

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research report consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on the introduction of the research study and includes the problem formulation, the research goal, objectives and hypothesis. The chapter also includes the ethical aspects, definitions of some of the main concepts and concludes with the limitations within this study.

Chapter 2 is the literature study on social work in mental health within the South African context. This literature study concentrates on the role of social work in mental health with regard to the various mental health sectors, the mental health team, social work qualifications in mental health and social work methods and approaches in mental health.

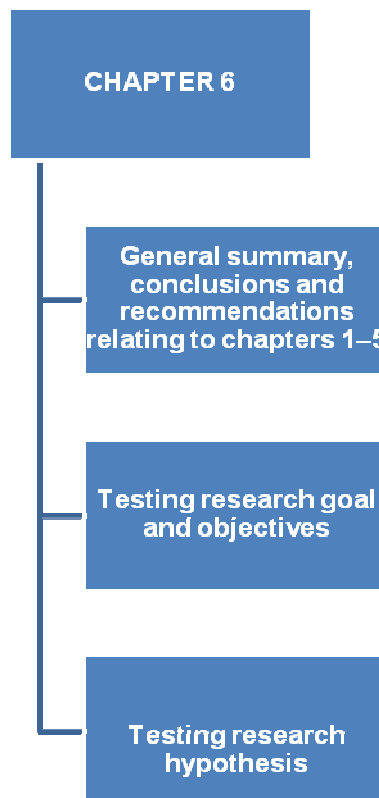
Chapter 3 focuses on literature on the DSM-system and forms the basis for the content of the training programme. The chapter discusses the reason for utilizing the DSM system, and not another system, the terminology in the DSM, the history as well as the multi-axial assessment of the DSM system, and concluded with the limitations and advantages of the DSM system.

Chapter 4 addresses the research methodology and specifically the research approach, type of research and the phases of intervention research. The chapter also includes the description of the research population and sampling method.

Chapter 5 includes the results of the empirical study and discusses the research data after the DSM training programme was presented to social workers. The analysis of the quantitative data is discussed in this chapter and the qualitative data is analysed and presented in identified themes.

Chapter 6 is the summary, conclusions and recommendations of all the previous chapters as well as an evaluation of the research goal, objectives and hypothesis.

Diagram 5: Format of Chapter 6



6.2 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

6.2.1 Summary

The content of the chapter includes the current utilization of the DSM system by social workers and highlights various views from professionals involved in mental health in South Africa. It became clear from the discussion that social workers in South Africa often use the DSM system without training. The research problem was formulated based on social workers stating that they use the DSM system, regardless of their training or lack of training in the DSM system. Social workers do not always receive sufficient training in mental health diagnostic systems while receiving their formal education.

The goal for this study was to develop, implement and pilot test a programme to train social workers in the utilization of an accredited diagnostic system, namely the DSM system, when dealing with individuals who present with a specific disorder.

The hypothesis that directed this research indicated that if social workers receive formal training in the utilization of the DSM system, it will equip them with knowledge and insight with regard to the mental health of their clients. This will enhance the profession, since social workers will be able to participate in the multi-professional team with insight with regard to mental health terminology and pathology.

The researcher addressed various ethical aspects such as the avoidance of harm, obtaining informed consent, ensuring cooperation with contributors, avoiding any deception of the respondents, ensuring competence from the researcher's side and focused on the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents.

Some of the identified limitations of this study were the lack of research on the utilization of the DSM system in South Africa, the need for training over a longer period, the uncertainties regarding the practical definition of 'clinical social work' and the need for a nationally accepted scope of practice for social workers.

6.2.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions are made based on the introduction of this study:

- Mental disorders affect the lives of millions of people. Social workers have to address their clients' problematic situations holistically, which may lead to social workers using the DSM system without any training. The mere fact that social workers utilize the system, regardless of training in this field

or the lack of training, is a clear indication that training in this field is necessary in the social work profession.

- The lack of a clear scope of practice for social workers in South Africa, and with that their right to do mental health diagnoses or even work with mental health clients, has led to conflict. It seems that there is not yet a clear agreement between the role players within South Africa, such as the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and the South African Association of Social Workers in Private Practice (SAASWIPP).
- One of the main concepts, namely 'clinical social work', is well defined in international literature. However, very little literature was found within the South African context pertaining to who is qualified to be a clinical social worker. It seems that there is controversy since only a limited number of academic institutions provide a postgraduate qualification in this field, and would rather refer to their specialized mental health postgraduate degree in other terms. This has caused some conflict on a practical level among social workers and 'clinical' social workers when operating in the field of mental health since the perception exists that some social workers overstep their boundaries or scope of practice.

