Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences, Volume 53, No. 9, 2026, 9073

Deanship of Scientific Research

The Reality and Needs of Supervision in Social Work in Qatar: From a Localized, Strength-Based Perspective

Ferdoos Abed Rabo Alissa [1]* ***Hmoud Salem Alolimat*** [2], ***Talal Abdelkarim Alqdah*** [1]

[1] SOSH, Social Work. Doha institute for Graduate studies, Qatar.

[2] SOSH, Social Work. Doha institute for Graduate studies, Qatar. And University of Jordan.

Received: 18/9/2024
Revised: 10/12/2024
Accepted: 25/2/2025
Published online: 10/6/2026

* *Corresponding author:*
falissa@dohainstitute.edu.qa

Citation:
Alissa, F. A. R., Alolimat, H. S., & Alqdah, T. A.(2026). The Reality and Needs of Supervision in Social Work in Qatar: From a Localized, Strength-Based Perspective. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, *53*(9), 9073.
https://doi.org/10.35516/Hum.2026.9073

© 2026 DSR Publishers/ The University of Jordan.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC) license https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Abstract

Objectives: This study aimed to assess the current state of social work supervision in Qatar's Ministry of Social Development and Family and its affiliated organizations. It also aimed to identify social workers' strengths and developmental needs and sought to develop a contextually relevant supervision system to enhance social work practices in Qatar.

Methods: The study used qualitative research methods, in which two focus group discussions, consisting of 17 participants were conducted. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis, capturing diverse perspectives and ensuring the robustness of the findings.

Results: The study results showed that the analysis identified key themes aligned with the research objectives. Social workers highlighted developmental needs such as clarifying supervision concepts, strengthening capacity-building initiatives, and creating integrated training systems. Educational readiness emerged as a significant area, with social workers expressing a strong desire for continuous learning to keep pace with evolving practices and support professional growth.

Conclusions: The study recommends that supervision is essential in Qatar's social work practice, supporting knowledge expansion, leadership development, and ethical, strength-based practice. To generate authentic local knowledge, supervision should integrate educational, supportive, and administrative roles, guided by locally relevant strengths-based approaches that address social challenges. Addressing the identified developmental and educational needs is crucial. Doing so will enhance supervision practices in the Ministry and its affiliates, ultimately fostering a more effective and efficient social work system in Qatar, promoting a future of progress and improvement.

Keywords: Localized supervision, Qatar, Reflective supervision, Social Work, Supervision in Social Work, Strength perspective.

واقع الإشراف واحتياجاته في العمل الاجتماعي في قطر من منظور محلي قائم على منظور القوة

فردوس عبد ربّه العيسى*، حمود سالم العليمات ، طلال عبد الكريم القضاة

معهد الدوحة للدراسات العُليا، برنامج ماجستير العمل الاجتماعي.

ملخّص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم وضع الإشراف في العمل الاجتماعي في وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية والأسرة في قطر والمؤسسات التابعة لها، وتسعى إلى تحديد نقاط القوة وحاجات التطوير للعاملين الاجتماعيين وتطوير نظام إشراف يتناسب مع السياق المحلي لتعزيز ممارسات العمل الاجتماعي في قطر.

المنهجية: استخدمت الدراسة أساليب البحث النوعي؛ حيث أُنشِئت مجموعتان بؤريتان تضمَّنتا 17 مشاركًا، ثم حُلِّلت البيانات باستخدام التحليل الموضوعي(الثيمات)؛ مما ساعد في استخراج وجهات نظر متنوعة وضمان قوة وموثوقية النتائج.

النتائج: أظهر التحليل مجموعة من المواضعات الرئيسة التي تتماشى مع أهداف البحث، وأشار العاملون الاجتماعيون إلى حاجات تطويرية مثل توضيح مفاهيم الإشراف وتعزيز مبادرات بناء القدرات وإنشاء أنظمة تدريب متكاملة، كما برزت الاستعدادات التعليمية كجانب مهم؛ حيث عبَّر العاملون الاجتماعيون عن رغبتهم القوية في التعلم المستمر لمواكبة التطورات في الممارسات ودعم النمو المهني.

التوصيات: يُعدُّ الإشراف أمرًا أساسيًّا في ممارسة العمل الاجتماعي في قطر؛ حيث يدعم توسيع المعرفة وتطوير القيادة والممارسات الأخلاقية القائمة على القوة. ولتوليد معرفة محلية أصيلة يجب أن يدمج الإشراف الأدوار التعليمية والداعمة والإدارية، مع التوجيه عبرَمناهج قائمة على القوة التي تتناسب مع التحديات الاجتماعية المحلية. إن تلبية حاجات التطوير والتعليم التي جرى تحديدها أمر بالغ الأهمية؛ إذ يمكن عبرَ ذلك تعزيز ممارسات الإشراف في الوزارة والهيئات التابعة لها؛ مما يؤدي في النهاية إلى نظام عمل اجتماعي أكثر فعالية وكفاءة في قطر، ويسهم في تحقيق مستقبل من التقدَّم والتحسين.

