrating how community work knowledge and skills can be borrowed from the fields of management, education and the social sciences. Problems in preparing students for practice are discussed in terms of fieldwork teaching and evaluation.

Social Work Supervision--Classic Statements and Critical Issues edited by Munson (1979) offers an authoritative view of historical and current approaches to social work supervision. Munson selected representative articles

from 1903 to 1979 to demonstrate the development of social work supervision from an historical perspective, including essential knowledge and skills, structural characteristics, organizational authority and professional autonomy, research and future trends.

The study of social work literature by the method of content analysis is scanty. In the past two decades, only three studies have been concerned with content analysis of social work periodical literature. Taber and Shapiro (1965) reviewed the sampled articles from all the years of publication of Social Work, Social Casework, and Social Service Review through 1963. The question of interest was the nature and extent of the development of the social work knowledge base in that period of time. Weinberger and Tripodi (1965) examined the trends regarding the amount and type of research studies in selected social work journals from 1956 through 1965. Howe and Schuerman (1975) examined the changes in content area, theoretical perspectives and methods of intervention in social work for the period 1957-77. The most recent efforts in the area of content analysis on social work literature is that by Gunther (1979). This author analyzed selected social work literature over an eight-year period (1970-1977) to capture a tentative professional social work perspective on organizations. However, a study of supervision in social work subjected to the methodology of content analysis has

not yet been undertaken.

This chapter has reviewed the development of social work supervision from 1869 when the Charity Organization Society Movement began. The agency-based training programme gradually changed to university-based professional education. The early pioneers in the profession tried to expound the educational, therapeutic, and administrative components of social work supervisory practice and knowledge. The modes of supervision, which include individual supervision, group supervision and consultation developed within a framework consistent with the basic methodologies of social work practice--working with individuals, groups and communities. Books on social work supervision published in 1970-79 were reviewed. In reviewing the study of social work literature where the method of content analysis is utilized, it was found that very few studies have used this approach in the study of social work literature. In particular, social work supervision is one of the areas which remains unexplored by the method of content analysis.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Methodology of Content Analysis

The method of content analysis has been employed in many fields. Holsti (1969) in describing the development and increasing use of content analysis indicates that during the first decade of the twentieth century, investigations were confined to journalistic studies. During the 1930's, content analysis was increasingly utilized in sociological, historical and political research. During the 1940's, content analysis was used by political scientists and psychologists to study propaganda, newspaper editorials and political speeches. In the 1950's, content analysis was applied to folklore, history, psychoanalysis, linguistics and psychotherapy. In recent years there have also been efforts to expand the use of content analysis to nonlexical materials such as imaginative studies, drawings, cartoons, music, and stamps. With more professional publications than ever before and the limited time available for reading in various disciplines, content analysis is an increasingly valuable tool for identifying particular professional concerns which deserve further discussion, research and publication.

Stone et al. (1966) define content analysis as "any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within a text" (p. 5). This with the other definitions set by other authors (Berelson, 1952; Budd, Thorp & Donohew, 1967; Carney, 1972; Holsti, 1969; Kerlinger, 1964) all point to four basic elements of content analysis. These four elements are maintenance of objectivity, execution of systematic procedures, careful analysis, and making inferences. Maintenance of objectivity refers to the need for researchers to remain uninfluenced by his/her own subjective feelings and/or beliefs. When translated into practical terms, it often means following formulated rules and precise definitions. To be systematic is to be methodical, that is, to logically establish an overall plan whereby information processing can proceed. This may be done by categorizing the material according to contents. Analysis is taken to mean a careful study of facts, and an examination of their meaning. Making inferences is the attempt to derive meaning from the overt attributes of documents. It is a projection of ideas based on the documented evidence. Hence, content analysis as a research method encompasses all the important elements of empirical investigation. It involves the application of the scientific method to documentary evidence with the objective of obtaining knowledge and

understanding for subsequent research.

The methodology of content analysis involves several steps. Budd, Thorp and Donohew (1967) identify six stages in this kind of research, and these are adapted as a methodological framework for this study.

This framework includes the following steps:

1. Formulation of research question(s), and categories for data analysis
2. Selection of a sample
3. Collection and tabulation of the data
4. Statement and interpretation of findings
5. Presentation of conclusions and recommendations

The first two steps are explained in the remainder of this chapter.

#### Formulation of Research Questions and Categories

A number of research questions are presented in this study. They fall under several content categories outlined below.

Background information of authors. Descriptive information was obtained on each of the authors in the study population. The information included items such as country of current employment, gender and professional status. These items are relevant to discussion and analysis of the periodical contents of the study presented. The following questions are addressed in this category:

What is the author's country of current employment?

What is the gender status of author?

What is the professional status of the author?

The above information was obtained by examining the articles for introductory remarks, footnotes or background data on each author. Such information is usually explicit and appears at the beginning of the articles.

Target readers and organizational settings. Three groups are involved in a supervisory process, namely, supervisors, supervisees and administrators. The articles under this study will be identified according to the target readers addressed by the authors. The following questions are addressed in this category:

What target readers do the authors address?

- student supervisors and supervisees
- work supervisors and supervisees, or
- various combination of these
- administrators

The target readers of the articles are identified by determining the target groups mentioned explicitly in the articles and the discussion of issues concerning them. To take an example, articles describing the techniques of instructing students in fieldwork are categorized under the heading of "student supervisor". In a similar fashion, the articles are categorized into the headings "student



supervisees", "staff supervisees", and "administrators".

What are the organizational settings of the target readers?

- social services
- universities
- mental health clinics
- hospital and medical settings
- non-specific organizations

Organizational settings are identified from the introductory remarks or from the contents of the articles. The categories include "social services", "university", "mental health clinic", "hospital and medical settings", and "non-specific organization". In this study, "social services" include public assistance, child guidance and day care services.

Modes of supervision. Individual supervision has been the chief mode of supervision since the early days of supervisory practice in social work. However, with a shortage of manpower, high technology, budget constraints, and the challenges of our consumer society for increased efficiency and quality of service, group supervision and group consultation became feasible and attractive. Part of this study attempts to see the changes in the modes of supervision over the past decade and to discuss the factors that are contributing to them.

The articles were categorized on the basis of the following definitional criteria:

Individual supervision is a two-person conference between the supervisor and the supervisee for accomplishing the objectives of supervision.

Group supervision is defined as "the use of a group setting to implement the responsibilities of supervision" (Kadushin, 1976, p. 321).

Consultation is defined as a "professional method of problem-solving involving a time-limited, purposeful, contractual relationship between a knowledgeable expert, the consultant, and a less knowledgeable professional worker, the consultee" (Rapoport, 1971, pp. 156-157).

Components of supervision. Kadushin (1976) views the supervisory process as consisting of three components, namely, educational, administrative and supportive. The articles in this study were analyzed within this framework to determine the supervisory components emphasized in each article. Articles were categorized on the basis of the following definitional criteria:

Administrative supervision includes the functions of organizing and coordinating agency resources, planning and assigning work to supervisors and ensuring the work is adequately done (Kadushin, 1976, p. 123).

Educational supervision is concerned with "helping the worker learn what he needs to know in order to do his job effectively" (Kadushin, 1976, p. 196).

