TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL WORKERS WITHIN A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

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RATIONALE

- Social work in Africa is by its very nature primarily focused <u>on intervention</u> with the most vulnerable people of society

- These interventions should however be <u>managed and supervised</u> within public and private organisational contexts

- With an almost exclusive focus on intervention, management and supervision of social workers <u>are seldom accommodated as mainstream topics</u> in social work deliberations

- A <u>comprehensive integration</u> of supervision with management practices is also seldom found in available texts.

- Available texts are also typically focused on particular <u>national contexts</u> and are largely dominated by so-called First World countries, which limits their relevance to other countries, contexts and practices, such as those in Africa

- Most texts are also directed <u>towards business,</u> and the orientation of those in the social service domain is often clinically based rather than geared towards social development

- This state of affairs <u>prompted research</u> with the aim to delineate an innovative conceptual framework for management and supervision of social workers within a social development paradigm

- The conceptualisation of this framework <u>derived from multiple research studies</u> on the issues and challenges of social work management and supervision of social workers within a social development paradigm

- ENGELBRECHT, L.K. 2010. Yesterday, today and tomorrow: Is social work supervision in South Africa keeping up? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk,* 46(3): 324-342**.**

- BRADLEY, G., ENGELBRECHT, L.K. & HÖJER, S. 2010. Supervision: A force for change? Three stories told**.** *International Social Work***,** 53(6): 773-790.

- ENGELBRECHT, L.K. 2010. A strengths perspective on supervision of social workers: An alternative management paradigm within a social development context. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 14(1): 47-58.

- ENGELBRECHT, L.K. 2012. The neglected agenda of social work management and supervision: Issues and challenges.   *Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development.* Stockholm: Sweden.

- ENGELBRECHT, L.K. 2012. Coaching, mentoring and consultation: The same but different activities in supervision of social workers in South Africa? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 48(3): 357-368.

- ENGELBRECHT, L.K. 2013. Social Work supervision policies and frameworks: Playing notes or making music? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 49(4): 456-468.

- The conceptual framework is the basis of a forthcoming book:
  - ENGELBRECHT, L.K. (ed) 2014. *Management and supervision of social workers: Issues and challenges within a social development paradigm*. Andover: Cengage Learning EMEA Limited.

CONCEPTUALISATION
(DSD & SACSSP, 2012)

- **Social work management**

…refers to the performance of tasks, such as planning, organising, leading and controlling in terms of functions relating to programmes, work load, human resources, etc.

- **Social work supervision**

… is an interactional and interminable process within the context of a positive, anti-discriminatory relationship, based on distinct theories, models and perspectives on supervision whereby a social work supervisor supervises a social work practitioner by performing educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services.

Conceptual framework:

1. **Theories, models and perspectives underlying management in social work (management schools of thought)**

2. Practice theories, models and perspectives of supervision

3. Implications of theories, models and perspectives

4. Potential factors impacting on management and supervision of social workers

THEORIES, MODELS AND PERSPECTIVES UNDERLYING MANAGEMENT IN SOCIAL WORK

- Based on an organisation's school of thought in management

Management schools of thought

1. Bureaucracy

2. Scientific management

3. Universal management principles

4. General systems theory

5. Human relations approach

6. Human recourses approach

7. Empowerment approach

8. Value driven approach

9. Learning organisation approach

10. Strengths perspective

1. Bureaucracy

In general terms bureaucracy refers to the management of organisations which is characterised by the following principles (Gerth & Mills, 1958):

- Clear and centralised hierarchies of authority and responsibility;
- A high degree of specialisation – workers are organised based on the type of work they do or skills they have;
- Prescribed systems of rules and procedures;
- Hiring and promotion based on technical ability;
- Impersonal and not focused on social relationships - the idea is to treat all employees equally, and not to be influenced by individual differences;
- Extensive use of written documentation.

2. Scientific management

- – <u>Divide every stage </u>of a job into tasks and segments
- – which could be analysed and taught in order to <u>maximise productivity </u>and job learning time
- – <u>precise measurements </u>for productivity, cost accounting, the description of performance objectives quantitatively, and performance-based rewards to workers.

3. Universal management principles

- According to Fayol's (1949) universal management principles management is a skill which can be taught once its underlying principles are understood.
- five basic <u>functions</u> of management:
  - <u>planning</u> (the formulation of objectives)
  - <u>organising</u> (the effective coordination of resources to attain objectives)
  - commanding (the art of <u>leading</u> people)
  - coordinating (to provide unity of action) and
  - <u>controlling</u> (to ensure that everything is done according to plans).

