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RESEARCHING SUPERVISION: A PARTICIPATIVE LEARNING PROCESS FOR KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN SOCIAL WORK?

CITATION : RESEARCH IS NEEDED AS: *“Supervisory development of supervisor, since supervision should be a mutually beneficial journey for both supervisor and supervisee. Development in supervisor helps future supervision.”*

A Delphi Study of Supervision

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ECSWR 16.4.2014 Bolzano

The Delphi study

- In 2012 four researchers from New Zealand (Liz Beddoe), England (Gillian Ruch), Finland (Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski) and Hong Kong (Ming Sum Tsui) met to discuss supervision research possibilities
- The following shared understandings, concerns and gaps in knowledge were identified:
 - Recognition of the centrality of supervision for good practice
 - The need for a global map of supervisory practices
 - Acknowledgement of the threats and challenges to supervision associated with economic conditions and new public management practices
 - The paucity of a coherent research agenda, including the lack of attention paid to identifying key areas for research and appropriate research methodologies

The Delphi method

- This is essentially a multi-phase project involving two or more questionnaires to “experts” or important stakeholders in which each iteration produces clearly ranked research or other priorities
- a Delphi is a closed study, usually only open for completion by those chosen by the researchers e.g. people who in this case are highly knowledgeable researchers, authors, educators and so forth.
- So it is important to avoid snowballing that the researchers can't control, as that might dilute the expertise.
- That is not to say that a wider range of views cannot be sought at a later stage

Choosing the experts

- One issue that emerges is that of choosing the "experts" for the research
- West (2011) suggests that often these are academics and so this has the effect of using the views of a rather narrow elite group
- Our aim is to recruit to the study reasonably equal numbers of people with academic expertise in supervision (having published in the field or closely related material for example) and people whom we might define as expert users.
- We invited those who are very involved in supervision as practitioners, expert practice teachers, people who might be influential in developing and implementing supervision policies etc.

Phase one

- Completed in April 2014 after the survey was open for 11 weeks from November 2013
- Most participants received two reminder e-mails
- Phase two will begin in May 2014
- The Phase two survey will go to those who completed the first survey and will focus on ranking items on the proposed research agenda- checking the consensus
- This also provides the opportunity to pursue any intriguing findings from the first survey

Invitations

- A SurveyMonkey survey was hosted on an external website by a research company
- In total 134 invitations were e-mailed out to a panel developed through discussion with professional networks
- A project blog was established which contains information about the research team, the participant information sheet and updates:

<http://socialworksupervisionagenda.wordpress.com/>

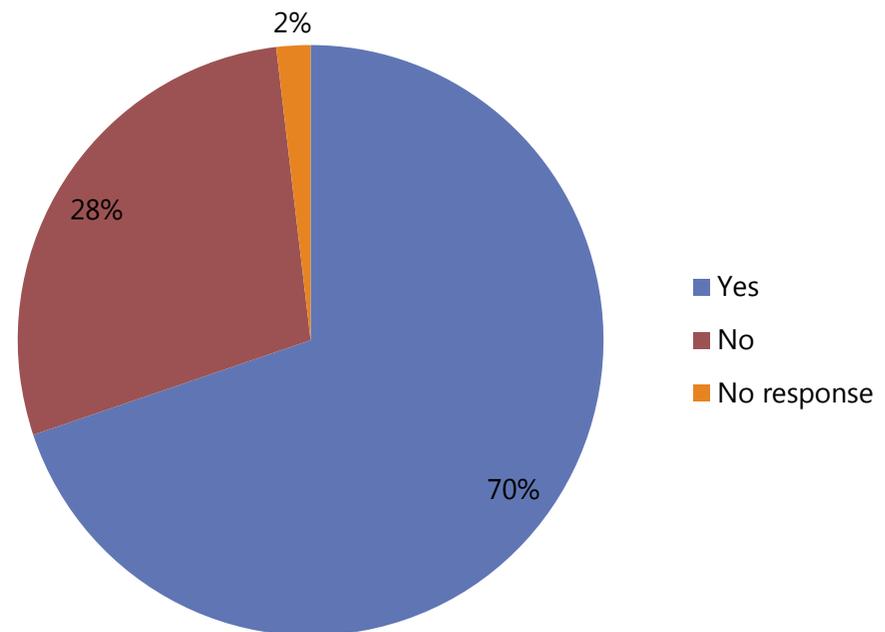
- 53 completed surveys were analysed – some information about our participants follows