الكلمات الدالة: الإشراف المحلي، قطر، الإشراف العكسي، العمل الاجتماعي، الإشراف في العمل الاجتماعي، منظور القوة

Introduction

Supervision plays an essential and evolving role in social work, benefiting educational development, applied practices, and organizational goals(Ravalier et. al., 2023). Growing research on diverse supervision models offers insight into the impact of hierarchical supervision models structured to support organizational goals and deficit-based care practices predicated on vulnerabilities and needs(Beddoe, 2011; Caiels et al., 2021); Rothwell et al., 2021).; Simmons, 2016;). Such traditional and often Western-centric supervision models designed to favor agency needs and highlight deficits inevitably hinge on power dynamics between the supervisor and supervisee, overlooking localized knowledge that could better inform care practices(Caiels et al., 2021; Hinojos et al., 2023).

There is an evolving recognition of the generative potential of a collaborative supervision process that fosters growth and learning through shared experiences and knowledge exchange. One such process is a strengths-based approach that highlights the importance of clients' competencies and situates care and resourcing within the many contexts that influence their lives(Caiels et al., 2021; Foot, 2012).

To better understand how a localized, strengths-based approach impacts organizational needs, supervisor-supervisee relationships, and client success, a focus group study of social workers at the Ministry of Social Development and Family(MSDF) in the State of Qatar was conducted. The study, which will be conducted in three phases, aims first to explore the reality of social work institutions affiliated with the MSDF and to identify specialists' current knowledge and needs. Phase two of the study will raise foundational capacities, and phase three will build a local supervision system based on authentic knowledge and practice.

This article begins by exploring literature documenting traditional, hierarchical supervision models before analyzing a shift to a localized, strengths-based approach. It then situates broader discussions of social work supervision practices within the study's methodology and two-stage data collection process before offering five key focus group findings. It further posits how social work supervision can produce localized and authentic knowledge to inform care practices, improve individual and community outcomes, and foster greater recognition for the institution of social work globally.

Supervision is a critical component of professional socialization for social workers. It helps them develop skills to practice in complex private and public organizations whose values may contradict social work ethics(McCarthy et al.,2020). While there is a broad agreement that supervision is a cornerstone of social work education and practice, there are diverging views regarding goals and methodological efficacy. One proposed framework views supervision as a structured approach to support agency needs, including providing high-quality services(Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; Marc et al., 2014; NASW, 2013, Rankine, 2019). This agency-first perspective focuses primarily on the administrative and developmental needs of the organization's services and considers social work competence and ethical practices through that lens.

Supervision is seen as a prerequisite to quality social services organizations. The effectiveness of the supervision process may indicate the quality of social work practice in an organization. Supervision is a life-changing activity in clinical settings, such as social work, which benefits the supervisee's growth by cultivating critical abilities(Caras & Sandu,(2014), Vîșcu & Rad,(2024). Carpenter et al.(2013) further outlines a formal and organized approach to supervision, emphasizing its role in guiding work choices, assessing performance, and achieving organizational goals.

An alternative framework to this hierarchical structure in which the supervisor's role is to ensure supervisee compliance in support of organizational aims is an interactive process that emphasizes positivity, participation, and cooperation towards achieving a shared goal for clients. Scholars who favor a collaborative, interactive relationship reason between supervisor and supervisee reason that this framework requires a shared understanding of the responsibilities of each party and follows plans without rigid administrative controls or specific protocols(O'Donoghue, 2019). Consistent with this view is the argument put forth by Nickson et al.(2007) that supervisors must have the capacity to establish trusting relationships that foster open discussions about their supervisee's challenges without hesitation or fear of assuming organizational responsibility.

While the flexibility offered by the interactive form of supervision can be generative, both the interactive and hierarchical approaches outlined above are Western-centric models limited in their potential to consider and integrate localized knowledge. Consequently, neither the hierarchical nor collaborative models tend to practice policies that produce and reinforce

marginalization, disparity, and racialized oppression(Hinojos et al., 2023; Vîșcu & Rad,(2024). A third framework, known as localized supervision, offers the collaborative model's generative potential while considering localized knowledge and culture. Hinojos et al.(2023) argue that a localized supervision framework considers the role of privilege and intersectional identities and is culturally responsive to varying values and norms.

A key feature of the localized model includes understanding supervision as a space for co-learning through exchanging experiences and knowledge between the supervisor and supervisee(Knickel et al., 2019). Ravalier et al.(2023) emphasize the value of reflective supervision in social work practice in their literature review. They discovered that reflexivity is made possible by understanding social worker autonomy, frequent supervisory sessions, and supportive management. The lack of resources makes task-oriented approaches hard for social workers and clients(Rankine, M., & Thompson, A. P.(2023).

Reflexive practice is a mindfulness framing that encourages reflexive forms of self-care in three ways: validating the importance of self-care and developing awareness of internalized oppression, supporting reflexive engagement with service users, and better mitigating work-related stress and role conflict, McCusker, P.(2022),. Ferguson, H.(2018).

In this reflexive context, the supervisory relationship is guided by principles of experiential learning, upending hierarchical structures that limit discovery. The localized supervisory model is oriented toward equality and justice and is built on trust, confidentiality, support, empathy, and respect(Knickel et al., 2019). Apart from fostering a safe and cooperative environment that promotes self-care, this generative approach facilitates the co-creation of social work practices by building on Indigenous, traditional, and localized knowledge, centering marginalized voices, and examining power dynamics(Gray et al., 2016; Hinojos et al., 2023).