Supportive supervision is concerned with "helping the supervisee with job-related stress and developing attitudes and feelings conducive to maximum job performance" (Kadushin, 1976, p. 270).

The context of the articles usually gives the most important clues for this categorization. Several key words are identified with each component. The key words "educational", "teaching", "teacher", "student" and "learner" are

identified with the educational component. The key words "organizational", "role", "management", "administrative", and "system" are identified with the administrative component, while the key words "emotion", "frustrations", "supportive", "empathy" are identified with the supportive component. The articles are scanned to determine the frequency counts of key words and categorized according to the component category having the highest number of key words.

Research orientation of articles. Social work, as a profession, depends largely on the social sciences for its knowledge base, and cannot dissociate itself from research activity in the pursuit of excellence and expertise in practice. This study identifies research orientation in social work supervision on the basis of criteria provided by Weinberger and Tripodi (1969).

Quantitative-descriptive studies are defined as "those studies having as their purpose, through the systematic collection of data from populations, programs, or samples of populations or programs, simple delineation or assessment of characteristics of phenomena, evaluation, or isolation of key variables" (1969, p. 441).

Explorative studies are defined as studies which "have as their purpose the formulation of questions for subsequent research, developing hypotheses, or increasing an investigator's familiarity with a phenomenon or setting

for more precise future research" (1969, p. 442).

Experimental studies "have as their purpose primarily the testing of hypotheses concerned with cause-effect relationships" (1969, p. 442).

The category of research themes includes articles which discuss "research either in general terms as an important field of endeavour for social workers and the problems which research presents in social work, more specifically, in terms of the implications or findings from studies or a detailed review of a particular study" (1969, p. 443).

The category of research methods includes "articles concerned either with the development of a research technique by empirical means or the discussion of the uses and/or importance of specific research technique and/or research designs" (1969, p. 443).

For the studies which did not fall into any of the above classifications, two additional categories were created. These are the explanatory-descriptive and the experience documentary types. The former refers to contents which describe or explain a concept related to supervision, e.g., the functions of supervision. The latter refers to articles which document a process in which changes are taking place.

Theoretical perspectives of articles. The study examines the theoretical stance or perspective of the



author(s) in order to gain an understanding of how supervision is conceptualized. The review of literature presented in Chapter Two revealed that different theories influenced the practice of social work supervision throughout the profession's history. Three theoretical perspectives were identified, namely, educational, psychoanalytic, and management and organizational theories. Articles were categorized on the basis of the following criteria:

Discussion is viewed from the educational perspective when the supervision is carried on in the context of a teacher and student relationship. The execution of educational supervision is based on the belief that the students or workers need to increase their knowledge and skill so that their service to clients may improve. Generally the material to be learned includes: social work philosophy, causal knowledge and intervention skills, self-awareness, social welfare policy, and organizational and country resources (Watson, 1973, p. 81).

The psychoanalytic perspective finds its roots in the work of Sigmund Freud. This theory emphasizes the role of the unconscious in determining behaviour. It provided insights into the role of anxiety and unresolved libidinal and aggressive conflicts in inhibiting learning and the mastery of learning tasks (Miller, 1977, p. 1545).

Management and organizational theories include discussion of organizational and personal objectives,

discipline and autonomy, formal and informal relations, management and workers, and how these variables act on the supervisory process (Granvold, 1978a, p. 38).

To identify the theoretical perspectives adopted by the authors, it was necessary to carefully analyze the overall content and context of the articles to identify key words and descriptive paragraphs associated with a particular theoretical perspective, as outlined above. Key words such as "student", "instructor", "teacher", "learner", "educating", "trainer", "teaching" are associated with the educational theoretical perspective. Key words such as "transference", "countertransference", "resistance", "unconsciousness" and "consciousness" are associated with the psychoanalytic theoretical perspective. Key words such as "role", "leadership", "management", "administrative", and "organizer" are associated with the management and organizational theoretical perspective.

#### Selection of Sample

The sample consists of all the articles which appeared under the headings "supervision" and "supervisor" in the journal Social Work Research and Abstracts for the period 1970-79. Appendix A presents the list of the articles by year of publication. Originally there were 39 articles. Two articles were excluded from the sample (Martinson & Wilks, 1975; Mootz, 1972). The first article

is on parolee supervision and is based on a worker-client relationship which is distinct from the supervisor-social worker relationship being discussed in this study. The second article may have been incorrectly cited since an exhaustive search for this article proved fruitless.

### Reliability

If a research is to come to any conclusions, it is important that the data obtained in the research be reliable. A protocol for intercoder reliability is adopted to indicate the stability of the research. In this study, Holsti's (1969) widely used coefficient of reliability is utilized to determine levels of intercoder reliability.

The sample selected for determining intercoder reliability consists of ten articles, one article drawn at random from the supervision articles appearing in each year for the 10-year period of the study, 1970-79 inclusive (see Appendix B). A coefficient of intercoder reliability is obtained through the judgments of the researcher (coder) and a colleague (co-coder) who agree on the definitions of all the content categories in the study (Appendices C-L). Total reliability for the study is 88% (see Table 1) which is acceptable for the exploratory nature of the study undertaken.

TABLE 1

## Inter-coder Reliability for Major Content Categories

Content category	Number of mutual coding decisions M	Number of coding decisions N <sub>1</sub> + N <sub>2</sub>	Coefficient of reliability
Name of journals	10	20	1.00
Sex status of authors	15	32	0.94
Professional status of authors	14	32	0.88
Geographical location of authors	16	32	1.00
Geographical location of articles	16	32	1.00
Target population of articles	7	20	0.70
Types of institutions addressed	9	20	0.90
Methods of supervision	8	20	0.80
Components of supervision	7	20	0.70
Research orientation			
Theoretical perspectives	9	20	0.90

$$\text{Coefficient of reliability} = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

$$\text{Total coefficient of reliability} = \frac{8.82}{10} = 0.88$$

M = the number of coding decisions on which the judges are in agreement  
 N<sub>1</sub>, N<sub>2</sub> = the number of coding decisions made by judges 1 and 2 respectively



### Validity

Several questions are asked in measuring the content validity of a study. These questions are:

Does the measure look as though it is measuring what the researcher wants to measure?

Do the entry terms in a tag appear to measure the concept that the tag is constructed to measure?

Is the amount of the text sampled adequate to produce stable assessments of the concept? (Stone et al., 1966, p. 218).

In this study, the categories are constructed in order to measure the documents in the sample. Content categories are identified by means of a name or tag, and clearly defined for purposes of analysis and quantification. In addition, all the relevant articles on social work supervision were extracted from the Social Work Research and Abstracts for the period 1970-79. As discussed in Chapter Three the Abstracts provides quite an adequate basis and framework for a valid assessment and analysis of the area of social work supervision during this period.

This chapter has reviewed the use of content analysis as a research tool. The method of content analysis is defined and the steps of the methodology formulated based on the framework suggested by Budd, Thorp and Donohew (1967). In this study, background information of authors, target readers and their organizational settings, modes of supervision, components of supervision, research orientation.

of articles, theoretical perspectives of articles are explored. The sample consists of the articles which appeared under the headings "supervision" and "supervisor" in the journal Social Work Research and Abstracts for the period 1970-79. Intercoder reliability and validity is discussed. A reliability quotient at the 88% level is acceptable for the exploratory nature of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of Articles in the Abstracts

The importance of supervision in social work was discussed in the introduction. It is central to this study to know how much has been written about the subject. Table 2 reveals that the number of articles on social work supervision is very small when compared with the total number of articles on other topics in each volume of the journal Social Work Research and Abstracts.

