The Perception of Social Workers in the N-E Area of Romania on Supervision

Elena UNGURU¹

¹Doctoral School of Sociology of the University of Oradea, Romania; LUMEN Research Center in Social and Humanistic Sciences, Iași, Romania, ely8519@yahoo.com

Abstract: The supervision relationship is a long-lasting evaluation, oriented towards a number of purposes: improving the professional activity of supervised persons, monitoring the quality of services provided by practitioners, and promoting professional practice in general. The aim of the research is to analyze the main axes of the social construction of the supervision of social services in public institutions for child protection in the N - E area of Romania. The research was based on the questionnaire survey and was carried out between October 2018 and January 2019 in the public social work institutions in Bacău, Botosani, Iași, Suceava, Neamț, Vaslui counties. Social workers prefer the supportive side to the administrative one, while supervision managers put the focus on the control dimension, but accompanied by the formative one.

Keywords: *supervision; supervised social workers; social construction; professional skills; professional practice;*

How to cite: Unguru, E. (2019). The Perception of Social Workers in the N-E Area of Romania on Supervision. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 11(1), 224-255. <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/108>

Literature Review

From the point of view of the supervisor's belonging in the organization, we talk about internal supervision - where the supervisor is a member of the organization, too often being also a member of the management and external team, the supervisor not being a member of the team, the contractual relationship with this being usually temporary.

Internal supervision is accessible to all members of the organization, usually as a permanent activity, but involves a series of costs related to the monthly payment of a salary for the supervisor. Internal supervision may sometimes be perceived by employees as mandatory, imposed, often being equated with managerial control activity (Holunga, 2013). Internal supervision can benefit from some continuity, which leads to the creation of a trust and cooperation relationship between supervisors and supervised persons (Cojocaru, 2005; Kadushin, 2014).

External supervision can be done periodically or occasionally, based on a contract between the organization and the supervisor. This agreement must necessarily include a set of supervision principles agreed upon by the organization and the external supervisor, including the ethical principles (Huidu, 2018) on which the supervision is based, including the principle of confidentiality (Unguru & Sandu, 2017; Mureșan, 2017). The costs of external supervision may be lower, but the depth of the relationship of trust between the supervised and the supervisor is usually lower (Frunză, A., 2018). One advantage of external supervision is that an external supervisor is more emotionally detached from the organizational problems and culture of the institution than the supervisor does, which allows a clearer analysis of the problems related to the human resource it faces (Chipea, Osvat, & Marc, 2013; Holunga, 2013; Lietz, 2018).

In the practice of supervision, a number of functional dimensions are known, such as those of managerial and control, and, respectively, the formative-supportive one. The following functions are included in the management dimension and the control of the quality of social services: hierarchical control, practice control, human resource administrative assessment, document assessment and control, document tracking, etc. Within the formative-supportive dimension are included: support based supervision, mentoring, coaching, supervision based on competency training (Baglow, 2009; Caras & Sandu, 2014a, 2014b; Frunza, 2017; Kadushin, 2014; Marc, Makai-Dimeny, & Oshvat, 2014; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015; Sandu, Unguru, Ponea, & Cojocaru, 2010; Tsui, 2004; Weiss & Brennan, 2008).

According to the way of organizing the supervision sessions, there is the individual supervision - the most frequent - at the supervising session attended only by the supervisor and supervised, and the group supervision, where several supervised persons participate in a joint meeting, usually based on group-specific techniques (Cojocaru, 2005; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002; Kyriacou, 2002; Muntean, 2007; O'Donoghue, 2010; O'Donoghue, Ju, & Tsui, 2018). Individual supervision takes into account the work of the social worker both in general terms and especially with regard to on roll cases - case management (Holunga, 2013; Nistor, 2018). At the level of individual supervision, support sessions can be developed to take into account the elimination of occupational stress and burn-out phenomenon, as well as the evaluation of training needs, practical mentoring and coaching activities for the benefit of the supervised person (Unguru & Sandu, 2018). Group supervision is a time-based professional meeting that seeks to evaluate situations and identify solutions, experience sharing, conflict resolution, and group therapy (Holunga, 2013).

A particular form of supervision is the appreciative one, based on the assessment and development of the supervised person's strengths. Appraisal supervision is based on a particular narrative-type research-intervention called the *appreciative inquiry*, based on identifying successful elements and strategies in the organization, as well as identifying patterns of transfer of these practices (Caras & Sandu, 2014a, 2014b; Frunza, 2017; Marc et al., 2014; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015; Kadushin, 2014).

Supervision is focused on solutions, seeking to identify the problems faced by the social worker in a case, as well as the diagnosis of social problems, the supervision process being centered on the time the problems arise in solving the client's case, on the issues that caused these problems and on identifying the optimal solutions (Holunga, 2013).

Professional stress

In general, professional stress is considered a negative phenomenon, with harmful effects on employee welfare (Baltitescu, 2016), but also its performance. In practice, a number of people perform under stressful conditions, at least for a limited time (Șleahțișchi, 2007).