A localized approach lends itself to integrating practices associated with the strengths-based approach to social work, which Simmons et al.(2016) position as a meta-theory that can help orient all other theoretical perspectives in social work. The strengths-based approach stresses the importance of individuals' specific characteristics and the impact of their environment(Caiels et al., 2021). This model posits that client interventions should be focused on assets, competencies, and accessible resources as opposed to deficits(Foot, 2012; Saleebey, 2008). When used in a supervisory context, a strengths-based orientation includes a supervisee's internal and external abilities, support, potential, and resilience(Department of Health and Social Care, 2019; Caiels, Milne, and Beadle-Brown, 2021). A relationship based on capacity rather than deficit respects diverse cultural identities, customs, and beliefs by addressing individuals within their natural environment(Caiels et al., 2021).

When utilized correctly, a strengths-based approach establishes a safe environment for learning and personal growth within a supervisory relationship, leading to better client outcomes. Shaping the supervisory relationship with a strengths-based lens towards colleagues, institutions, and the profession fosters hope for growth. This approach thus empowers supervisors to navigate life and work pressures, prevent career burnout, enhance performance, and increase efficiency(Alvord & Grados, 2005).

A focus group discussion with social workers at the MSDF in the State of Qatar was conducted to understand better how a localized, strengths-based approach can be developed in practice. The Study investigated the current supervisory knowledge, experiences, attitudes, motivations, and capabilities of specialists at MSDF before determining developmental and training needs. Through co-learning and knowledge building among academics and practitioners, the study's three-phase objective is to gather needs-based knowledge to inform the foundation for a localized supervision practice that will enhance social work quality, improve individual, group, and community outcomes, and foster greater community recognition of social work.

Critical Review and The Contribution of the Current Study

The literature review underscores the effectiveness of strengths-based approaches in social work supervision, particularly their role in fostering supportive learning environments that enhance personal growth and improve client outcomes. Supervision is a cornerstone in the professional socialization of social workers, providing them with the necessary skills to confidently navigate the intricate landscapes of corporate and public organizations, where values may sometimes conflict with social work principles(McCarthy et al., 2020).

The literature on social work supervision distinguishes between hierarchical and participatory systems, both having

strengths and limits. While traditional viewpoints focus on organizational needs and compliance, new perspectives stress collaboration, trust, and the value of co-learning to achieve more fair and culturally responsive practices. However, these techniques overlook the various cultural settings and intersectional identities that impact supervisees' experiences. The localized supervision model bridges this gap by incorporating strengths-based strategies that value and exploit individuals' and communities' unique expertise, addressing these issues and instilling a sense of reassurance and confidence in the audience, who play a crucial role in the supervision process.

This study will significantly contribute to the literature by examining current supervisory practices within Qatar's Ministry of Social Development and Family(MOSDF). It aims to provide valuable insights into how a localized, strengths-based supervisory approach can effectively enhance social work practice, improve client outcomes, and elevate the profession's status within the community. By exploring the needs and experiences of social workers, this research seeks to establish a foundation for a more inclusive and effective reflexive supervisory framework that aligns with local cultural values and principles of strengths-based practice(Fook and Gardner, 2013, Martin et al.,(2009).

The relevance of this research is underscored by the critical role of supervision in social work. The challenges inherent in the field—such as unexpected situations, frequent ethical dilemmas, and emotional hardships—underscore the necessity of robust supervision to enable social workers to perform effectively(Voicu, C. I., 2018). Theoretically, supervision provides essential support, competence, education, information, and guidance, all vital for professional development. Practically, however, barriers such as legal constraints, employment attitudes, and a lack of financial resources often render supervision a privilege accessible to only a few.

The present study attempts to fill the gap between social workers' needs and the current realities of supervision in social work practice in Qatar. This study is designed to inform academic discourse and engage and resonate with the audience, addressing the urgent and pressing need for improved supervisory practices in the region.

Methodology

This section describes the current study's research methodology. It includes the mood of data collection, sampling process, reliability and validity, data collection, and analysis.

Data Collection Method:

The current study employed a qualitative data collection method: focus group discussion. This technique was adopted due to its suitability for the data collection type, the topic's sensitivity, and the nature of the participants. Two focus group discussions were organized, and two trained master students wrote the content.

Recruitment and Sample Selection

The current study is a collaborative project between DI and MOSDF. Therefore, the selection process involved collaboration between the DI research team and the MOSDF representatives. The MOSDF representatives provided the DI research team with candidates' CVs, which were jointly reviewed and scrutinized to meet the inclusion criteria.

The Ministry's representatives contacted their affiliated institution and requested that one to two representatives from each institution be nominated to participate in the project. Purposive sampling was utilized based on the following criteria:

1) Practitioners who provided direct interventions to clients or families at one of the centers under the MSDF umbrella.

2) Practitioners with a bachelor's degree in social work or related fields and at least three years of work experience.

3) Practitioners who desire continuum learning are committed to taking supervisory roles in the future.

4) Practitioners who receive a high-performance evaluation.

Before the data collection process started, the research team recruited two research assistants. The assistants, MSW students at DI, have experience in research methods and data collection. One of them is Qatari, which helps to ensure an accurate understanding of the participants' spoken dialect. Their role was to attend the focus group discussions and write down the content of the discussion.

Data collection

Data was collected through two focus group discussions with the seventeen senior social workers selected for the study.