6.2.3 Recommendations

- A training programme in the DSM system should be made available to social workers since it is not only a need but also a necessity for work in the mental health field.
- The South African Council for Social Service Professions, which is a legal entity, needs to clarify and confirm the scope of practice for social workers.
- The growing confusion regarding 'clinical social work' needs to be addressed within the South African context. A generic field of training for

the mental health component as part of the learning programmes for social workers might address the current conflict.

6.3 CHAPTER 2: SOCIAL WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH

6.3.1 Summary

The dearth of resources regarding the use of the DSM system in practice highlights the necessity for more attention and research in this area, since knowledge of the disorders, as defined in the DSM system, can benefit the profession. Social workers are expected to use the DSM system although they have often not received any official training in this field. The researcher is concerned that social workers without specific training in the DSM system will have limited knowledge, although they are expected to know of and utilize this system.

Social workers have universal aims, which are to assist their clients, or patients with practical solutions for their problems, improving their social functioning, give hope, provide guidance so that they can take responsibility for their own problems, and support the vulnerable. Ironically the approach for mental health patients are also universal with similar aims as the social work profession, and social workers will therefore come across mental health affected clients or patients. Social workers should therefore be knowledgeable in the field of mental illness.

Currently social workers are working in various mental health settings such as community mental health centre's, general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, emergency and crises intervention services, employee assistance programmes and within private practice.

There is little doubt that the quality of mental health social work has vastly improved over the years, and that the role social workers could play in the field of mental health could increase. The development of adequately operationalized and empirically tested contextual systems of assessment

remains a principal challenge for contemporary social work. The value and benefit of intensive group training in the DSM system for social workers in South Africa needs to be assessed and researched since no data is presently available in the local context to validate social workers' use of the DSM.

6.3.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the literature study on social workers in mental health:

- An increasing number of social workers in South Africa deal with a client load where various mental health disorders could be present or even be a trigger for the clients' own problematic responses to their social or economic problems.
- Social workers have a definite role to play in mental health since mental health disorders include not only the psychological and physical context, but also the social and emotional context, in which the social worker is the specialist.
- There are still uncertainties within the South African context pertaining to the social workers' scope of practice when dealing with mental health patients.
- Social workers are accepted as mental health practitioners and as part of the mental health team. It is therefore significantly important that social workers understand mental health disorders and will benefit from understanding and utilizing a system such as the DSM system.
- Social workers receive very little and often no training in mental health related tools, diagnoses and theories, which is a shortfall since this profession often forms part of a mental health team.

- Basic knowledge and application of the DSM system can be a tool in the creation of a diagnostic impression in social work that will enable the social worker to participate in the consultation process with other professionals.

6.3.3 Recommendations

- The lack of a formalized and accessible social work scope of practice needs to be addressed on government level with input from various bodies, such as the South African Association of Social Workers in Private Practice (SAASWIPP).
- The academic curriculum for social work programmes in South Africa should include more training in the field of mental health, in order to equip social workers to fulfil their role as a mental health practitioner and team member.
- Social work training should equip the social workers with skills and knowledge on assessing and recognizing mental health disorders in order to make the correct referrals for the appropriate illnesses.

6.4 CHAPTER 3: DSM SYSTEM

6.4.1 Summary

There are various arguments as to why social workers should or should not make use of the DSM. Social workers are ambivalent towards classification systems for clients and have concerns about the degree to which categorizing and labelling clients as delinquent, unemployable, schizophrenic or mentally retarded increases stigma, shape expectations and limit opportunities.

Knowledge of diagnostic criteria can assist the social worker to address the overall functioning level of their clients. Clients and their family members may have limited information about mental health issues. The well-informed social

worker may be able to assist with correcting wrong ideas and perceptions, formulate a treatment plan and make referrals to the professional treatment team.

The DSM can provide a layperson with information to refer people who may have a mental disorder to psychiatric counselling or treatment. The DSM does not provide information about treatment or the cause of a mental health problem.