Considering the important role that supervision plays in social work, the proportion of articles on social work supervision in the professional field is astoundingly small. However, this finding only echoes the views of Kadushin (1976, p. viii) and Munson (1979, p. 59) who lamented the scarcity of publications on such an important subject.

Several possible reasons are worthy of discussion. The current concerns of deprofessionalization, deemphasis of power and authority in human relationships and correspondingly, the emphasis of individual autonomy and rights may have had some inhibitive influence on advocates of supervision in recent years (Kadushin, 1976, p. 18).

TABLE 2

Comparison of Article Coverage on Supervision and Other  
Article Topics in the Abstracts (1970-79)

Year	Total articles on supervision	Total on other topics
1970	3	1,031
1971	3	1,063
1972	4	1,064
1973	7	1,102
1974	3	1,066
1975	3	1,196
1976	4	1,211
1977	6	1,297
1978	3	1,346
1979	1	1,366
Totals	37	11,739

Supervision has never attracted as much attention and discussion as topics like "Delinquents", "the Aged", "Blacks" and "Drug Addiction" (Zimbalist, 1978), despite acknowledgment by most workers that supervision is an important means of training social work professionals.

One possible explanation of the limited number of articles in the periodical literature on supervision is the



lack of stimulus which comes from a tradition of very little writing in this area. Supervisory practice can become static without this type of input and stimulation. An increase in the number of journal contributions on this subject would help to overcome this problem.

It is perhaps fair to say that even the academics are not yet ready to view supervision as a subject of importance in its own right. Very few schools of social work have organized programmes or courses in supervision. Among the twenty Canadian schools of social work which offer bachelor or master degrees in social work, only five (two undergraduate and three graduate degree programmes) list supervision as one of the courses being offered (see Appendix M). It is recognized that these findings are based on calendar descriptions which may not always give profile to supervision, even though it may be included in the context of a course such as "Administration".

Another possible explanation for the limited number of articles in the periodical literature on supervision may lie in the dichotomy between research and practice in social work. Reid (1977) observes the phenomenon that practitioners pay little attention to the researchers' work. Academics work as teachers and theorists in universities, while social work practitioners work directly with clients. Each embraces his own world of activities. A breakdown of communication results in the decline in quantity and quality

of the articles published. Some other consequences of mutual alienation will be further discussed in the section on author status.

Finally, the significance of the journals as a vehicle for communication has not been fully appreciated by some professionals. This underutilization of the journals is understandable as most of the social work journals are still in their infancy, that is, they have only been published since 1962 (Appendix N).

It is clear from this brief consideration that there is an urgent need for better understanding of the functions and practice of supervision in social work. More research is obviously needed in this area.

#### Distribution of Articles in the Journals

As shown in Table 3, the journal Social Work has the largest number of articles on social work supervision (six articles, 16%) followed by the Journal of Education for Social Work with five articles (14%). This is followed by Social Casework with four articles (11%). The journals Social Worker and Administration in Social Work have three articles (8%) each. The remaining 10 articles (27%) are scattered in 10 other social work journals and medical journals.

TABLE 3

## Distribution of Articles in the Journals (1970-79)

Journals	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	Totals
Administration in Social Work*								2	1		3
American Journal of Orthopsychiatry						1					1
American Journal of Psychiatry			1								1
Arete				1				1			2
Child Welfare	1						1				2
Clinical Social Work Journal								1			1
Family Process				1							1
Journal of Black Studies			1								1
Journal of Counseling Psychology			1								1
Journal of Education for Social Work				2			1	1	1		5
Journal of Marriage & Family Counseling							1				1
Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease					1						1
Public Welfare	1			1							2
Smith College Studies in Social Work								1			1
Social Casework		2			1					1	4
Social Service Review							1				1
Social Work				2	1	2			1		6
Social Worker	1	1	1								3
Totals	3	3	4	7	3	3	4	6	3	1	37

\*Administration in Social Work first published in 1977.

### Geographical Location of Authors

The usefulness of geographical study of the authors is sometimes overlooked or not fully appreciated. Indeed, such a distribution study can sometimes be very revealing. As shown in Table 4, of the 54 authors in this study, only five authors (9%) are from Canada. They are professors and field instructors in Canadian universities. There are no articles contributed by social workers from Canadian social service agencies.

In contrast, authors from the United States are the overwhelming majority of contributors. Forty-nine authors (91%) come from this group and consist mainly of academics, administrators and social workers (see Tables 4 & 6). It is noted that the American authors mainly come from the north-eastern and southern states and California. The background of the authors is discussed in the section on author status.

TABLE 4  
Geographical Location of Authors

Country	Number of authors	Percentage
United States	49	91
Canada	5	9
Totals	54	100

The finding that far more of the authors in this study make a contribution from the United States than from Canada can be explained by the difference in the size of population, the number of universities, publishers and journals in these two countries. In this study, of the 200 journals surveyed only seven (3.5%) are Canadian publications.\* It would seem, therefore, that the professional mosaic is largely dominated by American thoughts and practice. This should be of concern to social workers interested in the questions associated with Canadian identity and the professional problems unique to this country.

#### Gender Status of Authors

Male authors outnumber female in the total population of authors--35 males vs. 19 females (see Table 5). This means that 65% of the authors are males. The ratio of men to women is almost two to one. This is consistent with Gunther's (1979) findings that in the period of 1970-77, women have made fewer contributions than men to the literature on organization in social work (p. 65). The findings of Kirk and Rosenblatt (1980) show that for the period of 1964-68, males wrote 60% of the articles published even though they comprised approximately one-third of the profession. For the periods of 1969-73 and 1973-75, men

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\*This figure is based on the journals reviewed for Social Work Research and Abstracts, 1978, 14, 4, p. 45.



wrote 59% and 56%, respectively, of the articles published in the social work journals (p. 205). However, a study of the National Association for Social Workers revealed that 69% of the members were women (Meyer & Siegel, p. 1070).

An under-representation of female authors in proportion to their membership in the profession is apparent and raises speculation as to possible causes.

TABLE 5  
Gender Status of Authors

Gender status	Number of persons	Percentage
Male	35	65
Female	19	35
Totals	54	100

Sex-stereotyping exists in the profession of social work (Kravetz, 1976). Women appear to prefer direct service rather than academic or administrative roles. The latter are perceived as having a leadership function and more male-dominated (Meyer & Siegel, 1977). Seventy-eight percent of the deans of graduate schools of social work and 60% of the directors of undergraduate programs are men (Kirk & Rosenblatt, 1980). In the 1971-72 study of membership of the National Association of

Social Workers, 37% of the men and 18% of the women identified administration as their primary practice. Similar findings were revealed in a later study by Hanlan (1978, p. 198). In the academic field, women represented only 14% of the full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities during 1977-78 and they are concentrated in the lower academic ranks (Tausig, 1979).

Many female professionals have to meet the demands of the traditional roles of mothers and housewives. As academics, they are at a disadvantage. This will be discussed later.

