

The Role of Professional Supervision in Helping Group Social Workers Address the Membership Problems in School Activity Groups

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Abstract:

The research aimed at identifying membership problems of school activity groups from the supervisory point of view, and determining the roles of professional supervision in helping social workers address these problems. The study was conducted on 90 supervisors specialized in group social work during May 2017. The research, as a descriptive study, applied the social survey method on an organized sample, using a questionnaire to collect data. The research identified seven problems related to membership of school activity groups and their causes, from the supervisory point of view. It also identified ten detailed tasks that supervision could carry out to help group social workers address membership problems, using five supervision methods and seven supervisory skills. The study also found that male supervisors displayed higher performance than female supervisors and there is positive correlation between the supervisors' age and performance in roles. In addition, there is a positive correlation between the number of years of experience and educational qualifications of supervisors and their performance. The research results could benefit practitioners and supervisors in the school field at the preparatory and secondary level in Egypt.

Keywords:

Professional supervision – roles – group membership – membership problems for groups – group social worker – school activity groups.

Introduction:

School, as a domain, is considered one of the first and most important domains for social work practice. Social work in schools began between 1906 and 1907 with initial development outside the school system, as a private agency and civic organization took on the work, it was not until 1913 that the first Board of education initiated and financed a formal visiting teacher program, placing visiting

teachers in special departments of the school under the administration and direction of the superintendent of schools. (Meares, Allen, 2008, p3)

The importance of this study lies in the importance of the school field in social work in general and the method of social group work in particular. Social work with groups has been practiced in Egyptian schools since 1949 to increase the social role of the school. This is through providing students joining the school groups with experiences, human values and social skills. The groups allow students to exercise democratic behavior to help them attain a sense of responsibility and respect for others and contribute to achieving the school educational goals (El Gindi, 2005, pp. 287-288).

Activity groups form when students with common interests and specific hobbies join in a group to engage in social, cultural, or sports activities to satisfy interests and develop hobbies (Abdel Razek, 2003, p. 674). It is a tool the school uses for developing students' social education and to influence their character growth. The school uses it also help students gain abilities for cooperation and leadership, and to prepare them for practicing customs and social behaviors required by the society in which they live (Tawfik, 2000, p. 434). The importance of school activity groups lies in satisfying the students' needs and enabling them to practice activities and hobbies freely, away from the constraints of the school day. The groups allow students to exchange experiences and contribute to these groups to adjusting their behavior (Suleiman, 1990, p. 85).

An academically and professionally qualified social group worker is responsible for working with school activity groups. The social worker should have the abilities and skills to use his or her learning to help groups achieve their goals through various activities inside and outside the school (Al Gindi, 2005, p. 29).

According to the Ministry of Education statistics, the number of social workers in Egyptian schools for the academic year 2016/2017 was 136,715 spread over 52,664 schools nationwide, serving roughly 21 million students (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Despite the long tradition of practicing group social work in the school field in Egypt, and despite the large number social workers in Egyptian schools, many obstacles are facing school activity groups. Abdellatif's study (1989) indicates a lack of awareness on the importance of groups and the lack of using modern methods in professional practice among social workers. Saad's study (1992)

refers to students' reluctance to join groups and the lack of time to practice group activities. Mustafa's study (2000) indicated that the school environment does not realize the importance of school groups. The study also pointed to the futility of professional practice with school groups. The previous studies were applied to samples of social workers in the school field.

Other studies in the twenty first century have also pointed to the persistence of these constraints based on the views of sample social workers. Sharif's study (2009) noted obstacles such as the lack of time to work with groups, school principals' lack of understanding for the social worker's role, and students refraining from taking part in school groups.

The researcher conducted a previous study applied to a sample of social workers on the use of scientific models in working with groups in the school field. The study pointed to the presence of some obstacles hindering groups. The study found that students refrained from joining groups believing that group activities would waste their time. At the same time, some social workers were unwilling to use scientific models in working with groups (Hassan, 2009).

Examining the results of the previous studies, the researcher identified the most prominent obstacles facing the social worker in working with groups. Such obstacles were the students' lack of awareness on the importance of groups and their reluctance to join them.