6.4.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the literature study on the DSM system:

- Since the field of mental health involves anything from divorce adjustment services and treatment of substance abuse to the treatment of depression and schizophrenia, it is important that social workers should understand and be familiar with a mental health diagnostic system, such as the DSM system which is the most commonly used system worldwide.
- Many people have signs or symptoms of mental health disorders that neither they nor others consider an indication of a mental disorder, and again some people present completely 'normal' and do not show any evidence of signs or symptoms pertaining to mental health disorders that might be present.
- The DSM is globally the most used mental health diagnostic system since the first edition was published in 1952, followed by revisions and subsequent editions.
- The inclusion of the Multi-Axial Assessment, more specifically Axis IV, does not only provide resolutions for some of the criticisms of the DSM

system, but also highlights the role of social work in dealing with mental health clients.

- Social workers, who are equipped with a basic knowledge and training in the use and even the misuse of the DSM system, will be in a much better position to understand and refer to the diagnostic criteria. Basic knowledge and training in the DSM can assist the social worker to enhance the overall functioning levels of their clients.
- Well-informed social workers can correct distortions and foster cooperation and referrals in the treatment plan among the mental health treatment team professions.

6.4.3 Recommendations

- Social workers should not only be educated in a mental health diagnostic system, but should also understand the terminology used in mental health, such as mental health illness, disorders and psychosis.
- Training in the DSM system should provide adequate training in the multi-axial system, Axis IV (Psychosocial and environmental problems), since that is the social workers' field of speciality.

6.5 CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.5.1 Summary

The goal of this research study was to develop, implement and pilot test a programme to train social workers in the utilization of an accredited diagnostic system namely the DSM system.

The research objectives were: completing a literature study regarding social workers' diagnostic and assessment tools and techniques; exploring social

workers' knowledge, attitude, and utilization of the DSM system; developing a training programme in the utilization of the DSM system for social workers; measuring the effectiveness and utilization of the content of the training programme; and making conclusions and recommendations regarding the benefit of a training programme for social workers in the DSM system.

A combined quantitative/qualitative approach, with the embedded mixed method design was followed. The researcher chose the embedded mixed method since the primary method was a quantitative approach, supported by a qualitative approach as secondary method.

This research was applied intervention research since the aim of the entire study was to contribute towards the practical issue, namely, to put in place training for social workers who use the DSM system without training and social workers who have a need to be more knowledgeable regarding the DSM system. This training programme in the DSM system is an attempt to an implemented and pilot tested intervention to address these practical issues amongst practitioners.

The data collection was done while the respondents attended a two-day training programme in the DSM system. Prior to the commencement of the training, the respondents had to complete a pre-test questionnaire in order to assess their views regarding mental health and the DSM system. After two days, on completion of the training programme, the respondents had to complete a post-test questionnaire to assess their views after the training. The data analysis was based on a pre-experimental design, namely the 'one-group pretest-posttest design' that contributed to making valuable interpretations and comparisons regarding the impact and value of the training programme.

The research methodology was based on the six phases of the intervention research process. In the first phase, the researcher identified the research problem, namely social workers often using the DSM system, without training, and the identified need amongst social workers for more knowledge regarding mental health. This phase also focused on the project planning, where the

researcher not only identified and involved social workers, but also received cooperation from the social work departments of the South African Police Service and the Department of Correctional Services, as well as various private institutions.

The second phase of the intervention research process focused on the gathering of information. Very little social work literature exists regarding this field of study, especially within the South African context. Experts in the field, such as social work academics, social workers in private practice, clinical social workers, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists were approached for their expert view and guidance regarding this subject.

Within the third phase, the researcher addressed the quasi-experimental design, namely the one-group pretest-posttest design. The researcher developed a training programme in the DSM system for social workers. The programme and the data collection methods, namely the questionnaires, were tested in the fourth phase. The research problem and questionnaires were pilot tested with various experts in the field to ascertain the adequacy, quality, and practicalities of the training programme.

The fourth phase of the intervention research process focused on the pilot testing the training programme, whereby the researcher collected data pertaining to biographical information, the DSM system and the DSM training programme, as well as data pertaining to social workers' assessments.

The last two phases of evaluation and advanced development as well as the dissemination of the programme could be addressed in future research. There is a need for a training programme on the DSM system as the researcher received requests from various companies to provide the training and manual, and the request that the training should be registered for continuous professional development (CPD) points due to the value that it could add to their work environment.