The fact that there are more male than female academics in a profession that is predominantly populated by females requires explanation. The past three decades witnessed a tremendous effort by the profession to attract male workers, especially in the fields of community work and social policies. They tend to be placed in administration, academic and social policy positions, as distinct from direct practice.

It is interesting to note that the authorship of early literature in social work was dominated by female writers. Women such as Josephine Shaw Lowell (1843-1905), Mary Richmond (1861-1928), Jane Adams (1860-1935), Jessie Taft (1882-1960), Hamilton Gordon (1892-1967) and Charlotte Towle (1896-1966) all made substantial contributions to the social work literature. Therefore, the findings of

this study cannot be explained by the tradition of social work as such. More research-based explanations are needed as to why there is less female authorship in the academic aspect of the profession.

#### Professional Status of Authors

The authors of the articles on supervision in this study are all professionals, that is, academics, administrators, social work supervisors, practitioners, consultants and medical doctors.

TABLE 6  
Professional Status of Authors

Status	Number of authors
Academic	34
Administrator	7
Supervisor	3
Social worker	3
Psychologist	1
Practitioner (family therapist)	1
Consultant	1
Medical doctor	4
Totals	54

As can be seen from Table 6, 34 out of the 54 authors (63%) are academics. This finding is similar to that of Gunther (1979). He found that university-affiliated persons have a higher total percentage (55%) of literature contribution than agency-based authors (45%) (1979, p. 63). Brieland (1978) also reports that 75 percent of senior authors of articles appearing in Social Work and Social Service Review from 1973 through 1977 had a university affiliation (p. 2). These findings suggest that academics are more active in facilitating the development of professional practice through knowledge dissemination than practitioners. An obvious reason for the greater number of articles produced by academics is that the reward system in universities involves publication. There is not as great a value placed on publication for a social work administrator or social work practitioners.

Table 6 also shows that administrators as a group rank second as contributors to the literature on social work supervision. The fairly recent publication Administration in Social Work (first published in 1977) encourages the contributions of articles in the area of social work supervision. The journal emphasizes the increased attention to administration in social work and particularly the subject of supervision. Three articles were published in the years 1977 and 1978 which is eight percent of the total articles in the 10-year period of this study. One

implication of this journal's appearance is the obvious attention given to this area of practice and the positive effect this may have in improving professional expertise and knowledge.

It is noted from Table 6 that only three supervisors and three social workers appear as writers on the subject of supervision. The reason is probably that their focus of work is different from the academics. The supervisors and social workers are more involved in providing direct service in the field. However, the continual absence of direct practice authors from the literature is an unfortunate loss to the accumulating knowledge in the social work field. Bartlett (1964) emphasized that it is the responsibility of social workers "to put into words what they are doing so that the essentials of the profession may be communicable and increasingly identifiable in scientific terms" (p. 1). To encourage writing by direct service personnel, some measures could be taken by social work agencies, for example, encouragement, educational leave, publication of agency journals and time off for research purposes.

Students do not appear as authors in the study except for two articles--"Student Reactions to the First Supervisory Year: Relationship and Resolutions" by Barnat (1973), and "Objectionable Supervisory Styles: Students' Views" by Rosenblatt and Mayer (1975). These articles



document the students' feelings about supervision. Students constitute a large group in supervision. Like the clients receiving social work service, social work students can provide educators valuable information for improving social work supervision, particularly in the aspects of design of supervision and supervisory relationship. As noted by Rosenblatt and Mayer (1975), "certain strains may be eliminated or eased through the input of the supervisees who may suggest remedies that had not occurred to the social work professional" (p. 188).

#### Target Readers

The determination of target readers of articles was done by carefully examining the tone, the nature and the contents in the articles. While many articles are written for a single target population, some of them address a number of groups. Although the supervisory process involves only the supervisor(s) and the supervisee(s), it takes place in a variety of settings, each with its own distinct features. Broadly, the target populations are categorized into five groups: the staff supervisors, staff supervisees, student supervisors, student supervisees and administrators.

The target population of 17 (46%) of the 37 articles (of the study population) is staff supervisors. Nine articles (24%) place in the student supervisor category. More emphasis is placed on staff supervision than student

TABLE 7  
Target Population of Journal Articles (1970-79)

Target groups	Number of articles	Percentage
Staff supervisor	17	46.0
Staff supervisee	1	3.0
Staff supervisor and supervisee	5	14.0
Staff/student supervisor	1	3.0
Staff/student supervisee	0	0.0
Student supervisor	9	24.0
Student supervisee	1	3.0
Student supervisor and supervisee	1	3.0
Staff supervisor and administrator	2	6.0
Totals	37	102.0*

\*Total percentage varies from 100 because of rounding.

supervision in the articles on supervision in the 10-year period of this study. It is seen, therefore, that the needs of staff supervisors for professional growth and development is being recognized in the periodical literature. The finding follows logically from the fact that most supervisors work in agency staff positions rather than university settings. Being in the majority they command

greater attention by writers.

However, the comparatively small number of articles addressed to the student supervisors is worthy of note. For many decades, the responsibility of professional training has been shifting to the universities from the agencies. The students in the schools of social work now have ample opportunities to be exposed to agency services and have fieldwork under supervision. Increasingly, student supervisors have assumed a more important role in the training and development of social workers. The role and practice skills of the student supervisors deserve far more attention and discussion by professionals.

Eight articles (22%) address staff or student supervisees (see Table 7). There are fewer articles written for supervisees than supervisors. However, it should be understood that the supervisory process is mutual and dynamic. The goals of supervision cannot be achieved merely by the efforts of the supervisor; the supervisory process would not be effective or efficient without a potentially competent and cooperative supervisee. It is common knowledge that supervisees often experience strains in their interaction with supervisors. They are often afraid to expose their weakness or anxieties which may lead to a poor evaluation. Psychological aspects aside, the supervisees have a vested interest in learning how they

can optimize their professional development in the context of supervision. Indeed, no discussion on supervision is complete without reference to the supervisees who have much potential in bringing about changes and improvement to the process and structure of supervision.

It is apparent from this study that increased attention needs to be given in the periodical literature to the potential use of supervision as a learning process both for the staff and student supervisees.

Only two articles address administrators. In the articles of the study population, the main concern is supervision of direct service workers, rather than supervision of middle management personnel. Social work supervision can be more effective if the administrator is aware of the contribution he/she can make to staff supervision. Berl (1960) notes that board members, administrators, supervisors, and practitioners each play a part in determining standards of supervision. Rothman and Epstein (1977) point to the relationship between organizational variables and social work practice and state that "the collective fate of clients are profoundly affected by organizational factors" (p. 1433).

The administrator is the key person in the organizational structure. The administrator's coordination, planning and ability in delivery of services are vital both to the supervisory process and to the healthy development



of supervision in social work. Such problems and supervisory functions deserve far more attention and enthusiastic discussion by professionals.

### The Organizational Settings of Supervisory Practice

An examination of the organizational settings in which supervision is discussed in these articles indicates an important aspect of social work supervision. In this study, the categories of organizational settings include universities, social services, mental health clinics, medical centres and hospitals, schools of medicine and other organizational settings which are not specified.