4. THE GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY

– Open or closed systems

– Micro, messo and macro

5. THE HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACH

– Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) (a social work manager)

- Her thoughts were based on the premise that <u>substantive worker participation</u> is needed in all aspects of decision making, affecting current concepts such as participatory management, conflict management and empowerment.

6. THE HUMAN RESOURCES APPROACH

- McGregor (1960)
- Theory X
  - manager assumes that workers <u>dislike work</u>, want to avoid responsibility and lack interest in organisational objectives. As a result, these managers base their management style on control and close supervision.
- Theory Y
  - manager assumes that workers <u>enjoy work</u>, desire responsibility, have the capacity to be creative, and have the potential to work with the minimum direction towards organisational objectives

7. THE EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

- avoid the assumption that corporate models can be applied to human services without appropriate adaptations

- appropriate organisational structures and policies are needed to promote participation in decision-making

8. THE VALUE DRIVEN APPROACH…

- <u>Values of the organisation direct all management actions</u>

- A <u>commitment</u> from the organisation's top management is needed for the development of a value driven culture in the organisation;

- Employees must be empowered and must also <u>buy into</u> the value driven culture of the organisation;

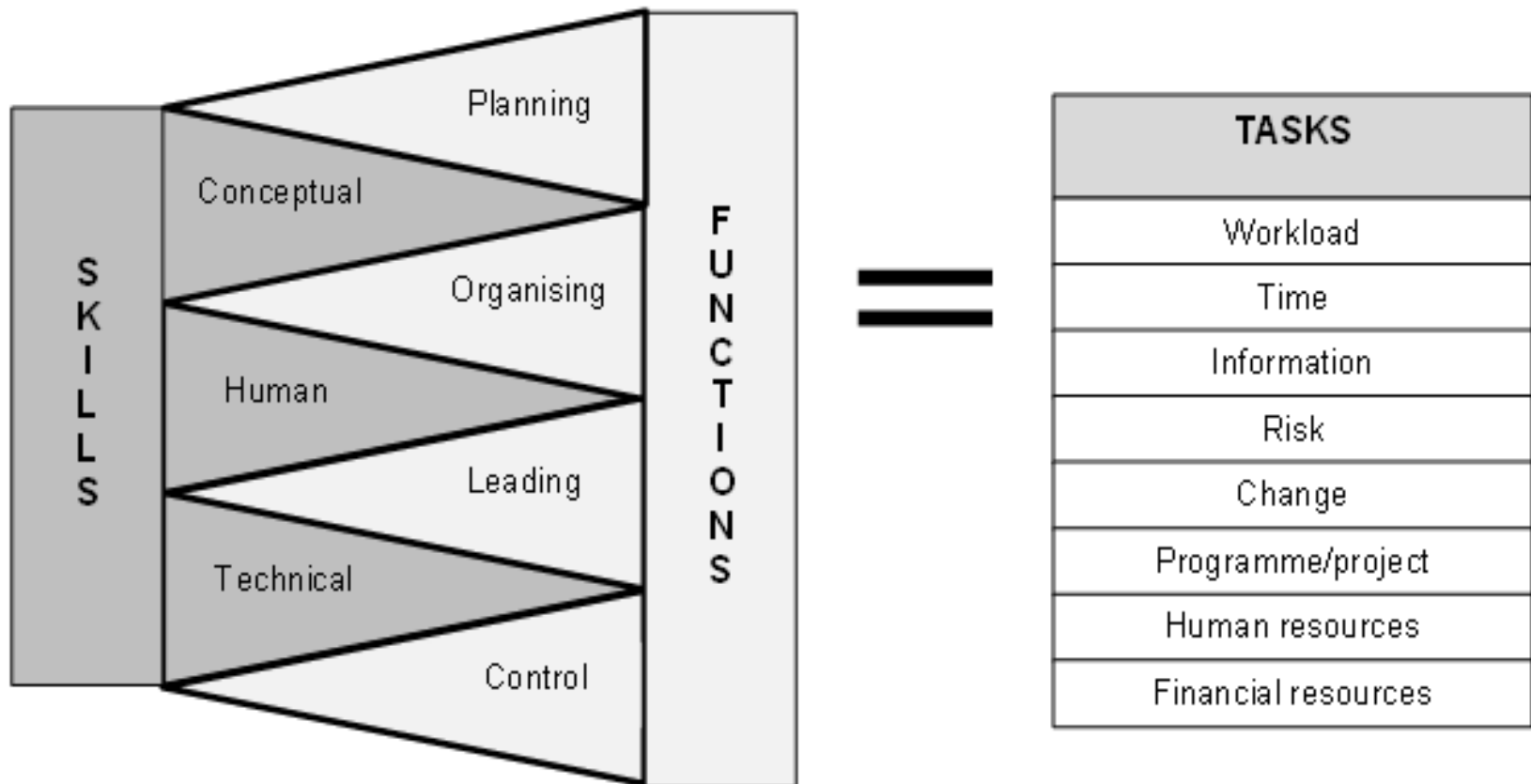# 9. THE LEARNING ORGANISATION APPROACH

– Stay committed to <u>lifelong learning</u>;

– <u>Challenge assumptions and generalisations</u> about the organisation and the world through becoming a learning individual and fostering a learning organisation (<u>research</u>?);

– <u>Share a vision</u> for the organisation;

– Encourage <u>active dialogue</u> in the organisation;

10. THE STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE

- It provides a distinctive lens for examining the world of practice" (Saleebey, 2002:20):
  - competencies
  - capacities
  - capabilities
  - Resilience
  - Empowerment
  - ownership
  - Partnership
  - facilitation
  - participation

Operationalization of theories, models and perspectives in management

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FUNCTIONS AND TASKS

- This conceptual framework of management is the underpinning for theories, models and perspectives on supervision of social workers

A practice theory, model and perspective on supervision

1. **The developmental theory of professional identity**
2. **A competency model**
3. **The strengths perspective**

1. The developmental theory of professional identity

BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Motivation		
Motivation for supervision is mainly driven by high anxiety levels owing to the need to gain skills and experience.	Fluctuating motivation for supervision owing to practice realities, demands and complexity of work.	Stable motivation for supervision owing to established professional identity.