The research population was social workers working with a client base in South Africa, while the sample consisted of 79 social workers from the Western Cape. The sample of social workers was purposively chosen from social workers working with clients specifically in the Western Cape area.

6.5.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the research methodology:

- This study had an applied research goal since the research aimed to attend to a specific problem in practice, namely developing, implementing and evaluating a programme to train social workers in the utilization of an accredited diagnostic system, namely the DSM system. In this study, the applied research worked well since the results can be implemented in practice.
- The first four phases of the intervention research process was applicable, since this study aimed to develop, implement and pilot test a new training course for social workers in the DSM system.
- The research consisted of four phases, the first phase of which was the problem analysis and project planning. This phase concluded that social workers actually seek training and assistance in using diagnostic systems since they are using the DSM system, regardless of the lack of training.
- The second phase that focused on information gathering concluded that more research in this field is needed since no previous research was available within the South African context.
- The pilot study was the fourth phase; this phase concluded that the content and evaluation measurements of the training programme were indeed adequate and that the study was feasible. In pilot testing the training programme, quantitative and qualitative data was collected with a

pre-test and post-test questionnaire that enabled the researcher to capture and process the data electronically.

- The fifth phase of evaluation and advanced development can be addressed in future research. The researcher received requests for more training in the DSM system, indicating the need for such a training programme.

6.5.3 Recommendations

- Since there is no existing South African research with reference to social workers using mental health diagnostic tools, it is recommended that more research should take place within the South African context on themes such as:
 - social workers' ability to intervene with mental health patients;
 - clarity on the scope of practice for social workers;
 - clarity on the various speciality fields in the social work profession;
 - identifying and/or developing other social work interventions for mental health patients.
- Future research could focus on Programme Evaluation in order to improve the training programme, as developed for this study.
- A training programme in the DSM system should rather be presented in the format of a certain number of modules over a set period, whereby social workers could have adequate time to familiarize themselves with all the terms, references and categories of mental health disorders and have the opportunity to integrate the new knowledge in practical examples.
- This training programme could be presented to social workers as a continuous professional development (CPD) training opportunity, as part of the dissemination planning.

6.6 CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL STUDY, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.6.1 Summary

This chapter represents all the empirical data as obtained from the study and consists of a comprehensive reflection of the quantitative and qualitative data.

The researcher made use of a comprehensive literature study regarding the DSM system as well as the role of social workers in the field of mental health, as the basis for the DSM system training programme and training manual. The programme was presented as a pilot study prior to the official presentation, in order to identify any shortfalls or errors.

The researcher presented the training over two days and evaluated the programme in order to refine and enhance the content to maximize the value. Seventy-nine (79) respondents attended the first day of the training programme, while seventy-five (75) respondents attended the second day.

Respondents completed a questionnaire prior to the training. The pre-test questionnaire had two sections: section A gathered biographical data, and section B, which assessed the respondents' views regarding the DSM system.

After the two-day training, the respondents had to complete the post-test questionnaire. The post-test questionnaire also consisted of a section A, which focused more on the evaluation of the training programme, while section B had similar questions as the pre-test questionnaires' Section B, in order to compare the respondents' views, knowledge and opinions regarding the DSM system, after they had completed the training.

The biographical data from the pre-test questionnaire indicated that the respondents' main expectation of the training programme was to obtain knowledge of the DSM system and to find clarity on mental health issues. Most of the respondents either worked for the government or for NGOs or in

the private sector and most of them had a graduate qualification. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 49 years and assessed 10–49 clients per month. Although many respondents never received any formal training in the DSM system, a relatively high number of respondents attended additional training or conducted self-study to learn more about this system.

The pre-test and post-test comparison on the empirical data for the respondents' views, knowledge and opinions related to the DSM system indicated that the respondents felt that they have learned and personally developed from the DSM programme. After the training, the respondents felt more knowledgeable and competent to assess and assist mental health patients. The respondents' overall view on the DSM system was that the system is needed, is useful and that it will enhance the social work profession. In conclusion of this section, the respondents indicated that, prior to the training, they were of the opinion that their social work assessments were only occasionally regarded as valuable by other professionals, while on completion of the training, they felt that their assessments could be of more value, because they were more knowledgeable about the DSM system.