A particular form of professional stress is the burn-out syndrome, which is in fact a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged stress, generally at work, being a consequence of the imbalance between requirements, resources and level of professional satisfaction (Morosan, 2015).

Competences of the supervisor

According to art. 5 of the Government Emergency Ordinance 129/2000 on the vocational training of adults, the professional competence is the ability to perform the required activities at the workplace, at the quality level specified in the occupational standard. Professional competencies are acquired through initiation, qualification, training, specialization, re-qualification, defined as follows: a) *initiation* is the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and minimal competencies necessary for carrying out an activity; b) *qualification* is the set of professional competencies that allow a person to carry out activities specific to an occupation or profession; c) *improvement* is the development of professional skills within the same qualification; d) *specialization* is a specific form of vocational training aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills in a limited area within the sphere of occupation; e) *retraining* consists in acquiring skills specific to another occupation or profession, different from those previously acquired.

According to the occupational standard of Supervisor in social services, COR code 263513, a supervisor should have the following skills: *organizing the supervisor's work in social services; ensuring professional standards in line with professional ethics in supervision; applying supervision methods in the field of social services; application of types of intervention in the supervision of social services; management of interactions / conflicts in professional activity, through supervision techniques; applying the methods of supervision in the organizational development specific to social services; applying methods and techniques for identifying training needs; applying group and team supervision techniques in the field of social services; compliance with legal provisions in the field of social services; acquiring mechanisms to manage the effects of personal professional experiences* (FONPC, 2017).

In line with the same occupational standard, "the social work supervisor brings a positive contribution to the labor market, the social services sector and beyond, by supporting professional development and a work environment in which social work professionals can integrate dynamic theoretical training with professional practice and the interest of the beneficiaries with the legislation, as well as the working procedures and the resources they have at their disposal" (Unguru & Sandu, 2018).

Methodology

The aim of the research is to analyze the main axes of the social construction of supervision of social services in public institutions for child protection in the N - E area of Romania.

Research objectives

O1. Identifying the types of supervision provided to social workers in the N-E region of Romania.

O2. Identifying the most common supervision functions present in the activity of supervisors in the N-E region of Romania.

O3. Identifying the main meanings that professionals in the social work sector for family and child assign to the supervision process.

Research hypotheses:

I1. The supervision of social services in Romania is overlapped with the exercise of managerial and control functions, managers being generally those who assume the role of supervisor.

I2. The overlapping of roles between managerial and supervision generates a preponderance of the administrative and control function, towards the formative and the support.

I3. Supervision is generally perceived by social workers as important for the development of human resources in the field.

I4. In the supervision process, the relationship of power between the supervisor and supervised is balanced by mutual trust.

Research development

The questionnaire-based survey was carried out between October 2018 and January 2019 in the public social work institutions in Bacău, Botosani, Iași, Suceava, Neamț and Vaslui counties. In the sample were accepted only social workers, members of the CNASR. The selection of the participants in the research was done by sending questionnaires to DGASPCs, DACs and social workers in the City Halls. The questionnaires were sent through the representatives of the CNASR leadership from the mentioned counties, who requested the support of the social workers from the public institutions in the mentioned counties, in order to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires contained, in the introductory part, a series of information on the question of the questionnaire and the possibility of withdrawing from the research at any time. Completing the questionnaire is in itself an informed consent to participate in research, and information processing without disclosing personal information about the respondents.

The self-addressed questionnaire was completed and sent through the CNASR representatives, to whom we thank publicly on this occasion.

Sampling

In the N-E area of Romania there are 1588 social workers working in the public services, being members of the CNASR college and representing the target population of the research. The margin of error of the research is $\pm 4\%$ at a probability of 95%. Sampling was done on quotas, with proportionality to the number of social workers in each institution where questionnaires were applied, following step $x + 4$, to which 39 more respondents were added, in order to ensure the representation of small institutions in which the step could not be applied.

A total of 461 people entered the research, of which the answers of 22 people were invalidated, as they did not meet the requirements imposed by the sampling process, namely to carry out their work as a social worker in the public environment. We chose to exclude private organizations from quantitative research, as the characteristics of the supervision process are relatively different, as is evident from qualitative research. The difference lies in the existence of a supervising post in many private organizations, where the person does not have administrative responsibilities as well.

Of the valid answers, 408 women and 31 men responded, the percentage being representative of the gender share of the social workers in the mentioned counties. All participants in the research have higher education, of which 12% have postgraduate studies, such as Masters and PhDs.

Results

Roles in the supervision relationship

Depending on the roles that the persons surveyed have in the supervision relationship, 54% are only supervised social workers, 27% also play the role of supervisor and supervised person, 27% do not benefit from supervision or act as supervisors, 8% are just supervisors. We can observe that, although mandatory by law, supervision is not always present in social work institutions in the N-E region of Romania, or even if it is formally present, it is inoperative. We assume that in these situations we are dealing with formal supervision, non-existent in fact, but not completely non-existent in the official documents, because the existence of supervision is a condition for the licensing of family and child protection services (Law 292/2011 Ordinances no. 21/2004, No 24/2004, No 25/2004, No 27/2004, No 89/2004).