To determine problems of school groups' membership, the researcher reviewed other recent studies. Despite the number of studies and the variety of issues that they tackled, they all agreed that students' reluctance to join was the main problem facing the school activity groups. Abdel Moshen's study (2013) focused on evaluating the role of school activity groups in developing citizenship among preparatory students. Muphtah's study (2013) focused on obstacles hindering female students from participation in school activity groups. Ibrahim's study (2014) focused on the role of school activity groups in preventing repeated influenza sickness. Last, Abdel Rahman's study (2016) focused on social factors and their relation to students' participation in group activities.

To ascertain the consensus on this problem, the researcher took part in a conference organized by the General Directorate of Social Education in December 2016, and attended by 250 social workers. The researcher conducted intensive discussions with the social

workers during the conference. The discussions highlighted low membership as one of the main obstacles facing school groups. Social workers attributed the causes to students preferring virtual communication to real groups. According to Mahfouz (2004), the lack of clear criteria for group membership (such as age, experience, skills, and participation fees) has a significant impact on group formation, structure, cohesion, and continuation (p. 123).

Hamed (2011) believes that several factors affect the group membership. Among these factors is the lack of awareness on the group objectives, the absence of a membership attraction plan, and the absence of methods for drawing students to groups (p. 201).

These constraints facing the school activity groups need to be addressed. In fact, the group social workers could not face these obstacles alone. They need help understanding the nature of these obstacles, as well as specialized professional support to help them perform their roles with groups. The responsibility for support, following the administrative regulations in the Ministry of Education, lies on the professional supervision of the social work.

Professional supervision in social work is a work system where a social worker benefits from the higher experience of the supervisor, and where the supervisor provides answers for the social worker's questions. Professional supervision motivates the social workers to become efficient, and provides them with needed guidance. It empowers the social worker to gain necessary skills to succeed in working with groups (Saad & Mankorious, 2007, p. 97).

This was confirmed in various previous studies, such as Gitterman's study (2008) on the social work supervisors, teacher of educational method and skills. Gitterman focused on the educational skills that social work supervisor should possess as an educator, on problem solving and counseling skills, and on correcting misinformation. Also, the study of Ivan, & Lynne (2010) confirms that supervision is an integral part of the professional practice of social work. Through supervision, social workers build communication skills, work in teams, develop their profession, and perform professionally with groups. In addition, Al-Gabri's study (2012) examined the training needs of the social work managers to develop their supervisory skills for guiding social workers in their work with school groups. The study suggested developing a training program for building supervisory skills such as leadership, observation, communication, and time management. Although

Gabri's study was applied on supervision in the school field, it did not address the roles of supervision nor the problems that supervisors need to focus on in their work with social workers.

Professional supervision helps social group workers face the difficulties of working with groups, directs them to work effectively, lessens their fears and helps them perform their roles with the group to achieve its goals (Mustafa, 2014, p. 192).

Professional supervision in social work has an important function in the indirect leadership of school activity groups. The social worker is considered the direct leader of the group with whom he works face to face. The supervisor is considered a secondary leader working with social worker for the benefit of the group. The social worker's high performance can only result from the interactions of experiences between himself and the supervisor. The supervisor represents a major source of support that is indispensable to the social worker. The supervisor participates with the social worker in thinking and planning to ensure success in working with the group (Mahfouz & Menkrios & Saad, 2008, p. 100).

This was corroborated by Stein's exploratory study (2005) on social work supervision in non-profit agencies: the supervisee's perception of its usefulness in direct practice with clients: This research study investigates the experiences that MSW social workers have in agency-provided supervision. The study looks at the social worker's perception of the supervision's usefulness in working directly with clients. Study results found a significant statistical correlation between perceived usefulness of supervision in direct practice with clients and supervision that included practice-related content. Statistical significance was also found between perceived usefulness and supervision that included support and encouragement as well as administrative content. The findings reveal that there is no correlation between the supervisee's level of practice experience and the perceived usefulness of the supervision. Implications for agency-based supervision are suggested. The importance of supervision for the worker, the supervisor, the agency and the client are emphasized. Future research investigating the impact that supervision has on client outcome is recommended. Social work researchers, educators and practitioners are encouraged to consider the relationships between agency supervision, professional practice, and client services in developing, implementing, and teaching models and content of supervision.