TABLE 8

### Organizational Settings of Supervisory Practice

Organizational settings	Number of articles	Percentage
Social services	22	60
University	8	22
Mental health clinic	4	11
Hospital and medical settings	2	4
Non-specific	1	2
Totals	37	102*

\*Total percentage varies from 100 because of rounding.



Twenty-two articles (52%) of the study population discuss supervision in social services settings (see Table 8). Several issues related but not necessarily unique to this setting are discussed. The most prominent is the issue of social workers' desire for increased autonomy in professional practice. Supervisors must maintain a delicate balance between the demands for professional autonomy and their responsibilities to the general public in terms of social service delivery.

Closely related to the issue of professional autonomy is professional practice within bureaucratic organizations. Supervision sometimes represents a bureaucratic means of control and there are times when professional values are in conflict with bureaucratic norms. Social workers in their formal training are often poorly prepared to cope with these complicated situations (Finch, 1976, p. 375). Increased attention needs to be given to the exploration of this problem and to related issues.

Eight articles (22%) discuss fieldwork supervision in relation to professional social work education (these articles were placed in the organizational category "university") (see Table 8). As early as 1974, Murdaugh observed that student supervision received very little attention in the literature (p. 131). The situation has not changed in the last decade. Supervision of student fieldwork is an area in which problems abound, so it is

surprising that so little has been written in this area. Rothman (1977) suggested that social work is in the middle phase of development and maturation along the continuum from "heavy reliance on the field for practice skill acquisition, proceeding to an equal sharing between the field and the university, and culminating in the assumption of major responsibility by the university" (p. 289). As the responsibility for training social workers is assumed mainly by the university, continuous work in studying the role of supervisors in formal university training programmes is needed.

Psychiatric and medical social work have been fields of social work practice since the turn of the century. However, as shown in Table 7, there are only six articles (16%) related to mental health clinics and medical settings. In these six articles, the following topics are discussed: self-awareness, counter-transference and resistances in the supervisory situation (Gizynski, 1978; Lower, 1972), the assessment of supervisor styles (Cherniss & Egnatios, 1978; Goin & Kline, 1974; Nash & Mittlefehldt, 1975) and the student reactions to supervision (Barnat, 1973). Some of the concerns of supervisory practice in psychiatric and medical settings are shared by the professionals of other social services. Nevertheless, social work professionals in the mental health clinics and medical settings face some unique problems. First of all, they have to function

as members of a health care team consisting of mainly medical and paramedical personnel. Secondly, the working relationship is usually intricate. In addition, there is emotional stress that arises from witnessing sickness and death. In this context the supportive component of the supervisory process is quite important. The techniques and skills for supporting and enhancing the competence of social workers in the mental health and medical settings obviously needs further study.

#### Modes of Social Work Supervision

Different modes of social work supervision have been employed by social work professionals in furthering their professional development and promoting effectiveness of practice. The categories for the modes of supervision in this study are as follows: individual supervision, group supervision, consultation, and different combinations of these three modes.

Twenty-four out of the 37 articles (65%) focus on individual supervision. The advantages and disadvantages of this particular method have been discussed by authors such as Apaka et al. (1967); Appleby et al. (1958); Fizdale (1958); Moore (1970, 1971); Smith (1972); Weinberg (1960); and Wax (1959). The advantages of individual supervision are seen to include: individualized teaching, lessened peer rivalry, enhanced confidentiality, reduced scapegoating,

immediacy of direct supervisee feedback, heightened supervisory control and lessened peer pressure for conformity. However, it is generally believed that individual supervision is inevitably limited in terms of experience sharing when compared with the many-faceted approach possible in group supervision.

Table 9 shows that 7 out of 37 articles (19%) focus on group supervision. Moore (1971) provides a detailed account of the advantages of group supervision. These include: opportunity for observation of worker interaction with colleagues, economy of time in sharing common concerns, multi-faceted feedback, collective group wisdom, and group identification facilitated and internalized through peer interaction (pp. 3-5).

TABLE 9  
Modes of Supervision Discussed in the Articles

Modes	Number of articles	Percentage
Individual	24	65
Group	7	19
Consultation	1	3
Individual and group	2	6
Individual, group and consultation	2	6
Group and consultation	1	3
Totals	37	102*

\*The total percentage varies from 100 because of rounding.



One article in the study population of 37 articles discusses the mode of consultation in social work supervision. However, there are 19 listings under the heading "consultation" in the Abstracts 1970-79. Of these 19 listings, only 10 articles contain discussion on the use of consultation for social workers. The other nine articles are mainly concerned with social workers acting as consultants to other professionals in schools and hospital settings. The infrequent use of consultation by social workers may be explained by the fact that the organizational context of supervision usually provides supervisors with power and control formally recognized by the conferment of special status. Consultation suggests a violation of bureaucratic norms, i.e., being able to go to "experts" (recognized by peers) on a consultative basis. More research effort into this hitherto unexplored area is needed.

#### Components of Social Work Supervision

We have discussed in Chapter Two the functional components of social work supervision, and noted how each of these functions developed. The present writer utilizes the basic framework suggested by Kadushin (1976). According to this author, the three principal supervisory functions are administrative, educational and supportive (p. 21). The number of articles with identified emphasis on any one of these functions, or on combinations thereof, are presented in Table 10.

It is seen that 21 out of 37 articles (57%) discuss the educational function of social work supervision. This finding is not unexpected since the traditional emphases of supervision have been the transmission of knowledge and skill development.

TABLE 10  
Components of Social Work Supervision in the Articles

Components	Number of articles	Percentage
Educational	21	57
Administrative	10	27
Supportive	2	6
Educational and supportive	1	3
Administrative and educational	3	8
Administrative and supportive	0	0
Administrative, educational and supportive	0	0
Totals	37	101*

\*Total percentage varies from 100 because of rounding.

There are 10 out of 37 articles on the administrative component of supervision. This represents a substantial 27%

of all articles. Administration has taken on greater importance in the past decade, a decade which has been called "the Age of Accountability" (Scotch & Haskett, 1978). This was a period in which goals and values came to be measured against standards of feasibility and in which costs and scarcity came to define possible alternatives (Scotch & Haskett, 1978). Social welfare institutions began to be viewed as accountable to individual clients or client groups (Henderson & Shore, 1974), the community (Bush, Gordon & LeBailly, 1977; Levin, 1976; Stretch, 1978), and the social work profession (Haselkorn, 1978). Supervision came to be perceived as a means of enhancing the accountability of the agency to the public through its administrative function. Coinciding with this increased concern for accountability was the establishment of the journal Administration in Social Work which seeks to promote discussion on administration in the profession.

Three articles (8%) of the study population focus on the supportive function of supervision (see Table 10). It was not until 1976 in Kadushin's book, Supervision in Social Work that the supportive component of supervision was clearly articulated. This function has long been implicit in the supervisory process. Support from the supervisors is needed to deal with the day to day frustrations that social workers meet. Otherwise, the quality of service delivery will be undermined, as well as the professional

growth of the workers. Increased attention is needed for developing this component of the supervisory process.

The findings of this study show that there are no articles which discuss the relationship of these three functions of social work supervision to each other. Study on the integrative features of the supervisory process is obviously needed.