Country of respondents

Country	n
United Kingdom	17
New Zealand	7
Australia	6
Hong Kong	6
United States	5
Canada	3
Finland	1
Germany	1
South Korea	1
Malta	1
Norway	1
Portugal	1
Singapore	1
South Africa	1
Sweden	1

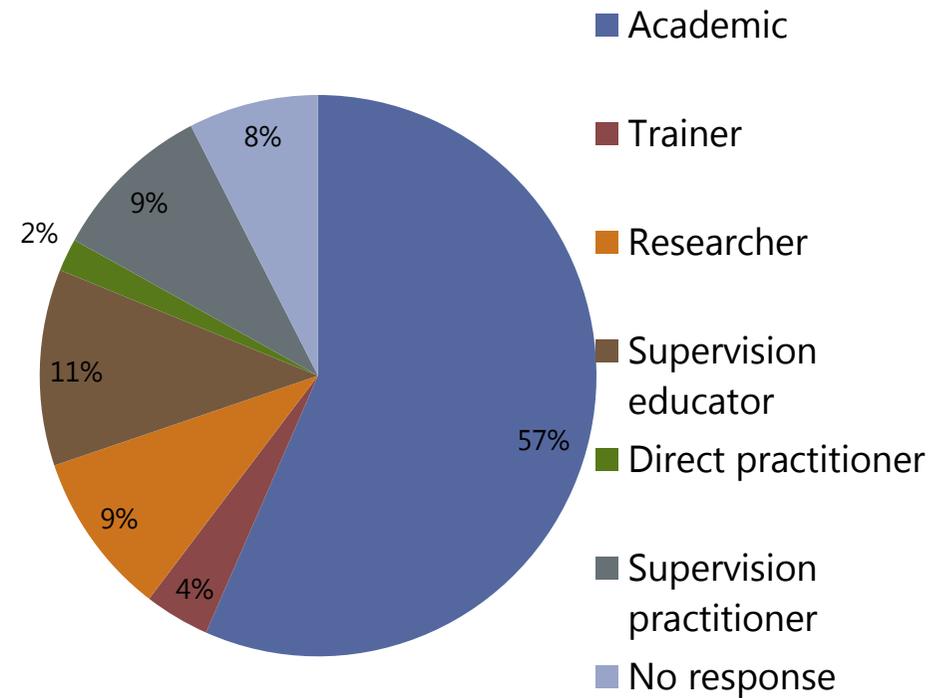
Do you currently offer professional supervision to others?

Response	n
Yes	37
No	15
No response	1



Current role

Role	n
Academic	30
Supervision educator	6
Researcher	5
Supervision practitioner	5
Trainer	2
Direct practitioner	1
No response	4

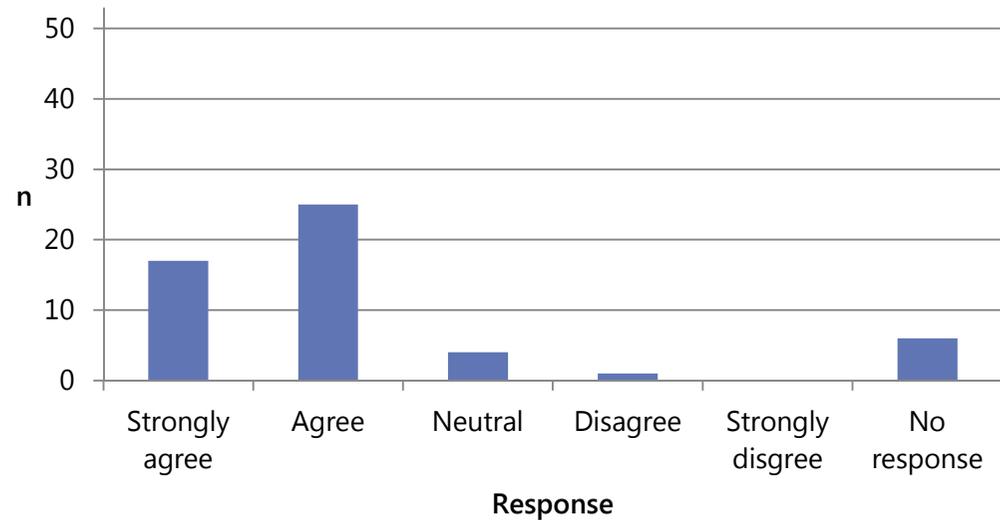


The first lesson: Who Would Be Interested In Finding Out An International Consensus On Research In Supervision