In this sense, the researcher assumed that the professional supervision has a role in helping group social workers deal with membership problems of the school activity groups. The study focused on the supervisors' perception of the membership problems, the nature of these problems, and their indicators, as well as their role in helping social workers deal with these problems.

The importance of the current research is also emphasized by Abdel Hady's study (2005) on the relationship between the supervisory role of social guidance and the development of social worker's professional performance in the school field. The results of Abdel Hady's indicated that there is a gap in the theoretical formation of supervisors and social workers. Social workers targeted by the study accused supervision on prejudice to own opinion and disapproved of focus on undetailed general issues in professional practice. The study of Abdel Hady is considered one of the important studies in the same field of the study subject on this paper, which is the school field. The differences between both study is that Abdel Hady's study was applied to a sample of social workers, like all previous studies, and focused on the general topic of professional practice. The current study on the other hand focused on a specific topics and was applied to supervisors.

The researcher was reassured on the importance of the research topic and the role of professional supervision in improving the professional capacities of social workers by Gabri's study (2015). The study found that a training program for using electronic supervision was effective in developing the professional practice skills of group social workers in school. Thus, Gabri's study agrees with the current study in the field of application, but differs in objectives, type of study, and methodology. Gabri did not address the role of professional supervision in helping social group workers deal with group membership problems, which is the study's main objective. A set of sub-objectives were derived from the main objective of the study, which included gathering the supervisory view on membership problems of school activity groups, determining the nature and indicators of these problems, reasons leading to these problems, determining the detailed tasks that supervisors use in helping social workers deal with membership problems, and identifying supervisory methods and skills that supervisors depend on in their roles with group social workers.

The researcher defined the procedural concepts of the study as follows:

The concept of professional supervision: They are a group of social work social workers who have worked for a long time as social workers. This long experience helped them built their professional experience and qualified them to take the role of supervision and guidance. Their role is supporting group social workers perform their roles and develop this performance, as well as monitoring and evaluating their professional practices with school activity groups.

The concept of the role: The role is a set of detailed tasks and professional actions carried out by the supervisor for helping the group social worker. This role includes all supervisory methods and skills on which the supervisor depends in guiding and helping the group social worker address the membership problems of school activity groups. The concept of the role in this context focuses on the actual role rather than the theory of the role.

The concept of group membership: It occurs when students join and belong to a school activity group. This means the participation of a number of students in a group and becoming members in it. Membership also means the appropriate number of members in a group, as well the set of factors that the social worker should observe in the composition of the group in terms of age and gender of the students, the harmony between them, and the membership conditions for the group.

The concept of group membership problems: They are the obstacles that face the formulation of the group such as problems related to joining group membership, the optimum number of group members, the homogeneity and heterogeneity in the membership of the group, the conditions of membership, gender of members forming the group, motives for joining the group, and the obligations of membership.

Method:

The study is based on the following hypotheses:

- 1- There is a significant correlation between the personal characteristics of supervisors (gender - age) and the level of performance in their role helping group social workers address group membership problems.
- 2- There is a significant correlation between the professional characteristics of supervisors (work phase – educational qualification - experience) and the level of their performance of their role helping group social workers address group membership problems.

This research is considered an analytical descriptive study, which presents the description of membership problems in school activity groups and the tasks carried out by the professional supervision social work to address these problems. This research was derived from the theory of role and related concepts, and its relation to the actual role. The study was based on a systematic random sampling methodology for a group of supervisors.