Most people declare that they act as supervised persons, as is to be expected. A small number of only 8% of respondents declare that they are exclusively supervisors, which makes us believe that these people cumulate the role of supervisor with that of center or team manager. A percentage of 100% of those who declared themselves to be supervisors only, without being supervised, said they had managerial positions, while there was also a 100% overlap between those who said they were, at the same time, both supervisors and supervised, with those who declare that they have managerial responsibilities. Looking back, only 44% of managers declare that they have supervisory responsibilities, regardless of whether these tasks are exercised without the benefit of supervision itself, or whether the manager also benefits from supervision is in his or her role as a social worker. 50.4% of managers are themselves supervised, but do not have supervisory responsibilities, and 5.6% of managers are not involved in supervision.

These results show only a partial verification of the first hypothesis, in the sense that the persons who are supervisors generally have managerial attributions, thus overlapping supervisory and control competences, but not vice-versa, with only less than half of the managers providing supervision. We recall that the persons with managerial position who have entered the sample have the status of social worker, a status which was a selection criterion for the sample. It is possible that a number of other managers, who are not social workers, can also carry out the supervision activity, a legally accepted situation, but not covered by our study, which is a limitation of the present research. We note that only 3% of respondents showed that they are supervised by people who do not have any specialization in social work or supervision, nor extensive experience in the field.

1. What is your type of supervision?

Figure 1 – The types of supervision the interviewees are a part of

The supervisor

Of the people surveyed, 59% stated that the supervision was performed by the manager, 21% responded that the supervision was carried out by a supervisor, 13% responded that the supervision was carried out by a colleague, 4% responded that the supervision was carried out by another person, in this case the chief of staff, the deputy general manager or the coordinator, and 3% responded that supervision was carried out by an external supervisor.

From the answer to this question, we find that 59% of the respondents appreciate that the manager is the one performing the supervision, plus another 4% of the respondents who place supervision in the responsibility of the manager, deputy general manager or others, which confirms again partly the hypothesis of overlap between the management-administrative and the supervisory function, with that of supervision. Only 22% of respondents show that there is at least one person in the organization in which they operate to be the supervisor. The fact that 13% of the respondents show that the supervisor is a colleague, although previously there were 22% who had the position of supervisor, makes us think that there is a reluctance to consider colleagues as supervisors, even if they are not expressly managers. We also find that supervision is practically non-existent among social workers in the N-E region of Romania, being below the margin of error of the research.

2. Who conducts the supervision in your organisation?

Figure 2 - Who supervises the organization that the surveyed people are a part of

The level of training of the supervisor, as perceived by supervised persons

Supervision is conducted in a proportion of 47% by a very experienced social worker, 19% are people in the management of the organization, bringing together the managerial and supervisory role, 14% by a professional in a field other than social work, but who has a wide experience in the organization, 11% by a specialist with studies in the field of supervision, 6% of the respondents opted not to respond, and 3% show that supervision is carried out by a person who does not have extensive experience or studies in the field.

Observations: The question allowed for multiple answers, a person being able to choose different variants, including the correlation between the situation where a supervisor has a lot of experience in the field, but also studies in the field of supervision, respectively experience and / or studies, cumulated with the quality of manager, but also lack of experience and / or studies related to being in the management. In the field data analysis, however, no such situations were identified in which respondents would opt for more responses that would be valid together.

We find that 17% of the respondents say they are supervised by people without studies in the field of in social work, but they are mostly considered to have extensive experience in the field. Respondents are demanding, with only 47% appreciating the supervisor's professional experience. The social workers surveyed seem to appreciate the supervisor's professional experience, even if he does not have formal education in the field of social work, but their lack is supplemented by experience. Exploratory studies in the area of supervision are quite rarely mentioned, only in 11% of these cases being obtained in the form of postgraduate training through masters.

3. What level of training in the field of supervision does the person you most frequently receive supervision from, has?

Figure 3 – Level of training in the field of supervision of the person most often performing supervision

Type of supervision

Of those who have declared that they benefit from supervision, 93% have internal supervision and only 7% have external supervision.

The lack of external supervision can be linked to the overlap between supervision and control, which leads most managers to take on the supervisory duties themselves, even if national standards allow these tasks to be delegated. External supervision usually occurs when social services are set up in municipalities or small organizations that do not allow for an extended organization chart, in which case they call on social workers, members of the free practice college, who have individual cabinets to ensure supervision, but also when part of the case management requires higher education studies in social work, the current activities being carried out with social workers, without training in social work.

4. What type of supervision you benefit from?

Figure 4 - The type of supervision the surveyed persons receive

Asked to detail the type of supervision received, the respondents considered that they received supervision as follows: 17% considered that they had individual supervision, 16% considered that their practice was supervised during bachelor studies, 16% 16% consider that they have been supervised within the multidisciplinary team, 15% consider they received support based supervision, 10% consider that they have benefited from group supervision, 9% consider that they have benefited from strenght-based (appreciative) supervision and 1% of the respondents chose not to answer this question.