Based on the participants' requests, the focus group discussion was not tape-recorded, but notes were taken during and after the focus groups. Each of the group discussions lasted two hours. In the first focus group, the participants were introduced to the study's purpose and objectives—namely, a needs assessment that will later inform capacity-building and the creation of a supervisory manual and a program. The participants were informed that no identifiable data would be disclosed. All the participants agreed to be interviewed and signed informed consent forms. The focus group protocol consisted of the following questions:

- What does professional supervision in social work mean to you? What are its objectives?
- Do you receive any supervision? What is its nature? How is supervision carried out? Can it help you meet your professional needs and answer your questions?
- In your opinion, what roles should a supervisor perform? What are the characteristics and qualifications that a supervisor should have?
- Does the existence of a supervision system facilitate the internal supervision process?
- Do you desire to participate in training and workshops provided by the Social Work Department at the Doha Institute, and why?

Reliability and Validity of the Study:

The following measures were adopted to ensure the reliability of the research tool and technique. First, the first author led the discussion and posed the questions and probing questions to the participants. Thus, no discrepancies in the instrument occurred.

The focus group meetings were conducted conveniently at DI's premises, which enhanced interactivity and provided the tools for presenting and disseminating relevant content. Thus, the participants were free from work interruptions. Several other measures were pursued to ensure the validity and authenticity of the data and its findings. These measures included [specific measures], which were implemented to maintain the integrity of the research process.

First, the research team thoroughly reviewed the collected data to ensure its accuracy. Then, after the DI team finished writing the manuscript, representatives from MOSDF reviewed it to verify the accuracy of the results and data. Any discrepancies or inaccuracies identified by the research team or the counterpart team from the ministry were carefully revised and corrected, ensuring the highest level of data accuracy.

At the beginning of the second FGD, the participants were presented with the thematic content of the first FGD to ensure its accuracy and the authenticity of their viewpoints and needs. This focus on the participants' needs was a key part of the process. After establishing the authenticity of the content, further probing discussion was conducted.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The data from both rounds was analyzed using a thematic analysis strategy. The qualitative data obtained through interviews was subjected to thematic analysis(Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun & Clarke(2006) state that thematic analysis is a six-phase process. Phase 1 familiarizes the researcher with the data through repeated readings. Phase 2 generates initial codes, systematically identifying and coding relevant data segments. Phase 3 collates these codes into potential themes. Phase 4 refines these themes, ensuring internal consistency and external distinctiveness. Phase 5 defines and names the themes, creating a coherent narrative. Finally, Phase 6 produces a concise, compelling report that integrates findings with the research question and existing literature, a significant contribution to the field.

Ethical Considerations

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies' Research Office provided ethical approval for this study under the number(11F-2022-IRB-D). In addition, participants were also informed about the study's purpose, and only those who gave informed consent and agreed to the ethical guidelines were allowed to participate. Additionally, participants were told that their involvement in the study was entirely optional and that they might leave at any moment, with the assurance that the confidentiality and anonymity of the information they submitted would be safeguarded.

Results

The authors first reviewed the early findings and later shared them with Ministry representatives, including social workers and consultants. The resulting outcomes included general themes and sub-themes, which came as follows:

Developmental needs: Participants articulated the need for in-depth clarification about supervision and the role of a supervisor, increased capacity-building to improve intern and practitioner localized education, and a training system that forms part of the structure of the MSDF and affiliated institutions.

Educational willingness: Participants described a reality at Qatari institutions with an intense desire for continued learning and a motivation to build professional and supervisory capabilities. As for the demographic data of the participants, they were as follows:

Table 1. Demographic data of the participants.

Item	Number	Percentage
Age group:		
27–37	5	23.5
38–48	7	41.1
49 and above	5	23.5
Total	17	100
Educational level:		
Bachelor's degree	14	82.3
Master's degree	3	17.7
Total	17	100
Gender:		
Male	1	5.8
Female	16	94.1
Total	17	100
Types of interventions:		
Individual level	17	100
Family level	17	100
Community level	17	100

This study seeks to assess the current conditions and needs of social work institutions and practitioners affiliated with the MOSDF in Qatar, laying the groundwork for a robust supervision system. The research is grounded in a localized, strengths-based approach to sourcing local knowledge, identifying competencies, developing supervisor training materials, and informing authentic practice. The findings presented in this section reflect these objectives and provide insight into the realities faced by social work professionals in this context.

The focus group data informs five key sub-findings, divided into broader themes of developmental needs and educational willingness.

Developmental Needs

1. Need for in-depth clarification on the nature and quality of supervision, both theoretically and in practice

The results indicate that most participants knew the concept of supervision and its importance for social work, especially those who have previously received supervision either during university studies or while working in an institution. They reported knowing that a social work practitioner is supposed to receive supervision regularly and continued education and assistance in managing the cases he or she is working on. However, they also reported being aware that much of their knowledge is theoretical. Participants have theoretical knowledge about supervision as a developmental and professional

relationship, usually subject to ethical standards, as with the relationship with beneficiaries. One of the participants, in this regard, commented:

The supervisory relationship is subject to ethics and must be built the same way as we build it with the beneficiary so that the specialist receives the necessary feedback and developments from the supervisor.

Another participant in her talk about the supervisory role pointed out that it is carried out within a professional relationship and a plan:

The supervisor should provide instructions on creating an action plan, applying it, and choosing the appropriate methods.

The participants also pointed out that the supervisory role should not deviate from direct practice. They stressed that supervision includes guiding the supervised specialist, building an individual plan with him/her, and not practicing control or exploiting the role's power dynamics. The

One of the participants said:

The supervisor's role is to guide the specialists under supervision on multiple aspects to let them try, while supervisors provide indirect support. The supervisor should not stay with the specialist under supervision and follow up on him at every step but should leave him for some time or combine three methods and techniques of intervention (adopt more than one method). The social worker under supervision has the right to receive more than one method and choice, all based on the arising shortcomings and needs.