The researcher used a questionnaire to gather information on the topic. The researcher implemented the following steps in the preparation of the questionnaire: The researcher identified the data and information related to the questions in the tool, in light of his review of scientific references and previous studies on the topic, the procedural concepts of issues, and the interviews with practitioners and supervisors. The researcher then formulated the questions of the questionnaire taking into account the dimensions of the research and its objectives. The questionnaire included the first dimension which was identifying the personal characteristics of the respondents (age and gender) as well as their professional characteristics (educational qualification - years of experience – the educational stage that they supervise). The second dimension included a question about on the type of problems associated with membership of the school activity groups in the supervision's view. The third dimension included 7 questions about the indicators of each membership problem. The fourth dimension included a question on reasons that led to the occurrence of those problems. The fifth dimension included the roles of professional supervision in helping social workers deal with these problems. This dimension encompassed three questions on the detailed tasks of supervision, supervisory methods, and supervisory skills on which the supervisor depends in performing his or her roles. Following the formulation, the researcher presented the questionnaire to five social work professors specialized in working with groups and five of professional supervision staff members. They were asked to test the content validity of the questionnaire, to ensure the integrity of questions' formulation, their relevance to the objectives of the study, and their relevance for the respondents in terms of time and clarity. In light of their recommendations, the researcher finalized the formulation of the questionnaire. Finally, the researcher verified the validity of the questionnaire through testing and retesting on a sample of 30 supervisors who shared the same characteristics of the study sample. The time interval between the two tests was 15 days. The results of the testing were as follows:

Table (1) Stability of Data Collection Tool Using Spearman Correlation Coefficient

N=30

Sr.	Dimensions of the Tool	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient Value and Its Significance
A.	The problem of joining the group membership	0.891**
B.	The problem of determining the optimal number of members of the group	0.871**
C.	The problem of homogeneity and heterogeneity in group membership	0.997**
D.	The problem of membership conditions	0.949**
E.	The problem of the gender of group members	0.960**
F.	The problem of motivation for joining group membership	0.891**
G.	The problem of membership obligations	0.950**
Total membership problems		0.899**
Causes of problems		0.981**
A.	Detailed tasks of supervision	0.942**
B.	Supervisory Methods	0.947**
C.	Supervisory skills	0.986**
Total professional role as a whole		0.935**
Total Tool		0.953**

** $P \leq 0.01$

The results of the table indicate the validity of the questionnaire and its validity for application.

Sample:

The study tool was applied to a sample of 90 supervisors specialized in professional supervision with social workers working with school groups. This sample was randomly chosen from a total of 180 supervisors who attended the annual forum organized by the General Directorate of Social Education in the school field on the country level. The study was conducted in the period from 21/5/2017 to 25/5/2017 during which the study data were collected. The forum was dedicated to discussing the problems of professional practice in social work with school groups on the level of supervision. It is worth noting that the number of professional supervisors specialized in groups in Egypt is 400, of which 180 supervisors participated in the forum.

The characteristics of the research sample were as follows: 27.8 percent of the sample were male while 72.2 percent were female.

Concerning the age range of the sample, 25.6 percent were between 35 and 44 years of age, 35.6 percent were between 45 and 54 years old, and 38.9 percent ranged in age from 55 years to 60 years, which is considered the age of retirement. As for the educational qualification, 70 percent of the sample held a bachelor's degree in social work, 17.8 percent held a master's degree in social work and education, while 12.2 percent held a doctorate degree in social work and education. At the same time 52 percent of male supervisors held either a masters or a doctorate degree, while only 21.5 percent of the female supervisors held similar degrees. Concerning the educational stage that the supervisors were responsible for, 45.4 percent of the sample supervised social workers in the preparatory or intermediate level, while 45.6 percent supervised social workers in the secondary (pre-university) level. Additionally, 37.8 percent of the respondents possessed more than 15 years of experience, 33.3 percent ranged from 10 years to less than 15 years of experience, and 28.9 percent ranged from 5 years to less than 10 years of experience. 48 percent of the male supervisors had more than 15 years of experience, while 30.7 percent of the female supervisors had the same number of years of experience.