Autonomy		
Is dependent of supervision in order to fulfil work requirements.	Is ambivalent about the need for supervision and confidence to fulfil work requirements.	Is self-confident and self-directive in work requirements and know when to seek supervision.
Awareness		
Limited awareness of work-related strengths and challenges and may rely on external sources to provide opportunities for continuing education.	Identify work-related strengths and challenges, and opportunities for continuing education.	Aware of work-related strengths and challenges and take ownership of continuing education.

2. A competency model

- *Intellectual competencies*
  - to develop the supervisee's <u>critical thinking</u> and analytical abilities.

- *Performance competencies*
  - how to <u>integrate</u> the theory and practice of social work.

- *Personal competencies*
  - Aspects such as the development of supervisees' <u>professional identity</u>, personality traits, value base and <u>emotional intelligence</u>

- *Consequence competencies*
  - supervisees' abilities to <u>reflect and evaluate</u> all the potential multi-dimensional aspects impacting on their interventions.

3. The strengths perspective

TRADITIONAL (PROBLEM-ORIENTED) SUPERVISION	STRENGTHS-BASED SUPERVISION
The supervisor educates and the supervisee is being taught.	Both the supervisor and the supervisee are involved in the education and they learn from each other.
The supervisor is the all-knowing expert and the supervisee is the layperson.	The supervisor admits that he/she is not the all-knowing expert and appreciates and utilises the supervisee's knowledge and experience.
The supervisor takes full responsibility for the critical reflection on interventions.	The supervisor and the supervisee are jointly involved in critical, reflective and imaginative thinking.
The supervisor mostly talks and the supervisee listens.	Both the supervisor and the supervisee talk and listen.
The supervisor makes the decisions and the supervisee implements them.	The supervisor and the supervisee make joint decisions, based on what is meaningful to both.
The supervisor controls the supervision process and the supervisee is being controlled.	The supervisor and the supervisee strive to meet each other's needs instead of maintaining a system of control.

Implications of the theories, models and perspectives on supervision

1. Goal of supervision
2. Definition of supervision
3. Functions of supervision
4. Process of supervision
5. Activities of supervision

1. Goal of supervision

- deliver to service users the best possible service
- on-going dependence on continuous learning

- 2. Definition of supervision
- largely all international texts from which local scholars draw, are based in <u>clinical contexts</u>
  - merely focuses on the supervisee's clinical interactions with a client;
  - Applicability within a social development paradigm?