Participants articulated that the role of the supervisor is to build an individual plan according to the needs of each social work specialist. On this point, one of the participants said:

Identifying the supervisee's needs and shortcomings should be based on individual needs. From this perspective, the role of supervision and what we should develop are determined. An individual plan should be built based on each social work specialist's needs; on this basis, the nature of supervision is to be determined.

The supervisor's role is to analyze the power relations governing the relationship with the client. Another participant commented that:

The supervisor must ensure the social work specialist does not practice control and power relations with the beneficiaries. The specialist should learn the difference between solving the beneficiary's problem and deciding on his/her behalf. Supervision should alert the social work specialist to matters where the specialist thinks he is helping the beneficiary but is hurting him(fundamentals of the profession, confidentiality, etc.).

One of the participants touched upon the fact that the supervision process should be characterized by formality and continuity and not be dominated by pure administrative patterns:

The supervisory process should be continuous and sustainable. One of the managers should supervise the supervisors themselves, and it is important to conduct a workshop for the managers to teach them the basic concepts of Supervision.

The participants also talked about the importance of mainstreaming and systematizing supervision within institutions, articulating that it should have clear procedures characterized by permanence. They were responding to the question:

"In your opinion, what roles should a supervisor perform? What characteristics and qualifications should a supervisor have?"

A participant in this regard stated that:

Supervision is not only for trainees or interns. Indeed, supervision is possible even at an intra-institutional level. The period for which the social work specialist receives supervision should be determined in advance. Similarly, the nature of supervision should be determined individually or collectively, in addition to what supervision should be given if the supervisor gets replaced, where usually everything changes! Doing it systematically and within sustainable steps with continuous official follow-up from the supervisor will lead to better results.

The absence of supervision in practitioners' social work experience is noted, and there is a need to acquire skills and knowledge to link theory and practice.

2. Improving localized education to enable social work practitioners to develop the characteristics of effective supervisors

This section explains the characteristics and qualities of the ideal supervisor based on the participants' opinions. Their

responses and discussions identified several traits, including knowledge, experience, and charisma, to name but a few. Following are excerpts from the responses and their analysis.

Most participants emphasized that for a social worker to be a supervisor, he/she must have the experience, talent, and personal attributes to complete the role effectively and professionally.

One noted characteristic that participants alluded to is a charismatic personality. Standard qualifications and experience may not ensure an influential supervisor. Supervisors must be charismatic:

On this point, one of the participants stated:

Charisma is a significant factor. While a supervisor's experience is valuable, charisma and other personality traits play a crucial role. A social work specialist may find it challenging to receive information from a supervisor who lacks charisma and the characteristics of a specialist. This underlines the importance of charisma in the supervisory role.

According to another participant, a social worker who wants to work as a supervisor in the field of social work should receive specific training. This training is crucial in fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding, where social workers are more open to different viewpoints, refrain from passing judgment, maintain a positive outlook, and work to improve supervisees' skills rather than pointing out their errors.

She explained:

The supervisor must be tolerant of the specialist's mistakes. He should help the specialist learn from them and accept the opinions of others. The supervisor should explain to the specialist what he or she should do, not judge him or her.

This is known in social work education as cultural competency. The social work profession stresses the need for cultural competency as one of the primary competencies social work education should include:

- Another quality of the required qualities is self-awareness:

Self-awareness and the ability to withstand challenges are among the personal critical characteristics needed for a social worker to become a professional supervisor.

In this sense, several participants expressed their opinions, as quoted in the following statements:

The supervisor must understand and know his/her qualities and abilities.

The supervisor must be able to deal with challenges related to the nature of the work and workplace.

The supervisor should learn how to train the social worker whose personality is weak and how to train the personality of the social worker who is of a sensitive or emotional character.

The supervisor must also have the skills and capabilities to provide support and education, identify the specialist's strengths and weaknesses, and develop them.

The supervisor should alert the social work specialist if personal experiences influence him and explain how to detach work from personal experience.

To become a supervisor, he must learn all the skills and identify strengths and weaknesses because the social worker's job is never limited.

3. Need for localized features to increase capacity-building and better relationship outcomes in a future supervision system

All participants emphasized the necessity of establishing a professional supervision system within the social work institutions involved in this study. They noted that such a system should be tailored to their specific needs, knowledge, and experiences, particularly concerning the unique aspects of social work within Arab-Qatari culture. Participants highlighted the importance of developing knowledge rooted in local practices, highlighting the gap in literature, programs, and guidelines for supervision models that align with cultural and privacy norms.

One of the participants commented:

There is no single guideline for handling cases, and details vary from one case to another! The supervisor's role here is to help the social worker based on each case and its needs, and managers also need empowerment and supervision training.

Most of the participants pointed out that there is a need for knowledge formation, skills training, and practice supervising as part of the preparation for building a supervision system. They also agreed that the training should include the latest applications and trends to deal with changes and emerging issues in Qatari society. They suggested that studying these

challenges could be a step toward launching a postgraduate diploma and a specialized certificate in the field of supervision. For example, participants commented:

There is a need for training offerings related to supervisory skills and social work skills in general.