With respect to the types of supervision, only 16% consider that supervision has been reduced to the managerial-administrative side, while 15% emphasize the support dimension of the supervision they received, which partially negates the hypothesis of research on overlap between management and supervision. This leads to the conclusion that although the supervision is carried out by the managers, they respect both main dimensions of supervision: the administrative-managerial and the formative-supportive one. In other words, although the formal overlap of roles exists and the administrative-managerial dimension has a larger share in the total of supervisory activities, it does not overlap completely with the supervision activity.

The close value between the number of respondents who considered themselves to be administratively and managerially supervised, and those who considered that they mainly benefit from supervision based on

education, training and support, respectively, partially invalidates hypothesis 2, showing that the model of supervision in the area of NE of Romania is rather balanced in terms of supervisory functions, even if it is mainly carried out by managers.

5. Which of the following types of supervision have you benefited from? Multiple Answer.

- a) supervision of practice during bachelor studies
- b) managerial / administrative supervision
- c) support-based supervision
- d) strenght-based (appreciative) supervision
- e) individual supervision
- f) group supervision
- g) supervision within the multidisciplinary team
- h) others (which kind?).....
- i) don't know / won't answer

Figure 5 - The type of supervision the surveyed persons receive
Meaning of the term "supervision"

Concerning the meaning of the term "supervision", 35% of respondents to the questionnaire correlate supervision with the term of support, 24% with the term control, 18% with the vocational training, 12%

with bureaucracy, 9% mediation, and 2% of respondents chose not to answer this question.

The social workers questioned considered that the supervision they receive is rather a professional support and training activity of the professionals, with the two functions of supervision, totalizing, together with the mediation, 62% of the respondents' opinions, while only 24% of these correlate it with the term control and 12% with bureaucracy. By correlating these results with those of the previous question, it appears that professionals appreciate the formative-supportive aspect of supervision rather than the administrative-managerial.

6. Which of the following words best describe the type of supervision you received?

Figure 6 - Words that best define the supervision received by people surveyed

Meaning of the ideal relationship of supervision

As far as ideal supervision is concerned, it should be based on support in 50% of answers, and 27% on training, which accounts for 77% of the respondents' preferences.

Further, we asked the respondents to identify a term describing the ideal supervision relationship. 50% of the respondents believe that the ideal supervision relationship is that of support, 27% consider the relationship to

be a vocational training, 16% consider the relationship to be a mediation, 6% consider it a hierarchical control relationship and 1% opted not to respond. There is a 24% difference between the preferences regarding the specificity of the supervision and its functional dimension, as it was previously expressed, which is higher in terms of management and control. The preference for the supportive and supportive-formative side can be explained by the adversity towards control, especially towards the hierarchical one, which can be translated into the definition of some games of supervision (Cojocaru, 2005, Delano & Shah, 2011, Kadushin, 1968), in the sense of balancing the power disparities between the supervisor and the supervised, by substituting the administrative control function with the support function.

The answer to the two questions, relating to the ideal supervisory relationship and to the one in which they are involved as supervisors or supervised, allows us to synthesize a response to O3 that the supervisors identify two functional axes of supervision, the first being that of support and training, and which is preferred by the respondents, and the second one combining the managerial and administrative control functions. The two functions are roughly equal in practice, the difference between the expectations and the preferences of the respondents and the situation they face in practice, making space for games of supervision, in order to reduce the power disparities between supervisor and supervised.

7. Which of the following words should define the ideal relationship of supervision?

Figure 7 - Words that should define the ideal relationship of supervision

The perceived utility of supervision

1. For supervised social workers

Among the respondents, 51% consider that supervision is very useful, 38% consider it useful, 9% consider it not useful or useless and 2% considered it completely useless.

8. How useful do you think supervision is for your professional development?

Figure 8 - Usefulness of supervision for the professional development of the persons questioned

2. For organizational development

59% of respondents to the questionnaire consider that supervision is very useful in organizational development, 33% consider it useful, 6% consider that it is neither useful nor useless, 1% considers it partly useless and 1% considered complete unnecessary.

9. How useful do you think supervision is for the development of the social work organization?

Figure 9 – Usefulness of supervision for the development of social work organizations

3. For beneficiaries

57% of respondents to the questionnaire consider that supervision is very useful for the beneficiaries of social work services, 38% consider it useful, 3% consider that it is neither useful nor useless, 1% considers it partly useless and 1% considered that it is completely useless.

10. How useful do you consider the supervision of social workers to be, for their beneficiaries?

Figure 10 - The utility of supervising social workers for beneficiaries of social work services

Respondents are generally aware of the importance of supervision in the professional development, with only 11% considering it to be useless or totally useless. This provides positive premises for the development of supervision among social workers in the studied region, making it an important tool in human resource management.

These results confirm hypothesis 3, the social workers considering supervision to be important both in terms of professional, and organizational and personal development.

The need for supervision

Of the respondents, 55% consider supervision to be necessary, 24% consider that there is a great need for supervision, 15% consider that there is little or no need for supervision, 4% consider that there is little need for supervision in the organization, and 2% believe that there is no need for supervision in the organization.