- The following <u>determinants for the definition</u> of social work supervision are apparent:
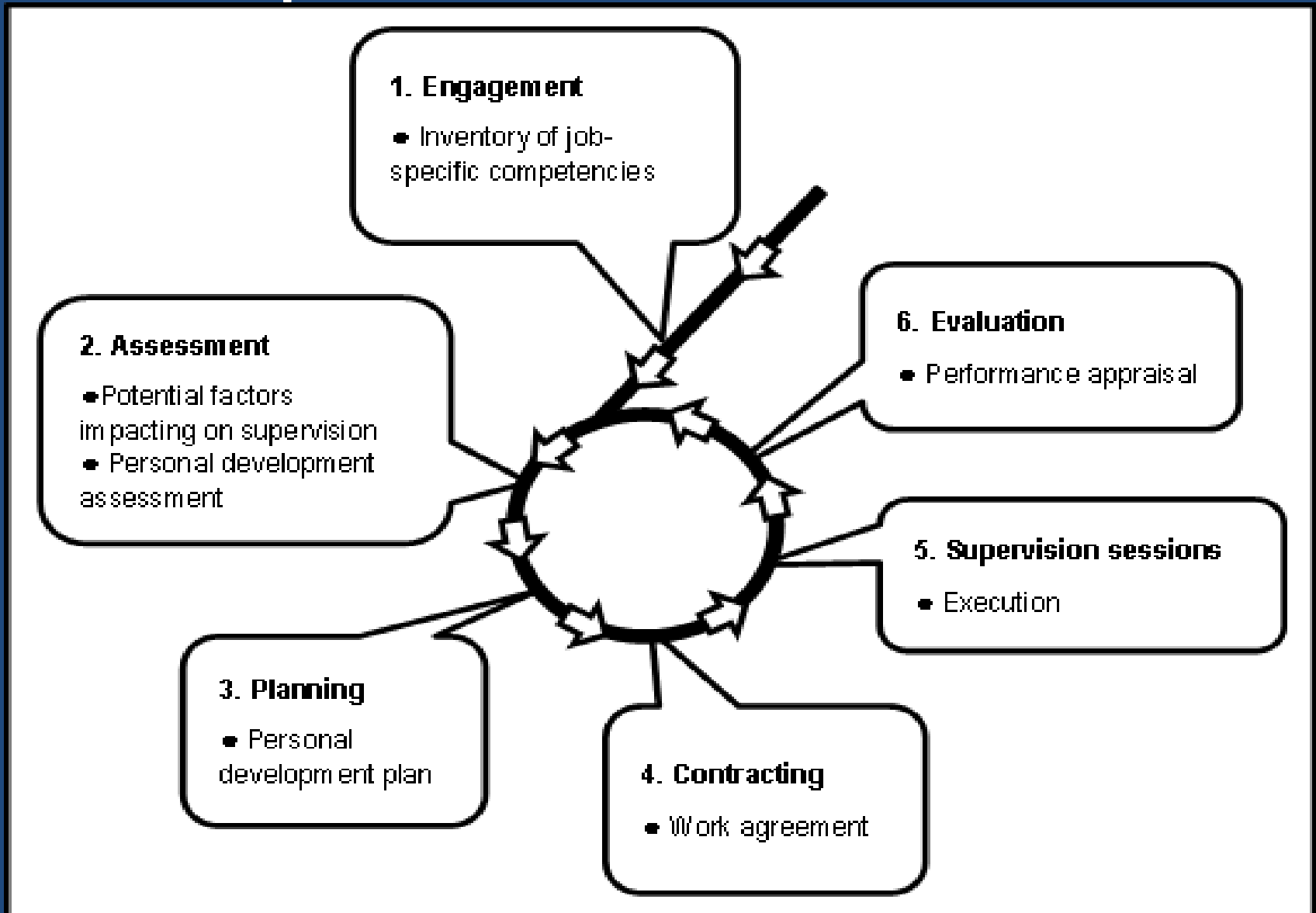
1. Goal of supervision (e.g. to promote efficient and professional rendering of social work services);
2. Functions of supervision (e.g. support, administration and education);
3. Mandate of supervision (e.g. supervision is a regular, formal arrangement and mandated by organisational policies);
4. Time-span of supervision (e.g. supervision is interminable or bound by a specific time-span);
5. Authority of the supervisor (e.g. the supervisor is based on a middle-management level, and engages with associated tasks);
6. Configuration of theories, models and perspectives underlying supervision (e.g. competency model, person-centred and/or strengths perspective, based on a learning organisation school of management thought).