We need training related to the modern issues constantly happening in society. The goal is to build a fully organized system and obtain an academic degree related to supervision.

Preparing the social work specialists who were selected to participate in the study and the training program to form the base of the supervision system units in the various institutions of the Ministry of Social Development and Family so that they act as knowledgeable specialists who have an understanding of the general culture and subcultures of both specialists and the beneficiaries with whom they work.

Cultures must be respected when working with social work specialists from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The supervisor should draw the attention of the social workers on various matters based on the culture.

Being familiar with other cultures, religions, and races is necessary. It would be terrible if the social work specialist tended to behave with a sense of racism.

We have great cultural diversity in Qatar.

We need to learn to remain unbiased towards our tribe or nationality.

Participants also stressed that supervisors must speak the same language as the supervisee.

The supervisor should be proficient in the social worker's language so that language does not create a barrier in the relationship. The supervisor should also master a second language to talk with non-Arabs, as the presence of an interpreter may be an obstacle in the professional relationship.

One participant explained that she has difficulty expressing her feelings in a language other than her native language, stating, “It would be difficult to express emotions because of the language barrier.”

One more issue of concern for the participants denotes the need for their administrative leadership to understand the roles and responsibilities of professional supervisors. Administrative staff often are concerned with bureaucratic rules and regulations and may not be attuned to professional culture and needs.

One of the participants stated:

After our managers have received training on our responsibilities as supervisors, we should assume a supervisory position to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that nobody fails to understand the purpose of supervision.

Educational Willingness

4. Participants' own experiences with supervision and their lack of training in supervision techniques

When the participants were asked if they had received supervision and, if so, what the nature of this supervision was, only three out of seventeen(17) participants indicated that they had received specialized professional supervision in social work either during university studies or at the beginning of their working life. One participant described her experience in supervision as being centered around the administrative role:

I received close supervision at my first job and was supervised by a foreign supervisor. She taught me things in a detailed way, such as sitting skills, communication skills, recording and documentation skills, and how to respond and what I should do. She even asked about feelings when dealing with a death case/news. As a supervisor, she provided psychological support and discussed given cases. In contrast, I provided psychosocial support and how to deal with these cases in the future, i.e., supervision of clinical work. She used to teach me the right skills if I made a mistake. This was my first job, but in the rest of my jobs, supervision was more of an administrative training, focusing on tasks like case management and paperwork, rather than technical training or a direct supportive role.

Another participant reported receiving supervision training while employed by an organization. The training focused on teaching her fundamental social work skills, including how to conduct interviews.

I was employed at the center where I trained during my studies at Qatar University. In this center, I was trained to form a professional relationship, sit in a session, and ask open and closed questions.

Other participants spoke about the administrative nature of their supervision experience:

The supervision in the jobs I worked in was administrative, and I received supervision during the courses at the university. In all other jobs, it was more administrative supervision.

There is a disparity in the models of supervision, but mostly, the focus is on the administrative side, and there is no focus on the challenges facing us.

Although some participants have been practicing social work for decades, none indicated that they took independent courses on social work supervision or completed training related to professional social work supervision either at the micro or macro levels.

5. Interest and commitment to learn and develop supervisory abilities

All study participants desired and were motivated to build their professional supervision capabilities and showed readiness to commit to the future training program that the Doha Institute will implement. The participants, who have practical degrees in social sciences and social work, also demonstrated awareness and understanding of the importance of developing skills to act as supervisors in their respective organizations. Furthermore, the participants have expressed openness, transparency, and trust in their potential to develop new knowledge.

Demonstrating their eagerness to join the supervisor training program, participants discussed technical arrangements related to implementation, such as training schedules, duration, and location. Participants agreed on an implementation plan that suits the official work schedules and their social and family obligations. Most participants are women with children who do not want to stay away from their children for extended periods. "Not more than 5 hours," one participant offered. The participants also indicated that they prefer the program to be held in the morning, regardless of the place, so that "it does not affect their commitments towards work or families." Despite potential scheduling conflicts, participants expressed their interest in adhering to the program and its developmental requirements, including earning a higher supervision diploma to improve their skills and the services provided to clients.

Discussion

The current study investigated and evaluated the state of social work supervision within the Ministry of Social Development and Family(MOSDF-Qatar) and its affiliated centers. Its objectives were to establish the framework for creating a localized, strengths-based, and efficient supervision system with practical implications for the field. The research utilized a qualitative approach, using focus group discussions for data collection. The sample comprised seventeen(17) social work practitioners from MOSDF and its affiliated centers.

The findings detected discrepancies in the status of social work supervision and the impression, from the viewpoint of participants who are experienced social workers, that the supervision field requires immediate action. They highlighted an excessive focus on administrative tasks while neglecting targeted training related to the specific skills and challenges of supervision. Social Work supervision should balance supervision's administrative and educational functions to create more opportunities for professional autonomy and meet the demands of implementing evidence-based supervisory practice, Mo et al.(2021).

The value of qualified supervision cannot be overlooked. A supervisor with theoretical and technical knowledge can empower supervisees to approach clients by focusing on strengths and capabilities and seeing them as experts in their situations(Foot, 2012). A supervisory relationship based on trust, the exchange of experiences, and a focus on capabilities is particularly generative. Participants validated this when expressing their desire for non-hierarchical, localized, and culturally informed training in a supervision system.