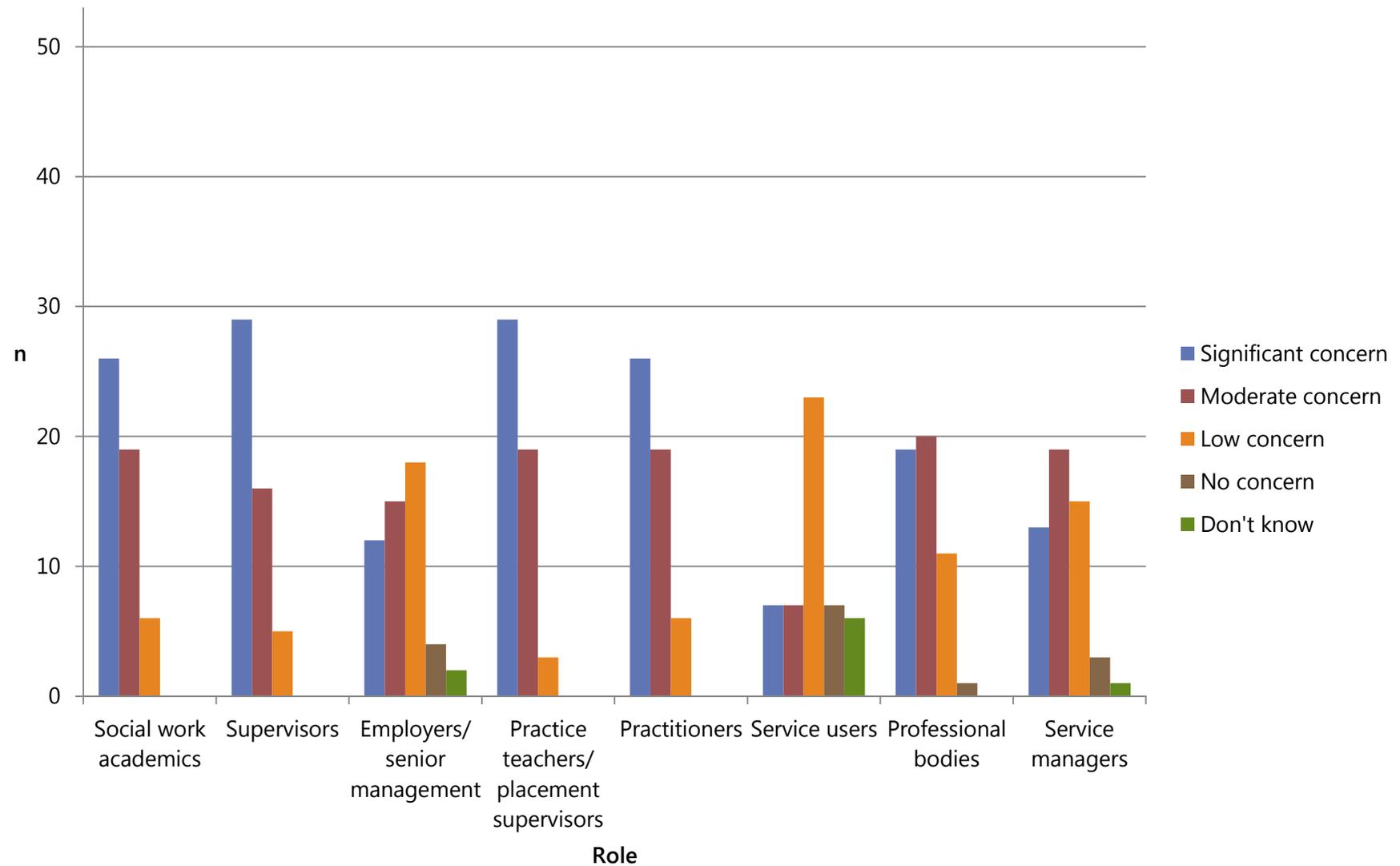
The research question underpinning this study is:
What should be on the agenda for research and development of supervision in social work?

Significant gaps exist in the current state of knowledge about supervision in social work

Response	n
Strongly agree	17
Agree	25
Neutral	14
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0
No response	6



How much importance do you perceive each of the stakeholders would place on strengthening the knowledge base and practice of supervision in social work?



What do you consider to be the three main challenges facing the practice of social work supervision in your country?