7. Distinct value and ethical base of supervision (e.g. value-driven, SACSSP's Ethical Code, respect, individualisation etc.);

8. Nature of the supervisor-supervisee relationship (e.g. professional, anti-discriminatory);

9. Designated roles of the supervisor (e.g. a modeller role);

10. Nature of the supervision process (e.g. interactional and developmental, cyclical and guided by phases and tasks);

11. Distinct supervision tasks (e.g. managing of supervisees' personal development plan and performance evaluation);

12 Supervision methods (e.g. individual and/or group supervision);

13. Supervision activities (e.g. coaching, mentoring and consultation).

3. Functions of supervision

- **administration or normative function**
  - entails all the management functions and tasks of the supervisor in respect of the supervisee's work.
- **educational or formative function**
  - continuing staff development and associated activities such as coaching and mentoring, in order to empower supervisees with knowledge, skills and values for the effective execution of their work.
- **supportive or restorative function**
  - Psychological and interpersonal support to supervisees mobilise their emotional energy required for effective work performance.

4. A cyclical supervision process in terms of phases and associated tasks

5. Supervision activities

SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Student — **coaching**

Newly qualified — **mentoring**

Experienced — **consultation**

Potential factors impacting on supervision (some examples)

- *Structural and organisational issues*
  - scarce resources, unmanageable workloads
  - "on the run" supervision or an "open door supervision policy", which is crisis-driven, and which cannot be defined as supervision as such
  - culminate in reducing supervision to a one-dimensional control function: "work inspections"

Cultural dimensions

- A continuum of acculturation:
  - assimilation (movement towards the dominant culture);
  - biculturalism (the ability to live in different worlds);
  - integration (a synthesis of different cultures);
  - rejection (reaffirmation of the traditional culture); or
  - or marginalization (alienation from all cultures).

Gender differences

MALE SUPERVISORS	FEMALE SUPERVISORS
Work at an unrelenting pace, and take minimum breaks in activities during the day.	Working at a steady pace, but with breaks scheduled throughout the day.
Describe their days as characterised by interruption, discontinuity and fragmentation.	Do not view unscheduled tasks and encounters as interruptions.
Spare little time during the day for activities not directly related to work.	Make time during the day for activities not directly related to their work.
Exhibit a preference for live encounters.	Prefer live encounters but schedule time to attend to static encounters such as emails.
Spend little time on reflection.	Spend much time on reflection.
Important to identify with their jobs.	See their own identities as multifaceted and not necessarily connected to their jobs.
Have difficulty in sharing information.	Schedule time for sharing of information.

Generation differences

TRADITIONALISTS/ BABY BOOMERS (-1960s)	GENERATION X (1960s -1980s)	GENERATION Y/Z (1980s -)
Regard younger generations as unreliable; stay in a job for life; feel betrayed as organisations do not appreciate them; feel secure in a rule-bound and routine-like environment; work is core to their identity; avoid and/or delegate the use of digital technology in the workplace; believe that the organisation will take care of them.	Tend to fulfil a parent role in the work environment; focus on cost-effectiveness of work; affected by the world recession; are at a dead-end, politically affected work position; are spiritually orientated; are not numerated according to potential work contributions; aware of the constant challenge to keep up with digital technology; believe in good professional work ethics.	Regard older generations as too rigid; have been in different jobs; aware that organisations are desperate for their knowledge; have a sense of entitlement; seek constant creative challenges; believe in creating a work-life-balance; are globally well-connected via social media; dependent on digital technology to be able to work; can be regarded as digital natives.

Adult education principles

- The basics of adult education principles rest on the following premises adapted from <u>Knowles (1971)</u> and modified to fit a supervision context. Supervisees:
  - are autonomous and <u>self-directed</u>, want to exercise choice and will only learn when they are motivated and enthusiastic;
  - learn best when they <u>enjoy</u> the learning process, learning material and learning methods;
  - have accumulated a foundation of <u>life experiences</u>, knowledge, skills and values which they want to be acknowledged, respected and incorporated into their learning experience;

Supervisee learning styles and supervisor education strategies

- Kolb's model of learning preferences may be interpreted in a supervision context as:
  - convergers who prefer practical applications;
  - divergers who prefer seeing things from different perspectives;
  - assimilators who prefer abstract conceptualisations and theoretical models;
  - accommodators who prefer to engage actively with the world and reality.

Blockages and power games of supervisors and supervisees

- ascribed inter alia to:
  - <u>previous experiences</u> of supervision
  - personal inhibition and defensive routines
  - difficulties with authority
  - conflict of roles and role fulfilment
  - organisational constraints affecting both the supervisor and supervisee
- may result in power games.

CONCLUSION

- This conceptual framework compels extended empirical research within the African social development context

- One way to address this, is by means of the formation of a committed research group on management and supervision in Africa

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