The post-test questionnaire's section A, the evaluation of the training programme, indicated that sixty five (65) (84.4%) of the respondents felt that the training in the DSM system is beneficial to the social work profession, since it assists social workers to provide more comprehensive assessments, it upgrades and empowers social workers and assists them to formulate more appropriate treatment plans. Seventy-four (74) (97.3%) of the respondents admitted that the training would assist them personally in their roles as professional social workers and a further 74 (98.7%) indicated that they would recommend the training to their colleagues.

6.6.2 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the empirical study, data analysis and interpretations:

- Social workers have a need to know more about the DSM system and to have clarity on mental health issues.
- Social workers receive very little training in mental health as part of their undergraduate training and that explains the significant need for more training in this area, since social workers have to work in mental health settings and with mental health patients, regardless of their training.
- The training in the DSM system increased social workers' perception to consider the use of well-researched diagnostic criteria in their dealings with mental health care users and in communicating with other members of the multidisciplinary team.
- It would appear that although the social workers became more hesitant about doing psychotherapy themselves, the training allowed them to consider other options, viz. to use other therapeutic interventions, to deal with the client holistically and to refer mental health problems to other members of the multidisciplinary team.
- The use of the DSM system would enhance the social work profession since social workers felt that they would be able to communicate more professionally with their colleagues in order to maintain a position as a respected member of the multi-disciplinary treatment team.
- Almost all the respondents stated that they attended the training due to a personal interest and a need to know more, which clearly indicated the need for training in this field. The large number of respondents that already trained themselves through either additional courses or self-study supported this statement.
- Training may enhance the professionalism of social workers amongst other professionals, and knowledge of the DSM criteria can assist the social worker to address their clients' overall level of functioning.

- Social workers are eager to improve their knowledge and skills. Social workers should be keenly aware and alert to updates in diagnostic criteria throughout the intervention. This training in a diagnostic tool would equip the social work professionals to provide better client services and provide an opportunity for the profession to recognize malpractice in terms of the DSM system.
- The DSM system may enhance the social work profession since social workers will be able to communicate with their colleagues in order to maintain a position as a respected member of the multi-disciplinary treatment team.

6.6.3 Recommendations

- Training in a diagnostic system is significantly important since social workers highlighted their need and interest in this field; 63% of the attendees further responded that they have never received any training in the DSM system, while 37% received training either at their academic facility or through additional courses and self-study.
- A similar training curriculum as part of undergraduate education should be considered since there is a rapid growth of social work practice, and more specifically medical social work, stimulated by the need for multi-professional collaboration in multi-disciplinary settings and for teaching allied disciplines.
- The DSM training programme will have to include practical examples and case studies of various factors such as:
 - formulating a treatment plan,
 - referral methods, and
 - maintenance of a position as a respected member of the multi-disciplinary treatment team.

- Seventeen (22%) respondents recommended the inclusion of more case studies or examples when referring to the disorders and Axis levels.
- More opportunities should be provided to practically implement some of the information provided.
- Many social workers recommended follow-up training since it was of great value.
- Social workers should be made aware of, and receive additional training where necessary to make a comprehensive assessment based on the health care approach consisting of three cycles that will dictate the presenting symptoms of an individual, namely the physical, the psychological and the socio-economic contexts. Social workers should be aware of the importance of the entire context in order to make a more comprehensive assessment.

6.7 EVALUATION OF GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

6.7.1 Goal

The goal of this study was **to develop, implement and pilot test** a programme to train **social workers** in the **utilization of an accredited diagnostic** system, namely the DSM system, when dealing with individuals who present with a specific disorder.

Research Outcome

The researcher achieved this goal since she:

- **developed** a programme with a 130 page manual that refers to mental health in general, social workers' role in mental health, mental health with regard to the regulating body (Department of Health) and detail with

regard to the DSM system. The last module of the programme included all the disorders as listed in the DSM, with a short overview and history on some of the disorders. The entire manual and programme relied on the information gathered for this thesis;

- **implemented** the above referred programme over a two-day training intervention in Cape Town, October 2008; and
- **evaluated** the above named programme (with manual), since the respondents had to evaluate and comment on the programme and content. The respondents had the opportunity to indicate their views with regard to the DSM system. The researcher made use of open-ended questions here, especially to get the personal evaluation of each respondent. All of the respondents were positive, with good evaluation feedback.

The researcher accepts that the evaluation of this intervention could have been more extensive. This research study therefore provides a platform for further training and intervention, as dictated by the intervention research design.