Rank	Challenges identified
1	Time and workload constraints
1=	Lack of valuing of reflective supervision
2	Inadequate training for the supervision role
3=	Loss of funding for supervisory roles due to cuts
3=	Impact of managerialism and risk thinking /surveillance
4=	Organisational culture not supporting
4=	Lack of focus on mission on social work
4=	Lack of consistency of provision/models
5	Insufficient research on supervision

Comments

“need time to reflect and a culture which really values critical reflection and emotional containment”

“organisations too defensive to be able able to engage in reflective supervision”

social workers need support to “resist and creatively challenge the neoliberal intensification of blaming the person, family or community for things the economic systems produce”

“supervision must encompass the ability to look beyond the individual and connect the dots to systemic cause and effect...basically social work supervision mirrors and supports social work practice”

WHAT SHOULD BE ON THE AGENDA FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISION IN SOCIAL WORK?

Second lesson: How could we contribute?

“Social workers will understand that part of their role is to support the learning of others (whether they are in a supervisory role or not). Supervisors understand and are able to articulate their role in supporting the development of SWs and in ensuring safe and good practice. Registered SWs in non-front line roles receive and provide high quality supervision that supports post holders continuing in their journey to deepen their professional knowledge, development and practice. Supervision is seen as the foundation of good practice, rather than a procedural requirement.”

Most urgent issues for research

Rank	Issue for urgent research
1	Exploring the relationship between supervision and client outcomes
2	Exploring relationship and process and evaluating models
3	Researching how supervision can improve decision-making /critical reasoning
4	Explore effectiveness of supervision in supporting staff
4	Explore training

We need to “ [use research] towards international sharing of preferred knowledge and practice”

“We need to improve the supervision relationship because the [goals] cannot be met if the relational bond is not strong and healthy”

Citations on the five themes of most worthy research

- **PROFESSION AND ITS FUTURE**

- *addressing questions that refocus the practice and discipline value of supervision, understanding that balancing administrative needs will continue to be an ongoing challenge... Evolving reflective practice. Preventing professional dangerousness.*

- **NPM, ACCOUNTABILITY AND OUTCOMES CULTURES AND EVIDENCE ON SUPERVISION**

- *Supervision is a costly exercise – able to demonstrate and measure effectiveness.*
- *Impact on client outcomes and neo-liberalism*

- **RETENTION AND RESILIENCE OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

- *Evidence of improvements in wellbeing and development, to improve access and resourcing.....professional development and resilience.*

- **INTERPERSONAL AND DYADIC SUPERVISORY RELATIONS**

- *Attachment processes (interpersonal factors) in supervisory relationship & clinical relationship, affecting transference; diversity & cross-cultural issues;*

- **PROCESSES AND PRACTICES OF SUPERVISION**

- *Process of sw supervision: to learn more about what goes into sw supervision*
- *What kind of supervision is offered? Power and diversity in human relations?*
- *Managing the managers, and managerial structures?*
- *What happens in supervision, models of, management and supervision development*
- *Comparative research across countries*

The "Future of SW Supervision"

- *visions and dreams on*

- *“evidence for supervision as an investment with impacts ..but as well interest in researching the content, processes, relationships and extension and use of supervision”*
- *social work supervision would be recognised as an important social work practice domain. It is my hope to see that clients and supervisees benefit from supervision”*
- *More professional..... “A reality”*

- *concerns and treaths on*

- *“If nothing is done intentionally, supervision could become nothing more than a tool for administrative surveillance”....”worsening in the context of social welfare organizations due to increasing concern about management, quantitative output and manpower cut”*
- *there's so little time for agencies to provide supervision that I do not feel optimistic*

HOW TO PROCEED IN OUR DELPHI PROJECT?

Third lesson

Supervision seems to be important for the developments of social work and answers imply great concern. We need to learn more on...e.g. What happens in supervision, models of supervision, management and supervision development, comparative research across countries..

Next steps

- Further analyses – from preliminary to publications
- The design and collection of the second questionnaire
- Your opinions / comments / questions?
- Further results will be presented at the IASSW World Conference in July 2014 in Melbourne
- The wish is to build international study groups to pursue the top ranked items on the '**supervision research agenda**' and share comments from survey:
 - *CITATION: “Inspiring practitioners filled with integrity, vision and passion, receiving excellent supervision and ongoing professional development and support and thus contributing to the continuous knowledge and experience bases that expand our understandings and approaches to the challenges we face as societies in a local, regional, national and global sense of the work! “*

SYNNÖVE, LIZ, GILLIAN & MING-SUM

Thank you for your attention, keep in contact!

<http://socialworksupervisionagenda.wordpress.com/>