#### Research Orientation of the Articles

One of the purposes of this study is to identify potential areas for future research in social work supervision. Examination is made of the research orientation of the articles. The articles are classified according to the research orientation of the content in one of the following seven categories: quantitative-descriptive, exploratory, experimental, research themes, research methods, explanatory-descriptive and subjective-experience. Greenwood's notions of empirical research, including the use of systematic observations and standardized procedures which can be independently reproduced (Weinberger & Tripodi, 1969, p. 440), were used as criteria to distinguish between empirical and nonempirical features of articles in this study. The findings are presented in Table 11.

The findings indicate that nonempirical studies make up the largest proportion of the articles in the study population, 24 or 65% of the 37 articles. This includes

TABLE 11  
Research Orientation of the Articles

Research Orientation	Number of articles	Percentage
<b>Empirical:</b>		
Quantitative-descriptive	4	11
Exploratory	5	13
Experimental	4	11
Sub-totals	13	35
<b>Nonempirical:</b>		
Research themes	0	
Research methods	0	
Explanatory-descriptive	15	41
Subjective experience	9	24
Sub-totals	24	65
Totals	37	100

15 articles of the explanatory-descriptive type which discuss the concepts of supervision, and nine articles of the subjective experience type which discuss how the social work professionals solve the problems arising from supervision. This pattern suggests that exchange of experience is the primary function of these 24 articles. These discussions and experiences, while contributing to the



knowledge of social work, could further act as a base for empirical studies. It should be emphasized that no science, natural or social, can survive and remain vital simply on the basis of descriptive studies alone.

This study reveals that 13 articles (35%) are based on empirical research. Of these, only two studies are designed in such a way that hypotheses concerned with cause-effect relationships are tested. In this "empirical" category, the "quantitative-descriptive" method of research is the method used most often. Three articles are exploratory in nature.

These results suggest an awareness amongst professionals of the importance of empirical research in the area of supervision. The fact that there are model-testing studies is encouraging. With this powerful tool of scientific experimentation supervision may be more precisely defined and the effectiveness of different supervisory models evaluated. Data obtained in such empirical studies will provide both a guiding framework and a basis for the development and refinement of supervisory practice.

It is noted from Table 11 that there are no articles on research themes and research methods. There is no discussion on the instruments of research on supervision and there is no discussion of the research topics of social work supervision. Lack of discussion in this area is not

a problem exclusive to social work supervision. It is a concern shared in other fields of social work practice. With an increasing appreciation and demand for empirical knowledge in the field of social work, undoubtedly more empirically-based studies will appear in the literature. If the trend of increasing appearance of empirical-based studies continue, the significance of research themes and methods will be apparent to the researchers. Undoubtedly, insights into the research themes and research methods in social work supervision will help sharpen the tools of experimentation and call attention to areas where data are needed but presently lacking.

#### Theoretical Perspectives

A review of the history of social work supervision in Chapter Two revealed that the development of supervisory practice was influenced by organizing principles having their conceptual roots in learning, psychoanalytic and organizational theories. The purpose of the present analysis is to identify the theoretical perspectives or emphasis taken by the authors in the articles under study. The categories include the models of learning, psychoanalytic and organizational theories. The theoretical positions taken by the authors reveal something of the basic framework and assumptions underlying the developments that have taken place in the past decade.

TABLE 12  
Theoretical Perspectives of the Articles

Theoretical perspectives	Number of articles
Educational	19
Psychoanalytic	3
Management and organizational	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

Nineteen authors (51%) place supervision in the perspective of the educational model (see Table 12). This model has a long tradition in the history of social work supervision. One of its major functions has been knowledge transmission. Learning theory continues to be popular as supervision is considered by social work professionals as a learning process.

Fifteen articles (41%) discuss supervisory process from a management and organizational perspective. The organizational theories which are used by the authors in this study are leadership theory, role theory and management theory. The impact of organizational theories on social work supervision as suggested by Miller (1971) continues to be felt at a time when social services are becoming highly organized, institutionalized and bureaucratized.

There are three articles which use technical language peculiar to the discipline of psychoanalysis. The small number of articles may speak of the relatively little emphasis that psychoanalysis has been given in social work supervision in the last decade. The finding is unexpected as social work supervision has been greatly influenced by psychoanalytic theory. As a matter of fact, the psychoanalytic perspective in each of the articles is assumed by professionals with a clinical orientation (Goin & Kline, 1974; Lower, 1972; Nash & Mittlefehldt, 1975). Thus, it seems that use of psychoanalytic techniques in supervision is more frequent in the mental health and medical settings than in the setting of social services.

#### Audio-visual Techniques and Evaluation of Social Work Supervision.

Two dimensions of supervision are absent in the contents of the 37 articles in this study. The two dimensions are: the use of audio-visual technology on social work supervision, and, the evaluation of social work supervision.

Social work supervision faces the challenge of updating practice technique and skills with the use of modern technology in order to meet the demands of an ever-changing age. Audio-visual technology has the ability to capture the complexity of human transactions crucial to therapeutic intervention. The audio-visual taped sessions

have the potential to significantly improve skill development as well as serve as an objective and useful tool for assessment. The value of audio-visual techniques in supervision and training in the medical field is confirmed (Connolly & Bird, 1977; Goin & Kline, 1976; Meyerson, Wachtel & Thornton, 1977; Vaughan & Marks, 1976). Training in social work and medicine share a common emphasis on supervision in obtaining a required level of performance and facilitating professional growth on the job. Thus, if audio-visual techniques are useful in medical training, one can be reasonably certain that these techniques would find equally successful applications in social work supervision.

There are many articles devoted to the discussion of skills for carrying out evaluation of the work of students and workers. In contrast, none of the articles deal directly with the subject of effectiveness and efficiency of supervision as a vehicle or mechanism to improve worker competence and facilitate learning. This is surprising in a time when increased emphasis is being given to accountability (Briar, 1973) and issues related to cost benefits (Scotch & Haskett, 1978). Should the profession be thinking in terms of alternative routes to proficiency and expertise in practice? Obviously this question cannot be answered without supervision itself becoming the focus of evaluation.



In summary, several findings emerge from this study. There are few articles on social work supervision in the periodical literature when compared with articles on other topics. Over half of the articles in this study were found in five major journals of social work. The authors are mainly male and from the United States. The majority of the articles are contributed by writers with faculty status in the universities. More attention has been given by the writers to agency-based practice and knowledge-building in the interest of front-line workers than to issues related to professional education for social work. Individual supervision remains the primary mode of social work supervision. Educational theory is found to be the predominant framework in which the supervisory process is based and explained. Nonempirical studies make up the larger portion of the articles. Two dimensions of supervisory practice are prominently absent from the articles reviewed in the study. These are: the use of audio-visual technology in practice, and evaluation of supervision as a vehicle to improved practice.

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study confirms the observations of Stiles (1963) and Munson (1979) that supervision as a subject, has attracted little attention in social work literature. The periodical literature on social work supervision is quite small when compared with articles on other topics abstracted in the journal Social Work Research and Abstracts 1970-79. Several possible explanations were suggested and discussed. They included: the increased interest in and concern for professional autonomy and individual rights, the dichotomy of research and practice in the profession and the limited use and appreciation of the journals as a vehicle for professional communication.

Fifty-seven percent (21) of the supervision articles reviewed were found in five journals of social work. They include Social Work, Journal of Education for Social Work, Social Casework, Social Worker and Administration in Social Work. The remaining 43% of the articles (16) appear across 10 social work and medical journals.