6.7.2 Objectives

6.7.2.1 Objective 1

The first formulated objective was to do a literature study regarding social workers' diagnosis and assessment within the context of the DSM system.

Research outcome:

A literature study regarding social workers' diagnosis and assessment tools and techniques was completed:

- It appears that social workers in public sectors are expected to do diagnosis and assessment, regardless of their tools, training or techniques or lack thereof, due to the lack of finances and psychiatric and clinical psychology resources.

- It appears that social workers in private sector make a definite separation between generic social work and clinical social work. Clinical social workers are making diagnoses and according to literature are allowed to diagnose mental health conditions.
- Training for social workers in mental health is overall limited, regardless of mental health diagnostic and assessment tools.

This research study indicated controversial issues pertaining to this subject, and therefore the objective is very broad and dynamic. This is an indication for more research in this regard, but that is the purpose of intervention research – to stimulate further research with intervention or programme design. The researcher is of opinion that this objective was met. Uncertainties with regard to social workers' scope of practice in mental health, leaves social workers without guidance or diagnostic and assessment tools and techniques. Social workers rely on their training in direct work, with various approaches to deal with mental health clients.

6.7.2.2 Objective 2

To explore social workers' knowledge, attitude, and utilization of the DSM system.

Research outcome:

The researcher reached the second objective with regard to the following:

- **Social workers' knowledge of the DSM system:** Various South African universities agree that social workers receive little or no information in their training with regard to the DSM system, and therefore would have limited knowledge. Even social workers, who admitted to using the system, stated that they have not received any education in this regard. In the empirical data the respondents, in the context of this study the social workers, confirmed that they received limited opportunities and training to obtain knowledge about the DSM system.

- **Social workers' attitude of the DSM system:** From the literature investigation, it seems that social workers are either pro or against the use of the DSM system, with various reasons as discussed in Chapter three under limitations and advantages of the DSM system. The empirical data indicated that there was a significant change of attitude after the intervention. Respondents changed their attitude from lack of confidence to being confident that social workers will be enabled to make earlier and more appropriate referrals, will make assessments that are more comprehensive, and that knowledge of the DSM system will upgrade and empower the social work profession and assist social workers to find the appropriate treatment plan.
- **Social workers' utilization of the DSM system:** The literature study indicated that there are controversial views to the right of social workers to use the DSM system. The researcher found from interviews with various experts and from her own experience, that social workers utilize the DSM system. The researcher explored and found from the empirical data that there was a further significant change with regard to the utilization of the DSM prior to the intervention compared to after the training. However, this objective aimed at exploring, and is not a guarantee that the social workers will indeed utilize the system, but rather an indication that they are planning to do so.

Based on the above, the researcher believes that this objective, which is also broad, was reached. Again, there is scope for more questions and measurement tools and therefore more research in this regard. This is in line with one of the outcomes of intervention research, namely to stimulate further research with intervention or programme design.

6.7.2.3 Objective 3

To develop a training programme and train social workers in the utilization of the DSM.

Research outcome:

The researcher developed a training programme with a 130-page manual, since this was also the primary goal of the research study. The training was presented over a two-day period and the content of the manual is listed in Chapter 4, although this entire research report formed the basis for the training manual.

6.7.2.4 Objective 4

To measure the effectiveness and utilization of the content of the training programme.

Research outcome:

The empirical data indicated that the training programme was perceived as a valuable course. The respondents felt that a training programme such as this one was effective and the content can be utilized for future training. The qualitative data indicated:

- the social workers were of the opinion that training in this field could make their assessments more valuable and professional;
- that social workers could be able to make earlier and more appropriate referrals, comprehensive assessments, and that the knowledge of the DSM system will upgrade and empower the profession and assist with the appropriate treatment plan.

This concurs with the literature study that showed that such a training programme could assist social workers to understand and use the mental health language used in the DSM system.

This objective was reached; however, it could be viewed as a rather vague objective since the question could be raised as to the meaning of 'effectiveness' and 'utilization'. The researcher is of opinion that the training could either have been effective – and therefore voted for as a good functional training, or as ineffective, whereby respondents would have indicated that

they were not satisfied and that expectations were not met. In this instance, all the quantitative and qualitative data indicated an effective score according to the collected responses.

To measure utilization in this regard is impossible, since the post-test took place immediately after the intervention, and intended utilization were measured. This measurement indicated that the respondents intended to utilize this system. Further research with regard to on-going research and interventions could be of value.