Resuming in another form the question of the need for supervision, the data confirms that social workers understand this need, with 79% of respondents considering it as large or very large.

11. If you were to grade, from 1 to 5, the need for supervision in your organisation, what would you chose?

Figure 11 - How high is the need for supervision in the organizations of the people surveyed

The need for supervision. The main reason why supervision is required

Of the people surveyed, 30% believe that the main reason for the need for supervision is the professional development of social workers, 24% consider that the main reason for supervision is the reduction of professional stress (Marc & Osvat, 2013), 18% consider that the main reason why supervision is necessary is the continuous training of social workers, 11% consider that the main reason for supervision is the mentoring of the social workers in the beginning, 9% consider that the main reason for this need for supervision is to control the work of social workers and case managers, 5% consider that the main reason why supervision is needed is to avoid malpractice, 2% consider that the main reason for supervision is that it is a bureaucratic element imposed by the system and 1% considers that supervision is not necessary. We draw attention to the fact that only 3%, meaning below the margin of error, considers supervision to be bureaucratic and totally useless. Since professional development is the main reason why respondents consider supervision to be necessary, we can assume that hypothesis 3 is verified.

12. What is the main reason why supervision is required?

Figure 12 - The main reason why supervision is required

Frequency of supervision

33% of the survey respondents consider that they offer or receive day-to-day supervision, 23% consider that they offer or receive weekly supervision, 14% consider that they offer or receive monthly supervision, 20% consider that they offer or receive quarterly supervision, 6% chose not to respond to this question, and 4% consider they are providing or receiving supervision on an annual basis.

Service accreditation standards, for the most part, expressly require the existence of weekly supervision sessions and, as the case may be, whenever needed. As such, 56% of respondents work in organizations that comply with this standard. In the case of those who receive quarterly or annual supervision, we may consider that they do not realize that they are involved in a supervision process due to the informal nature of a supervision meeting that they consider as a peer-review, or work in organizations that put small emphasis on supervision, despite the fact that social workers have highlighted its importance for their professional and personal development.

13. How often do you benefit from supervision / offer supervision?

Figure 13 - How often do the people surveyed supervise or provide supervision?

Length of the session of supervision

Of those surveyed, 60% consider that a supervision session lasts between 10 and 30 minutes, 20% consider that a supervision session lasts between 30 and 60 minutes, 10% of the respondents consider that a supervision session takes less than 10 minutes, 7% opted not to answer this question, and 3% believe that a supervision session lasts over 60 minutes. The length of the supervision meetings depends on the supervisor style and the techniques used, as well as on the importance given to the supervising organization. In general, a session under 30 minutes can review the important cases, but the supervisor is less able to transfer new competencies to the supervisor, or to perform all the functions of supervision, including emotional support and diminishing professional stress.

Of course, the correlation between the importance of supervision and its frequency is important, as not all the dimensions of supervision must be present at each meeting. Unfortunately, 62.13% of respondents who declared that they had a supervision over a period of more than one month, representing 14.58% of the total respondents, showed that the times for holding a meeting are lower than 30 Minutes, which clearly shows that meetings are generally formal or contain an administrative and supervisory control side.

14. How long does a supervising session take you?

Figure 14 - Duration of a supervision meeting

Features of the Supervision Meeting

38% of respondents consider that a supervision meeting focuses more on the situation of the beneficiaries, 13% of the respondents consider that a supervision meeting focuses more on the situation of the supervised person, 11% of the respondents consider that a supervision meeting is more focused on the acquisition of new skills by the supervised person, 10% of the respondents consider that a supervision session focuses more on ethics in social practice, 9% of the respondents consider that a supervision meeting focuses more on the supervisor's weaknesses, 7% of respondents consider that a supervision meeting focuses more on possible errors, 6% of respondents consider that a supervision session focuses more on the programs of the organization and its particularities, and 6% of the respondents considers that a supervision meeting focuses more on the supervisor's strengths (appreciative).

From the perspective of the content of the supervision meeting, the interest in case supervision, focusing on the situation of the beneficiaries, followed by the situation of the supervised person, including the acquisition of new skills, the development of professional ethics, etc., prevails. Practically, the content follows the pattern that the supervisor focuses on cases where the supervisor acts as the *gatekeeper* between the interest of the beneficiaries and the mission of the organization.

15. On which element does a supervision session focuses most?

- a) on the beneficiaries' situation
- b) on the situation of the supervised person (professional stress, burn out, etc.)
- c) on the acquisition of new skills by the supervised person
- d) on Ethics in Social Practice
- e) on the organization's programs and its particularities
- f) on the supervised's strengths (appreciative)
- g) over the supervised's weaknesses
- h) on possible errors
- i) others (which?).....

Figure 15 - The element on which a supervision meeting is most focused

Techniques in the supervision process

With regard to supervision methods and techniques, they are generally known by the respondents, with relatively few percentages for each of the methods being due to the fact that it was specified not to make multiple selection because it was intended to rank them according to frequency and accessibility for social workers.