Study Results:

Results related to the objectives of the research:

Table (2) Membership Problems and Indicators for Each Problem from the Perspective of Supervision

N=90

Type of Membership Problems in Activity Group	Problem Indicators	Responses			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking of Problem Indicators	Ranking of Problems
		Yes	To Some Extent	No				
The problem of joining the group membership	Reluctance to apply for group membership	34	46	10	2.26	0.73	1	6
	Fewer number of applicants for group membership	17	40	33	1.82	0.69	4	
	Hesitance to join groups	17	47	26	1.9	0.78	3	
	Non-payment of group contributions	30	35	25	2.06	0.71	2	
Total Dimension					2.00	0.39	Medium Level	
The problem of worker's lack	Social	23	46	21	2.02	0.70	3	3

Type of Membership Problems in Activity Group	Problem Indicators	Responses			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking of Problem Indicators	Ranking of Problems
		Yes	To Some Extent	No				
determining the optimal number of members of the group	of knowledge on the optimal size of the group							2
	Lack of knowledge on factors affecting the size of the group	36	36	18	2.20	0.75	2	
	Few number of members in groups	38	37	15	2.26	0.73	1	
	Variance in the number of members from one group to another	35	35	20	2.17	0.77	4	
Total Dimension					2.16	0.59	Medium Level	
The problem of homogeneity and heterogeneity in group membership	Lack of clarity on the homogeneity criteria	53	14	23	2.33	0.86	1	2
	Not determining factors affecting the composition of the group	44	26	20	2.07	0.80	2	
	The difference of standards from one group to another	43	24	23	2.22	0.83	3	
	Lack of integration of different cultures in the group membership	36	33	24	2.17	0.78	4	
Total Dimension					2.25	0.57	Medium Level	
The problem of membership conditions	Lack of clear membership conditions	21	39	30	1.90	0.75	1	7
	Non-compliance of the social worker the stated membership conditions	21	33	36	1.83	0.78	3	
	Contrasting membership	18	39	33	1.83	0.74	2	

Type of Membership Problems in Activity Group	Problem Indicators	Responses			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking of Problem Indicators	Ranking of Problems
		Yes	To Some Extent	No				
	conditions with school function							
	Enforcing membership on some students	19	28	43	1.73	0.79	4	
Total Dimension					1.83	0.48	Medium Level	
The problem of the gender of group members	The group limited to one gender.	57	25	8	2.54	0.66	2	4
	Lack of gender mixing in schools	59	22	9	2.56	0.67	1	
	The insistence of some social workers on preventing gender mixing	28	16	46	1.80	0.89	3	
	The social worker not believing in the members' freedom to form the group as they wish	12	21	57	1.50	0.72	4	
Total Dimension					2.1	0.73	Medium Level	
The problem of motivation for joining group membership	The social worker unfamiliar with the motivations of members to join the group	39	38	13	2.29	0.71	1	5
	Different objectives and motives among members	37	39	14	2.26	0.71	2	
	Group members having different objectives than those of the group	25	45	20	2.06	0.71	3	
	Lack of understanding of members for reasons of group formation	6	28	56	1.44	0.62	4	
Total Dimension					2.01	0.41	Medium Level	

Type of Membership Problems in Activity Group	Problem Indicators	Responses			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking of Problem Indicators	Ranking of Problems
		Yes	To Some Extent	No				
The problem of membership obligations	Lack of members' knowledge on membership duties	41	34	14	2.30	0.73	3	1
	Lack of members' knowledge on membership rights	42	34	14	2.31	0.73	2	
	Members disagree on membership responsibilities	40	40	10	2.33	0.67	1	
	Members disagree on membership rights	39	20	31	2.09	0.88	4	
Total Dimension					2.26	0.63	Medium Level	
Total Membership Problems					2.08	0.13	Medium Level	