6.7.2.5 Objective 5

To draw conclusions and make recommendations with regard to the benefit for the social work profession as well as to multi-professional teamwork, should social workers receive training in the DSM system.

The researcher is of the opinion that she achieved the last objective within the scope of developing and pilot testing the DSM training programme. Conclusions and recommendations were made according to the literature study as well as the empirical study. These recommendations concur with the applied research aim to improve practical situations or problems.

6.8 TESTING RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

6.8.1 Research questions

All the research questions were answered.

- Are social workers qualified to do mental health diagnosis?
 - There are international uncertainties to whether a generically trained social worker is qualified to do mental health intervention or not. Some authors and experts accept diagnosing as part of social work, while some do not accept it. Universities are clear that social workers' training is limited with regard to mental health and especially diagnosis.

- Are social worker's already working with diagnostic tools?
 - The researcher found from the literature, experts and empirical data that social workers are doing mental health assessments, and that some authors even noted that social workers could diagnose. However, it seems that training and education with regard to mental health and mental health assessments are limited.

- What is the scope of practice for mental health social workers?
 - The researcher found a major problematic area to be the shortfall of a mental health social work scope of practice for South African social workers. The concern that social workers assess and even diagnose in the field of mental health, without adequate training, was raised in the literature study, discussions with experts and was noted by respondents.

6.8.2 Research hypothesis

The research hypothesis is as follows: If social workers receive formal training in the utilization of the DSM system, it will equip them with knowledge and insight with regard to the mental health of their clients. This will enhance the profession, since social workers will be able to participate in the multi-professional team with insight with regard to mental health terminology and pathology.

The researcher found the following with regard to the development of a hypothesis (**an answer** to a **problem** that was **empirically tested**):

Problem:

- Currently in South Africa, social work as a profession is not fully accepted in the private health sector, and as part of the mental health team. This may be due to uncertainties and lack of a scope of practice in social work in mental health.

- Social workers are often not familiar with the mental health terminology since this may not have been part of their initial undergraduate training.
- A scope of practice will guide social workers with regard to their mental health assessments and treatment, but in the absence thereof, social workers have to rely on their generic skills and training to do so.
- Social workers are forced by agencies and the public sector to use the DSM system, or to comment on the criteria, and without adequate education and knowledge, the social workers would not be able to make a relevant professional input, as expected from other mental health practitioners.
- There are uncertainties in the mental health profession not only amongst social workers (clinical vs. generic social workers) but also with other professions, with regard to the quality and role of social services in mental health.

Answer:

- The researcher could not find any formal (historic or current) training in South Africa on the utilization of the DSM system, particularly for social workers, and therefore initiated such a training (intervention). Especially with the absence of formal training at university level, the researcher felt that formal training could provide a platform for social workers to become familiar with, obtain knowledge and insight with regard to the mental health of their clients.
- This could assist in enhancing the social work profession since social workers will have insight into the mental health terminology and pathology.

Empirical study:

- The need for formal training in the DSM system (to enhance the profession with knowledge and enable social workers to participate in the multi-professional team) was supported by not only the literature study, but also the empirical study.

- The majority of the respondents indicated that training which provides knowledge and insight with regard to the DSM system could benefit social workers, and therefore enhance the profession.
- There was a significant increase after the training whereby 98.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that they would make use of the DSM system.

The researcher therefore believes that this hypothesis was empirically tested. It could be argued that more instruments should be used to measure 'knowledge and insight with regard to mental health'. The researcher is of opinion that due to the lack of previous research, it has been difficult to narrow aims, objectives and the hypothesis, prior to the study. However, the study has indicated that there is a definite need for further research in this field.

6.9 CLOSURE

Depression, suicide, violence, and abuse are no longer hidden concerns. These are just a few examples of mental health issues that social workers have to deal with on a daily basis. This study has indicated that mental health behaviour consists of psychological, physical and psychosocial facets. However, it was found that social workers receive very little training in mental health diagnoses and criteria, regardless of the practical need. This study has developed a training programme in the DSM system and after the implementation of this two-day training programme, social workers indicated in their evaluation a need for more and regular training in this field. The researcher evaluated the programme through a pre-test and post-test. The preliminary evaluation indicated that the programme was successful in contributing to social workers' knowledge of the DSM system when dealing with individuals who present with a specific disorder.