Of the respondents, 22% know case analysis, 14% know case reassessment, 13% - support supervision, 12% know group meetings, 10% know control supervision, 8% know appreciative supervision, 7% of respondents to the questionnaire know role play, 3% know training / workshop supervision, 2% know the parallel process, 2% know narrative supervision, 2% know mentoring, 2% know coaching, 1% video interaction, and 3% opted not to answer this question.

As such, case-control, which collects 36% of the answers expressed, predominates. It is worth mentioning that only 10% declare at this point that supervision is of the control type, as such, even though the activity of control during the supervision process is more widespread, is not perceived as purely control, but rather as correlated with case supervision. However, supervision with a role of professional training, including mentoring and coaching, is quite low, being only 9%, a part of the training activity being, of course, included in the field of case supervision. We are glad that appreciative supervision, based on the strengths of the social worker, is met in the proportion of 10%, which means that supervisors take care of motivating staff by identifying and developing the strengths of social workers.

16. Which of the following supervision techniques did you encounter in the supervision process? (multiple answer)

Figure 16 - Supervision techniques encountered in the supervision process

Level of confidence in the supervisor

As regards trust in the supervision relationship, 52% of respondents think they have confidence in the supervisor, 23% of the respondents consider that they have tremendous confidence in the supervisor, 20% do neither trust nor distrust the supervisor, 4% have a little confidence in the supervisor, and 1% think they do not trust the supervisor at all. The importance of trust in the supervision relationship is given by the support dimension that the supervision process has, and whose primary element is trust. The fact that over 75% of the respondents have high or very high confidence in the supervisor makes us believe that there is a process of balancing the power relationship in the supervision activity, precisely through the allocation of mutual trust between the two partners. As such, hypothesis 4 is verified.

17. How do you appreciate the level of confidence you have in the supervisor?

Figure 17 - Level of confidence the respondents have in the supervisor

The competences of the supervisor

Of the respondents, 36% consider that the most important competences of a supervisor are those of communication, 30% consider that the most important competences of a supervisor are professional ones, 13% consider that the most important competences of a supervisor are the ethical

ones, 9% consider that the most important competences of a supervisor are the managerial ones, 7% consider that the most important competences of a supervisor are the pedagogical ones, 4% consider that the most important competences of a supervisor are the administrative ones, and 1% have opted not to answer this question.

The importance of communication in the supervision relationship is highlighted by the positioning of communication skills as the most important skills that a supervisor must have, even before the professional and ethical ones. Managerial skills are important only for 95 of the respondents, which shows that although the managerial function is perceived as partially superimposed over the supervisor, managerial skills are not so necessary in the overall supervision activity, and what is important to highlight is the fact that they are seen as the most important ethical competences in 13% of cases, which shows an awareness of the need for ethical supervision in terms of ethics in the communication process, as well as the supervision of ethics in the organization (Frunză & Sandu, 2018; Funze, 2018).

18. What do you consider is the most important competence of a supervisor?

Figure 18 - The most important competence of a supervisor

The relationship of supervision

Of the people surveyed, 49% consider that they have a good relationship of supervision, 28% consider that they have a very good relationship of supervision, 20% consider that they have a neither good nor bad relationship of supervision, 2 % believe they have a bad relationship of supervision and 1% think they have the worst relationship of supervision. The supervision relationship is 77% good and very good, which shows its functionality in the public institutions of the respondents.

19. If you were to grade your supervision relationship from 1 to 5, where 1 is the worst relationship, which grade would you give?

Figure 19 – Grading the quality of the relationship of supervision by the surveyed persons

Discussions

The research is valid for social workers with higher education, members of the CNASR, who carry out the supervision activity in public institutions in the NE of Romania, and hence results a series of limits, namely the fact that the supervision activity is carried out also in the private organizations, where a number of characteristics of this relationship may differ from social work and its supervision in the public environment. Also, a limitation comes from the fact that some of the supervisors have a different professional training than the social workers, and as such, have not been included in the target population, nor in the sample. Social workers

with secondary or no studies who carry out social activities, at least in rural institutions, can not be members of the CNASR and therefore have been excluded from the sample, although they benefit from supervision according to national standards.

Another limitation is that there has been no analysis of supervision practice from the point of view of a correlation of the practices and techniques used with the professional experience of the supervisors, which was not possible because the questionnaire was applied simultaneously to the persons performing the supervision activity, and those who benefit from supervision, the intersection of these categories find very wide.

Conclusions

Professional supervision of social work is a particularly important activity for professionals as well as for beneficiaries and the provider of social work services, because through supervision, there are simultaneously pursued: the professional development of the social worker, the quality of the social services, the way of respecting the interests of the beneficiaries and the ethics of social practice. The supervisor can be considered a key person in the organization because it is a knot of organizational communication at the intersection of the interests of the beneficiaries, the social service bidder and the social worker case manager.

The social workers prefer the supportive side to the administrative one, while supervision managers place the focus on the control dimension, but accompanied by the formative one. Consequently, the I1 hypothesis is only partially verified, as supervision is generally in the managers' favor, there being an overlap between the managerial and the supervisory roles.