The results of this table proves one of the objectives of the study. The results indicate that the problems associated with membership of school activity groups are considered medium level, where the arithmetic mean was 2.08. The research sample identified the problems in the following order: the problem of membership obligations with mean of 2.26. The main indicators for this problem were the disagreement of members on membership responsibilities, and lack of awareness on membership rights among members. The second group membership problem was the problem of homogeneity and heterogeneity in membership, with an arithmetic mean of 2.25. The most important indicators for this problems were the lack of clarity of homogeneity criteria and not determining factors affecting the composition of the group. The third problem in the ranking was determining the optimal number of membership with an arithmetic mean of 2.16. The most important indicators for this problem was the few number of members in the groups and the social worker's lack of knowledge on factors affecting the size of the group. The problem ranked fourth in the list was the gender of group members, with an arithmetic mean of 2.1. The most important indicator of this problem was the lack of mixed genders in some schools, thus limiting the group membership to one gender. The fifth problem was the

motivation for joining group membership, with an arithmetic mean of 2.01. The most important indicators were the social worker's unfamiliarity with the motivations of members to join the group, as well as the different objectives and motives among members. The sixth problem was joining group membership with an arithmetic mean of 2.00. The most important indicators for this problem were the few number of application for group membership, and the non-payment of group contributions. The seventh and last problem in the list was the conditions of membership, with an arithmetic mean of 1.83. The most important indicators for this problem were the lack of clear membership conditions and the contrasting between membership conditions and the school function.

Table (3) Reasons for Membership Problems from the Perspective of Supervision N = 90

Reasons for Membership Problems	Responses			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
	Yes	To Some Extent	No			
Lack of the social worker's knowledge and skills on the nature of membership problems.	39	38	13	2.29	0.71	2
Non-compliance of the social worker to the guidance of supervision during the formation phase of the group.	31	43	16	2.17	0.71	7
The activities of the school activity groups are unappealing.	33	41	16	2.19	0.72	6
Lack of use of attractive advertising methods	36	41	13	2.26	0.70	4
Lack of adequate budgets for spending on group activities.	39	33	18	2.23	0.77	5
Heavy burdens placed on the social worker.	45	33	12	2.37	0.71	1
Absence of a school environment that supports the work of school groups.	45	26	19	2.29	0.80	3
Supervisors neglecting to train social workers on the subject of school groups.	30	27	33	1.97	0.84	8

The results of this table prove the achievement of one of the objectives of the study, which is identifying the reasons behind the problems associated with school activity groups membership. In the first rank came the heavy burdens placed on the social worker, with a mean of 2.37, followed by the lack of the social worker's knowledge and skills on the nature of membership problems. The third reason was the absence of a school environment that supports the work of

school groups. The supervision's neglect of training social workers and the non-compliance of the social worker with the supervision's guidance were ranked last.

Table (4)The Role of Professional Supervision in Helping Group Social Workers Address Membership Problems

N=90

Dimensions	Indicators	Responses			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
		Yes	To Some Extent	No			
Detailed tasks of supervision	Listening to the problem presented by the social worker	50	35	5	2.50	0.60	1
	Discussing the details of the problem with the social worker	49	35	6	2.48	0.62	2
	Using brainstorming among social workers to reach solutions	41	41	8	2.37	0.64	6
	Providing social workers with information on the topic	43	40	7	2.40	0.63	4
	Providing the group social workers with answers to their questions on the topic	45	38	7	2.42	0.64	3
	Providing social workers with training on the topic	29	16	45	1.82	0.89	10
	Exchanging experiences among social workers	43	38	9	2.38	0.66	5
	Presenting models of successful groups	36	37	17	2.21	0.74	8
	Supporting the social worker by distributing periodicals on the topic	44	22	24	2.22	0.85	7
	Seeking the aid of university professors to inform social workers	36	16	38	1.98	0.91	9
Total Dimension					2.28	0.53	Medium Level
Supervisory methods used	Conducting supervisory meetings before the actual work with the group	31	49	10	2.23	0.64	4
	Conducting individual supervisory meetings	48	32	10	2.42	0.69	3
	Conducting group supervisory meetings	53	30	7	2.51	0.64	2
	Conducting evaluative supervisory meetings	51	37	2	2.54	0.54	1

Dimensions	Indicators	Responses			Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
		Yes	To Some Extent	No			
	Field visits for social workers	37	27	26	2.12	0.83	5
Total Dimension					2.37	0.47	High Level
Supervisory skills	Observation	33	38	19	2.16	0.75	6
	Problem solving	47	34	9	2.42	0.67	4
	Meetings management	50	35	5	2.50	0.60	3
	Explanation and clarification	67	19	4	2.70	0.55	1
	Education	55	31	4	2.57	0.58	2
	Guidance	55	31	4	2.57	0.58	2 (repeated)
	Presentation	33	41	16	2.19	0.72	5
Total Dimension					2.44	0.40	High Level
Total Professional Role					2.36	0.44	High Level