The authors of articles on social work supervision in this study are mainly male (65%) and from the United

States (91%). This finding, coupled with the research conclusions of Taber and Shapiro (1965), provides evidence to support the concern expressed by Canadian social workers and female professionals that their views and input are not adequately represented in the current periodical literature.

In spite of the emphasis given by authors (Bartlett, 1964; Little, 1950; Mayer & Rosenblatt, 1975) to the important role and potential contribution of practitioners and students to knowledge-building, very few writers appear in these two author categories of this study. The majority of the articles are contributed by writers with faculty status in the universities.

There are more articles on staff supervision than student supervision. This suggests that more attention has been given by the writers to agency-based practice and knowledge-building in the interest of front-line workers than to issues related to professional education for social work. In fact, with university-based schools of social work assuming major responsibility in training professional social workers (Rothman, 1977), one would expect that the subject of student supervision would command more attention than it has over the past decade. The articles in this study are concerned mainly with supervisors; the issues related to supervisees are not discussed to any large extent. This was explained as possibly

resulting from a lack of insight and appreciation on the part of supervisees as to their role and potential contribution to effective supervision. There is also very little discussion on the potential contribution of administrators to the supervisory process.

Observations by Howe and Schuerman (1975) and Miller (1977) lend support to the assertion that individual supervision is still the mode of social work supervision used most frequently in practice. Nevertheless, group supervision as an alternative method to the individual approach has gained increased attention in the literature over the past decade. This development in practice may have profound effects on the supervisory process and the social work profession as a whole. Such a shift points to the need to re-think the educational, administrative and supportive components of supervision and the final objective of efficient and effective service delivery. Consultation as a method in social work supervision has not been discussed extensively in the journals, probably because it is still at an infancy stage of development. Other factors may be the constraints of agency structure, lack of resources, and limited knowledge and skills in the use of consultation.

In this study, educational theory is found to be the predominant framework in which the supervisory process is based and explained. This is consistent with the finding

by Howe and Schuerman (1975). The traditional function of social work supervision in transmitting knowledge and skills remains important, but a trend toward supervision being reviewed more in the context of administration and management theory is emerging. This echoes Miller's observation based on a review of the recent trends of supervision (1977). There are perhaps three reasons for the small number of articles focusing on the supportive function of supervision. Firstly, the supportive function may not be viewed as important simply because it is taken for granted as implicit in the supervisory process. This could possibly explain the little attention drawn to it in the literature. The second explanation may relate to the fact that experiences of carrying out this function have not been carefully examined or explored. Of course, both explanations are related and merit further study.

The findings show that nonempirical studies make up the larger portion of the articles represented in this study sample. The descriptive nature of the majority of the articles conveys the impression that an exchange of subjective observations, experiences and analysis is still the primary approach to knowledge-building in the periodical literature on supervision. In spite of this, it is encouraging to note that 34% of the total articles are based on empirical research. The need for a greater awareness among professionals of the importance of empirical



research in this area would seem apparent.

Two dimensions of supervisory practice are prominently absent from the articles reviewed in this study. These are: the use of audio-visual technology in practice, and evaluation of supervision as a vehicle to improved practice. With regard to the first issue, it is important that the helping professions be up-to-date with technological changes that have potential for serving and enhancing professional practice. It is also important to evaluate the effectiveness of supervision for the purposes of accountability and the pursuit of more effective and efficient means of using scarce resources.

#### Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from the findings are as follows:

1. That investigation be carried out to determine the factors contributing to the under-representation of women authors in the social work periodical literature when female social workers comprise the majority of the profession's membership.
2. That alternatives be explored to encourage a greater participation and sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences on the part of supervisors, practitioners and student supervisees with the focus on social work supervision and its potential for enhanced practice. This would foster a more balanced perspective of the supervision as it would include the primary actors or participants in the process, the people most directly effected by change.

3. That the uniqueness of social work supervision in Canada deserves exploration. If the social welfare scene in Canada is considered different from that of the United States, more attention needs to be given to the effect of social welfare policy on social work supervision in Canada.
4. That more attention be given to research and publication aimed at exploring the structure and process of student supervision. This aspect of supervision warrants attention because it is a primary vehicle and major component of professional socialization into the profession.
5. That research be carried out to determine the extent to which consultation is used, and its potential as a developmental/supervisory mechanism within social work practice. Demonstration projects, prospective studies and retrospective studies on consultation would help clarify the role of consultation in the supervisory process.
6. That more empirical data be generated to determine the effectiveness of different modes of supervision, the use of supervision and the nature of supervisory content. This would form a basis for sound administrative practice consistent with principles of efficient and effective utilization of resources.
7. That the present status and potential use of electronic technology in social work supervision be explored.

In conclusion, this study represents a preliminary effort to examine the periodical literature base for social work supervision in the period 1970-79. The findings point to the need for further study of social work supervision as a basis for enhanced practice, and the efficient use of resources to better serve those in need.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Study Sample

#### 1970

Abels, P.A. On the nature of supervision: The medium is the group. Child Welfare, 1970, 49 (6), 304-11.

Foeckler, M.M. & Deuschberger, P. Growth-oriented supervision. Public Welfare, 1970, 28 (3), 297-99, 302.

Moore, S. Group supervision: Forerunner or trend reflector? Part I: Trends and duties in group supervision. Social Worker, 1970, 38 (4), 16-20.

#### 1971

Crawford, B. Use of color charts in supervision. Social Casework, 1971, 52 (4), 220-22.

Getzel, G.S., Goldberg, J.R. & Salmon, R. Supervising in groups as a model for today. Social Casework, 1971, 52 (3), 154-63.

Moore, S. Group supervision: Forerunner or trend reflector? Part II: Advantages and disadvantages. Social Worker, 1971, 39 (1), 3-7.

#### 1972

Cowan, B., Dastyk, R. & Wickham, E.R. Group supervision as a teaching/learning modality in social work. Social Worker, 1972, 40 (4), 256-61.

Lower, R.B. Countertransference resistances in the supervisory situation. American Journal of Psychiatry, 1972, 129 (2), 156-60.

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1974

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- Hawthorne, L. Games supervisors play. Social Work, 1975, 20 (3), 179-83.
- Nash, K.B. & Mittlefehldt, V.A. Supervision and the emerging professional. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1975, 45 (1), 93-101.



Rosenblatt, A. & Mayer, J.E. Objectionable supervisory styles: Students' views. Social Work, 1975, 20 (3), 184-89.

### 1976

Allen, J.D. Jr. Peer group supervision in family therapy. Child Welfare, 1976, 55 (3), 183-89.

Lounsbury, J.W. & Hall, D.Q. Supervision and consultation conflicts in the day-care licensing role. Social Service Review, 1976, 50 (3), 515-23.

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### 1977

Cohen, N.A. & Rhodes, G.R. Social work supervision: A view toward leadership style and job orientation in education and practice. Administration in Social Work, 1977, 1 (3), 281-91.

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1978

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Gizynski, M. Self-awareness of the supervisor in supervision. Clinical Social Work Journal, 1978; 6 (3), 202-10.

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1979

Matorin, S. Dimensions of student supervision: A point of view. Social Casework, 1979, 60 (3), 150-56.