In the NE of Romania, supervision in social work is carried out on two functional axes, the first in the order of the respondents' preferences being the one constituted by the supportive-formative side, and the second on the administrative and controlling side, less preferred by the respondents. The two sides are seen as being in balance with the effective practice of supervision. All of this confirms the hypothesis I2.

Social workers mostly understand the need for supervision, many of whom consider it particularly important in professional practice and personal development. The power disparities in the supervision relationship are corrected by the so-called games of supervision, in the sense of transforming the relationship of control into one of support and humanizing it in the sense of professional cohabitation. Hence, hypothesis 3 is also confirmed, with social workers considering supervision to be important or

particularly important, both for their personal and professional development, and for the development of social services in their organization.

The hypothesis 4 is also verified, the relationship of power between the supervisor and the supervised being balanced by the trust allocation between the two partners.

Acknowledgment

Work carried out within the framework of doctoral research titled The Social Construction of Supervision in Social Work. Research in Institutions of Child Protection in the N.-E. area of Romania, elaborated within and with funding through the Doctoral scholarship of the Doctoral School of Sociology of the University of Oradea.

References

- Bălțătescu, S. (2016). Către o abordare sociologică a bunăstării subiective. *Sociologie Românească*, 14(4), 11-28.
- Baglow, L. (2009). Social work supervision and its role in enabling a community visitor program that promotes and protects the rights of children. *Australian Social Work*, 62(3), 353-368. doi:10.1080/03124070902964632
- Canțer, N. (2014). *Monitorizare, evaluare și supervizare în asistența socială*. Note de curs. Universitatea de Stat „Alec Russo” din Bălți, Facultatea de Drept și Științe Sociale, Catedra de Științe Socioumane și Asistență Socială. Bălți, Republica Moldova. Disponibil la <http://tinread.usarb.md:8888/tinread/fulltext/canter/monitorizare.pdf>
- Caras (Frunză), A., & Sandu, A. (2014a). Epistemic and pragmatic backgrounds of supervision of ethics. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 149, 142-151. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.08.178
- Caras, A., & Sandu, A. (2014b). The role of supervision in professional development of social work specialists. *Journal of Social Work Practice: Psychotherapeutic Approaches in Health, Welfare and the Community*, 28(1), 75-94. doi:10.1080/02650533.2012.763024.
- Chipea, F., Osvat, C., & Marc, C (2013). The assessment of health services for children in romania. *Revista de Cercetare și Intervenție Socială*, 41, 40-59.
- Cojocaru, S. (2005). *Metode apreciative în asistența socială*. Ancheta, supervizarea și managementul de caz. Iași, România: Polirom.
- Congress, E., & McAuliffe, D. (2006). Social work ethics: Professional codes in Australia and the United States. *International Social Work*, 49(2), 151-164. doi: 10.1177/0020872806061211.

- Damian, S. I., Bulgaru Ilescu, D., Rohozneanu, A., Glodeanu, A., Diac, M., David, S., & Hunea, I. (2017). The Role of Educational Measures for Juvenile Offenders in Forensic Psychiatry. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 9(3), 140-156. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18662/rrem/2017.0903.09>.
- Delano, F., & Shah, J. C. (211). Games played in the supervisory relationship: The modern version. *Relational Child and Zouth Care Practice*, 24(1-2), 177-185.
- Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Copii (FONPC). (2017). *Standard ocupațional Supervizor în serviciile sociale* Cod COR 263513. Disponibil la <http://www.anc.edu.ro/uploads/SO/SUPERVIZOR%20IN%20SERVICII%20SOCIALE.pdf>
- Frunză, A., & Sandu, A. (2018). Supervision of ethics in social work practice. A reconstruction of ethics expertise. În A. Sandu & A. Frunză (Eds.), *Ethical issues in social work practice*. , Hershey, SUA: IGI GLOBAL. doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-3090-9.ch011
- Frunză, A. (2017). *Supervizarea și dezvoltarea profesională a asistenților sociali*. Iași, România: Lumen.
- Holunga, L. (2013). *Evaluare si supervizarea serviciilor sociale*. Disponibil la http://www.incluziunesociala.ro/upls/46_49743_suport_curs_Evaluarea_si_supervizarea_serviciilor_sociale.pdf
- Huidu, A. (2018). Social Acceptance of Ethically Controversed Innovative Techniques Related to or Derived from Assisted Reproductive Technologies – A Review of Literature. *Eastern-European Journal of Medical Humanities and Bioethics*, 2(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.18662/eejmhb/11>
- Kadushin, A. (1968). Games people play in supervision. *Social Work*, 13(3), 23-32. doi:10.1093/sw/13.3.23
- Kadushin, A. (2014). *Supervision in social work*. New York, SUA: Columbia University Press.
- Kadushin, A., & Harkness, D. (2002). *Supervision in social work* (ed. a 4-a). New York, SUA: Columbia University Press.
- Kyriacou, C. (1992). *Essential teaching skills*. Hemel Hempstead, Regatul Unit al Marii Britanii: Simon & Schuster Education.
- Parlamentul României. (2011). Legea nr. 292 din 20 decembrie 2011. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 905, 2011, 20 Decembrie.
- Lietz, C. A. (2018). infusing clinical supervision throughout child welfare practice: Advancing effective implementation of family-centered practice through supervisory processes. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 46(4 SI), 331-340. doi:10.1007/s10615-018-0672-7