The findings support the value of strengths-based supervisory relations in developing effective social work practices(Tugendrajch et al., 2021). Participants additionally expressed a high expectation for the integration of skills under the supervision of a specialist, indicating the confidence and reflexive potential that can be achieved through field experience, "professional advice," and the opportunity to develop "critical thinking." Efficiency in the supervisory relationship must be sustained through ongoing developments and strengthened through non-hierarchical co-learning. Periodic supervision training can be utilized to introduce new theoretical and localized experiences. Ongoing field

assessments to analyze the impact of continued training on the value of supervisory relationships would be beneficial. Similarly, academic social work programs should periodically follow up with social workers to assess the significance of supervision and enhance training to address currency social and cultural issues.

All participants are committed to developing professional supervision capabilities and participating in the Doha Institute training program. This commitment is tied to their aspiration to contribute to a localized Qatari system, which they hope will serve as a model for other countries. Their strong need for continued professional growth and capacity improvement creates an encouraging environment for developing a comprehensive training program. This program will integrate modern theoretical concepts with practical applications tailored to the unique challenges and realities faced by social work practitioners in Qatar. The participants' suggestions underscore the necessity for culturally sensitive training that focuses on ethical practice, promotes effective communication, and builds critical skills like creating individual action plans and assessing power dynamics in the relationship between supervisors and supervisees.

Finally, the study's results are crucial for establishing a more effective and culturally relevant supervisory system within Qatar's MOSDF. The findings underscore the crucial role of language skills and cultural sensitivity in supervision. These skills are not just desirable but essential for effective practice. Recognizing both supervisees' and clients' varied cultural backgrounds in the Qatari context further highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of cultural diversity.

By recognizing the need for thorough training, adopting strengths-based and localized strategies, and integrating cultural awareness into supervisory methods, Qatar can develop a sustainable supervision model that fosters professional growth, promotes ethical practices, and, most importantly, enhances client outcomes. With its potential for success, this approach could also be a valuable template for other Arab nations seeking to establish robust and culturally aligned monitoring frameworks within their social work domains, providing reassurance and confidence in their potential for success.

Conclusion

Supervision is an essential component of the social work profession, as it seeks to empower supervisors working on the front lines theoretically and practically and promote professional values to improve the quality of services provided to beneficiaries. The supervisor performs organizational and administrative roles in direct work with social workers, plays a supporting role in alleviating the stresses resulting from the nature of work, and plays an educational role through the provision of knowledge and skills to supervisees.

The ethical principles of the social work profession form the basis for the model and attitude adopted by the supervisor, the most consequential of which is respect for the supervisees' capabilities and the ability to work with them in a positive and participatory way. Supervision, like other components of social work, is most generative when the model respects culture and integrates local knowledge into practice. Supervision systems must also be formalized to sustainably integrate a localized model into the structural framework of institutions. The organization of social work practice, including supervision, must be grounded in local standards and societal specificity that reflect the reality of the environment—a recognition this study sought to achieve in partnership with the MSDF in the State of Qatar.

Strengths of the Study

This study effectively used a localized, strengths-based strategy to better understand the current situation of supervision inside Qatar's MOSDF and connected facilities at the time of the survey. Strengths-based approaches stress individuals' and organizations' existing strengths and resources, promoting empowerment and resilience. This perspective improves the effectiveness of interventions and fosters a more positive and inclusive work atmosphere where everyone feels part of a team. The research produces genuine local knowledge by concentrating on the unique requirements and cultural background of social workers in Qatar, which guides the establishment of pertinent, effective, and efficient supervisory training materials. Rich data can be gathered through focus groups, which can offer insightful qualitative information on the viewpoints and living experiences of the members. The participation of MOSDF representatives throughout the research process assures that the study's conclusions are relevant to the Qatari environment. The study serves as a foundation for future improvement of the monitoring process in Qatari social welfare organizations.

Limitations of the Study

The study's qualitative methodology uncovers interesting information, but its generalizability is hindered by the small sample size(17 participants). While focus groups can provide valuable qualitative information, they may also be susceptible to response bias due to group dynamics. The study's scope is limited by its primary focus on social workers' perspectives within the MOSDF, which might not adequately represent the opinions and experiences of other social workers in different institutions—the lack of tape recording limits the opportunity for in-depth secondary research. When considering the study's applicability to other social work contexts, it is important to note these potential limitations. However, exhaustive efforts were made to guarantee the caliber of the discussion's written content and review it with the participants.

Policy and Practical Implications

The findings underscore the urgent need for a strength-based, regionally relevant national supervision system in Qatar's social work institutions. A holistic approach to capacity building is recommended, including theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and ongoing support. This might mean developing a unique supervisory training program and providing ongoing education, which would improve the standard of social work and provide improved client services. Regular assessments and adjustments are required for the supervisory system to remain effective and responsive to changing needs.

The research in this field is ongoing and dynamic. More studies with larger samples and a broader scope, including the diversity of institutions and populations, are needed. This ongoing research is crucial for the continuous improvement of social work practices.

REFERENCES

Alvord, M., & Grados, J.(2005). Enhancing resilience in children: A proactive approach. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *36*(3), 238–245. https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.36.3.238

Beddoe, L.(2011). External supervision in social work: Power, space, risk, and the search for safety. *Australian Social Work, 65*(2), 197–213. https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2011.591187

Braun, V., & Clarke, V.(2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Caiels, J., Milne, A., & Beadle-Brown, J.(2021). Strengths-based approaches in social work and social care: Reviewing the evidence. *Journal of Long Term Care*, 401-422.