## APPENDIX B

The sample of 10 articles used to determine coefficient of intercoder reliability include:

1. Moore, S. Group supervision: Forerunner or trend reflector? Part I: Trends and duties in group supervision. Social Work, 1970, 38, 16-20.
2. Getzel, G.S., Goldberg, J.R. & Salmon, R. Supervising in groups as a model for today. Social Casework, 1971, 52, 154-63.
3. Lower, R.B. Countertransference resistances in the supervisory situation. American Journal of Psychiatry, 1972, 129, 156-60.
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## APPENDIX C



# Names of Journals--Intercoder Reliability

Journals	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Social worker	*									
Social caseworker		*								*
American Journal of Psychiatry			*							
Arrete				*						
Social Work					*	*			*	
Social Service Review							*			
Administration in Social Work								*		

Note: \* = decisions in agreement  
 number of coding decisions = 10  
 coefficient of reliability (C.R.) =  $\frac{20}{2 \times 10}$   
 = 1.00

## APPENDIX D

# Gender Status of Authors--Intercoder Reliability

Sex status	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Male	*	***	*	*	*	**	*	**	*,2	
Female							*		1	*

Note: \* = decisions in agreement = 15  
number of coding decisions = 32

1 = decision made by coder  
2 = decision made by co-coder

$$C.R. = \frac{2 \times 15}{32}$$

$$= 0.94$$

## APPENDIX E

# Professional Status of Authors--Intercoder Reliability

Professional status	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Academic	*			*	*	**		**	*	
Administrator	/	***					1,1		*	
Supervisor										
Social worker										*
Psychologist										
Practitioner										
Consultant							2,2			
Medical doctor			*							

Note: \* = decisions in agreement = 14  
number of coding decisions = 32

1 = decision made by coder  
2 = decision made by co-coder

$$C.R. = \frac{2 \times 14}{32}$$

$$= 0.88$$



APPENDIX F

# Geographical Location of Authors--Intercoder Reliability

Country	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Canada	*									
United States		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Note: \* = decisions in agreement = 10  
number of coding decisions = 20

$$C.R. = \frac{2 \times 10}{20}$$

$$= 1.00$$

## APPENDIX G

# Target Population of Articles-Inter-coder Reliability

Target population	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Staff supervisor	*	1	2						1	
Staff supervisee										
Staff supervisor and supervisee		2			*				2	
Staff/student supervisor								*		
Staff/student supervisee										
Student supervisor			1			*				*
Student supervisee										
Student supervisor and supervisee										
Staff supervisor and administrator				*			*			

Note: \* = decisions in agreement = 7  
number of coding decisions = 20

1 = decision made by coder

2 = decision made by co-coder

$$\text{C.R.} = \frac{2 \times 7}{20}$$

$$= 0.70$$

## APPENDIX H



# Types of Organizational Settings--Intercoder Reliability

Institutions	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Social services	*	*		*	*	2	*			
University						1		*		*
Mental health clinic									*	
Medical centre and hospital			*							

Note: \* = decisions in agreement = 9  
number of coding decisions = 20

1 = decision made by coder  
2 = decision made by co-coder

$$\begin{aligned} \text{C.R.} &= \frac{2 \times 9}{20} \\ &= 0.90 \end{aligned}$$

## APPENDIX I

# Modes of Supervision--Intercoder Reliability

Modes	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Individual			*	*	2	*		2	*	*
Group	*	*								
Consultation							*			
Individual and group								1		
Individual, group and consultation					1					

## Note:

\* = decisions in agreement = 8  
number of coding decisions = 20

1 = decision made by coder  
2 = decision made by co-coder

C.R. =  $\frac{2 \times 8}{20}$   
= 0.80

## APPENDIX J

# Components of Social Work Supervision--Intercoder Reliability

Components	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Educational	*		*			*			1	*
Administrative				*			1	1		
Supportive										
Educational and supportive		*								
Administrative and educational					*					
Administrative and supportive										
Administrative, educational and supportive							2	2	2	

Note: \* = decisions in agreement  
number of coding decisions = 7  
= 20

1 = decision made by coder  
2 = decision made by co-coder

C.R.  $\frac{2 \times 7}{20}$   
= 0.70



APPENDIX K

# Research Orientation of the Articles--Intercoder Reliability

Research orientation	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Quantitative-descriptive			*					1		
Exploratory					*	*			1	
Experimental				*			*	2	2	
Research themes		2								
Research methods										
Explanatory-descriptive	*									*
Experience		1								

Note:    \* = decisions in agreement    =    7  
              number of coding decisions    =    20  
              1 = decision made by coder  
              2 = decision made by co-coder  
              C.R. =  $\frac{2 \times 7}{20}$   
                      = 0.70

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APPENDIX L

# Theoretical Perspectives of the Articles--Intercoder Reliability

Theoretical perspectives	Year of the articles									
	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Educational	*					*			1	*
Psychoanalytic			*							
Organizational		*		*	*		*	*	2	

## Note:

\* = decisions in agreement = 9  
number of coding decisions = 20

1 = decision made by coder  
2 = decision made by co-coder

$$\begin{aligned} \text{C.R.} &= \frac{2 \times 9}{20} \\ &= 0.90 \end{aligned}$$

## APPENDIX M



Course on Social Work Supervision Offered by Universities  
and Colleges in Canada

Universities and colleges	Bachelor programme and first professional degree	Master programme
British Columbia	no <sup>a</sup>	no <sup>a</sup>
Calgary	no <sup>a</sup>	yes <sup>a</sup>
Carleton	--	no <sup>a</sup>
Concordia	no <sup>a</sup>	--
Dalhousie	no <sup>a</sup>	no <sup>a</sup>
King's (Ontario)	no <sup>a</sup>	--
Lakehead	no <sup>b</sup>	--
Laurentian	no <sup>a</sup>	--
McGill	no <sup>a</sup>	yes <sup>a</sup>
McMaster	no <sup>a</sup>	no <sup>c</sup>
Manitoba	no <sup>a</sup>	no <sup>a</sup>
Memorial	yes <sup>a</sup>	no <sup>a</sup>
Regina	no <sup>a</sup>	no <sup>b</sup>
Ryerson	yes <sup>b</sup>	no
St. Thomas	no <sup>a</sup>	--
Toronto	--	no <sup>b</sup>
Victoria (B.C.)	no <sup>a</sup>	--
Wilfred Laurier	--	no <sup>a</sup>
Windsor	no <sup>b</sup>	yes <sup>a</sup>
York	no <sup>a</sup>	--

<sup>a</sup>according to school calendar 1980-81

<sup>b</sup>according to school calendar 1979-80

<sup>c</sup>according to school calendar 1978-79

--no course offered

## APPENDIX N

## First Year of Publications of Journals

Journals	Year
Administration in Social Work	1977
American Journal of Orthopsychiatry	1930-31
American Journal of Psychiatry	1927
Arete	1970
Child Welfare	1948
Clinical Social Work Journal	1973
Family Process	1962
Journal of Black Studies	1971
Journal of Counseling Psychology	1954
Journal of Education for Social Work	1965
Journal of Marriage & Family Counseling	1975
Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease	1951
Public Welfare	1943
Smith College Studies in Social Work	1930
Social Casework	1920
Social Service Review	1927
Social Work	1956
Social Worker	1946