- Marc, C., Makai-Dimeny, J., & Oșvat, C. (2014). The social work supervisor: Skills, roles, responsibilities. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brașov Series VII: Social Sciences, Law*, 7(56), 221-230.
- McPherson, L., & Macnamara, N. (2016). Supervising child protection practice: What works?: an evidence informed approach. New York, SUA: Springer.
- Milicenco, S. (2016). Concepția supervizării în asistența socială: Modele practice și principii de realizare. *Studia Universitatis Moldaviae - Științe Sociale*, 8(98), 20-24.
- Moroșan, A. (2015). *Sindromul burnout și epuizarea emoțională, psihică și fizică*. Retrieved from: <https://www.depresiv.ro/sindromul-burnout-epuizarea-emoționala-psihica-fizica/>
- Muntean, A. (2007). Supervizarea. Aspecte practice și tendințe actuale. Iași, România: Polirom.
- Muresan, V. (2017). Ethics – Information or Giving-Form?. Postmodern Openings, 8(1), 9-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18662/po/2017.0801.01>.
- Nistor, P. (2018). The Charitable Foundations of Social Assistance. *Eastern-European Journal of Medical Humanities and Bioethics*, 2(2), 15-30. <https://doi.org/10.18662/eejmhb/12>
- O'Donoghue, K. B. (2010). *Towards the construction of social work supervision in aotearoa new zealand: a study of the perspectives of social work practitioners and supervisors* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Palmerston North, Noua Zeelandă: Massey University.
- O'Donoghue, K., & Tsui, M. S. (2015). Social work supervision research (1970-2010): The way we were and the way ahead. *British Journal of Social Work*, 45(2), 616-633. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bct115
- O'Donoghue, K., Ju, P. W. Y., & Tsui, M-S. (2018). Constructing an evidence-informed social work supervision model. *European Journal of Social Work*, 21(3), 348-358. doi: 10.1080/13691457.2017.1341387
- Guvernul României. (2000). Ordonanța de Guvern nr. 129/2000 privind formarea profesională a adulților. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 110, 2014, 13 Februarie.
- Marc, C., & Osvat, C. (2013). Stress and Burnout Among Social Workers. *Revista de Asistența Socială*, 3. Retrieved from: http://www.swreview.ro/index.pl/stress_and_burnout_among_social_workers
- Ministerul Muncii, Solidarității Sociale și Familiei, & Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Copilului și Adopție. (2004). Ordinul nr. 21 din 26 februarie 2004 pentru aprobarea standardelor minime obligatorii privind serviciile pentru protecția copilului de tip rezidențial. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 222, 2004, 15 Martie.

- Ministerul Muncii, Solidarității Sociale și Familiei, & Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Copilului și Adopție. (2004). Ordinul nr. 24 din 4 martie 2004 pentru aprobarea Standardelor minime obligatorii pentru centrele de zi. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 247, 2004, 22 Martie.
- Ministerul Muncii, Solidarității Sociale și Familiei, & Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Copilului și Adopție. (2004). Ordinul nr. 25 din 9 martie 2004 pentru aprobarea Standardelor minime obligatorii privind centrele de zi pentru copiii cu dizabilități. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 247, 2004, 22 Martie.
- Ministerul Muncii, Solidarității Sociale și Familiei, & Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Copilului și Adopție. (2004). Ordinul nr. 27 din 10 martie 2004 pentru aprobarea Standardelor minime obligatorii privind serviciile pentru protecția copilului de tip rezidențial pentru copiii cu dizabilități. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 515, 2004, 8 Iunie.
- Ministerul Muncii, Solidarității Sociale și Familiei, & Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Copilului și Adopție. (2004). Ordinul nr. 89 din 27 iulie 2004 pentru aprobarea Standardelor minime obligatorii privind centrul de primire în regim de urgență pentru copilul abuzat, neglijat și exploatat. *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 759, 2004, 19 August.
- Sandu, A., Unguru, E., Ponea, S., & Cojocaru, S. (2010). Analysis of professional competencies in social services supervision. *Social Research Reports*, 17, 3-56.
- Șleahțișchi, M. (2007). *Stresul profesional: Entitate și efecte*. Disponibil la https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/Stresul%20profesional%20entitate%20si%20efecte.pdf
- Tsui, M. S. (2004). *Social work supervision: Contexts and concepts*. Thousand Oaks, SUA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Unguru, E., & Sandu, A. (2017). Supervision. From administrative control to continuous education and training of specialists in social work. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 9(1), 17-35. doi:10.18662/rrem/2017.0901.02
- Unguru, E., & Sandu, A. (2018). Normative and institutional frameworks for the functioning of supervision in social work. *Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 10(2), 69-87. doi:10.18662/rrem/47
- Weiss, A. B., & Brennan, F. C. (2008). *Gerontological supervision: A social work perspective in case management and direct care*. Abingdon, Regatul Unit al Marii Britanii: Routledge.