Caras, A., & Sandu, A.(2014). The role of supervision in professional development of social work specialists. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 28*(1), 75-94. 75–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2012.763024

Carpenter, J., Webb, C. M., & Bostock, L.(2013). The surprisingly weak evidence base for supervision: Findings from a systematic review of research in child welfare practice(2000–2012). *Children and Youth Services Review*, *35*(11), 1843–1853. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.08.014

Department of Health and Social Care.(2019). *Strengths-based approach: Practice framework and practice handbook*. https://t.ly/nsLLw

Ferguson, H.(2018). How social workers reflect in action and when and why they don't: The possibilities and limits to reflective practice in social work. *Social Work Education, 37*(4), 415–427. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1413083

Fook, J., & Gardner, F.(2013). *Critical reflection in context: Applications in health and social care*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Foot, J.(2012). What makes us healthy? The asset approach in practice: Evidence, action, evaluation. http://www.janefoot.co.uk/page3/index.html

Hinojos, B., Warrior, A., & Cerda-Lizarraga, P.(2023). Decolonizing training and supervision: Understanding the role of colonization and historical trauma in behavioral health training. https://mhttcnetwork.org/decolonizing-training-and-supervision-implementing-a-culturally-responsive-model-of-training/

Juma'a, S.(2008). *Working with groups between theory and practice*. Egypt: The Modern University Office. Cairo: Egypt.

Kadushin, A., & Harkness, D.(2014). *Supervision in social work.(*5th ed.). Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/kadu15176

Knickel, M., Knickel, K., Galli, F., Maye, D., & Wiskerke, J. S. C.(2019). Towards a reflexive framework for fostering co-learning and improvement of transdisciplinary collaboration. *Sustainability, 11*(23), 6602. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11236602

Marc, C., Makai-Dimeny, J., & Oşvat, C.(2014). The social work supervisor: Skills, roles, responsibilities. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, Series VII: Social Sciences and Law, 1*, 221–230.

Martin, E., Cheng, T. B., Philip, D., Sarhan, B., & Al-Khalaki, A. A.(2009). Promoting the Qatar 2030 vision for a good society towards a social policy for the State of Qatar. General Administration of Development Planning. https://l1nq.com/4oLSG

McCarthy, L. P., Imboden, R., Shdaimah, C. S., & Forrester, P.(2020). 'Ethics are messy': Supervision as a tool to help social workers manage ethical challenges. *Ethics and Social Welfare, 14*(1), 118–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2020.1720265

McCusker, P.(2022). Critical mindfulness in social work: Exploring the potential of reflexive self-care in the journey from student to social worker. *The British Journal of Social Work, 52*(1), 334–353. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa246

Mo, K. Y., O'Donoghue, K., Wong, P. Y., & Tsui, M.(2021). The historical development of knowledge in social work supervision: Finding new directions from the past. *International Social Work, 64*(2), 187-200. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872819884995

National Association of Social Workers(NASW).(2013). Best practice standards in social work supervision. Standard 4. http://www.naswdc.org/practice/naswstandards/supervisionstandards2013.pdf

Nickson, A., Gair, S., & Miles, D.(2016). Supporting isolated workers in their work with families in rural and remote Australia: Exploring peer group supervision. *Children Australia, 41*(04), 265–274. https://doi.org/10.1017/cha.2016.41

O'Donoghue, K. B.(2019). Registered social workers who are supervisors: A national survey. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work, 31*(3), 97. https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol31iss3id651

Rankine, M.(2019). The internal/external debate: The tensions within social work supervision. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work, 31*(3), 32. https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol31iss3id646

Rankine, M., & Thompson, A. P.(2023). 'If we weren't reflecting, we would be like robots': The case for thinking aloud in social work supervision. *Qualitative Social Work, 22*(5), 899–917. https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250221113020

Ravalier, J. M., Wegrzynek, P., Mitchell, A., McGowan, J., McFadden, P., & Bald, C.(2023). A rapid review of reflective supervision in social work. *The British Journal of Social Work, 53*(4), 1945-1962. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcac223

Rothwell, C., Kehoe, A., Farook, S. F., & Illing, J.(2021). Enablers and barriers to effective clinical supervision in the workplace: A rapid evidence review. *BMJ Open, 11*(9), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-052929

Saleebey, D.(2008). The strengths perspective: Putting possibility and hope to work in our practice. In *Comprehensive Handbook of Social Work and Social Welfare*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470373705.chsw001011

Simmons, C., Shapiro, V., Accomazzo, S., & Manthey, T.(2016). Strengths-based social work: A meta-theory to guide social work research and practice. In *Theoretical Perspectives for Direct Social Work Practice*(pp. 131–154). Springer Publishing Company.

Tugendrajch, S. K., Sheerin, K. M., Andrews, J. H., Reimers, R., Marriott, B. R., Cho, E., & Hawley, K. M.(2021). What is the evidence for supervision best practices? *The Clinical Supervisor, 40*(1), 68–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/07325223.2021.1887785

Vîșcu, L., & Rad, D.(2024). Reflective supervision and the strategic integrative model in social work supervision. *Technium Social Sciences Journal, 66*, 365-380. https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v66i1.12053

Voicu, C. I.(2018). Importance of supervision in social work. *Journal for Ethics in Social Studies, 2*(2), 43–56. https://doi.org/10.18662/lumenss.2017.0602.02