The results of the previous table indicate the roles of the supervisors in helping the social workers address membership problems, which is one of the objectives of the study. Results present a number of detailed tasks carried out by supervisors, the most important of which were listening to the problem as presented by the social worker, discussing the problem the social worker in detail, and providing the social worker with information on the topic. The last task in the ranking were training and seeking the help of university professors to inform the social workers.

The results indicate that the most important supervisory methods to assist the social worker were evaluative meetings, which came in the first rank, followed by group supervisory meetings and individual supervisory meetings.

As for the supervisory skills needed to help social workers address membership problems, the highest rank was given for explanation skills, followed by education and guidance skills, as well as the skills of meeting management.

The results of the table also indicate the high level of performance among supervisors in general, at an arithmetic mean of 2.36 and a standard deviation of 0.44. The skills and supervisory methods were at a significantly higher, while carrying out detailed tasks remained at a medium level.

Results related to research hypotheses:

Table (5) Correlation between the Personal Characteristics of Supervisors and the Level of Their Performance of Their Professional Role in Helping Social Workers address Membership Problems

N = 90

Personal Characteristics	Used Coefficient	Tasks	Supervisory Methods Used	Supervisory Skills Used
Gender	X ² C.C.	6.312*	7.701*	3.951*
Age	Kendall's tau	0.481**	0.413**	0.672**

* $P \leq 0.05$

** $P \leq 0.01$

The data in the table above indicates that there is a significant correlation between the gender of supervisors (males or females) and the level of their performance in their roles with the social workers to help them address membership problems. The value of 6.312= X² in task performance, 7.701 in the use of supervisory methods, and 3.951 in the use of supervisory skills. The strength of this correlation using compatibility coefficient (C.C.) was in the following order: 0.256, 0.281, 0.205. Statistics showed that male supervisors demonstrated higher performance than females, where 60 percent of males performed well, compared to 32 percent for females. Similarly, 72 percent of males demonstrated higher performance in using supervisory methods versus 41.5 percent of females. In addition, 68 percent for male supervisors demonstrated higher performance related to supervisory skills versus 41.5 percent of females.

The data also showed that there is a significant positive correlation between the age of supervisors and the level of performance of their roles with the group social workers in helping them address membership problem using Kendall coefficient. Thus the results of this table proved the validity of the first research hypothesis.

Table (6) Correlation between the Professional Characteristics of Supervisors and the Level of Performance of Their Professional Role in Helping Social Workers Face the Membership Problems

Professional Characteristics	Used Coefficient	Tasks	Supervisory Methods Used	Supervisory Skills Used
Educational Stage	X ² C.C.	0.225 df=2	6.361* 0.257* df=2	0.004 df=1
Years of Experience	Kendall's tau	0.409**	0.451**	0.600**
Educational Qualification	Kendall's tau	0.683**	0.413**	0.587**

* $P \leq 0.05$

** $P \leq 0.01$

The data in the table above indicate that there is no significant correlation between the educational stage in which the supervisors work and the level of performance of the detailed tasks with the group social workers. On the other hand, there is a correlation between educational stage in which supervisors work and the level of their use of supervisory methods with social workers, but there is no correlation between the educational stage in which supervisors work and the level of performance in using supervisory skills with social workers. The statistics also show level of performance of supervisors in the secondary stage and the level of performance of supervisors in the preparatory stage, where 41.5 percent of the supervisors working with the secondary stage demonstrated high performance compared to 38.8 percent supervisors working with the preparatory stage, which is a close level. In addition, 53.7 percent of the supervisors performed higher in using supervisory methods in the secondary stage compared to 46.9 percent in the preparatory stage. Similarly, 51.2 percent of the supervisors in the secondary stage performed higher in using supervisory skills compared with 51 percent in the preparatory stage, which is also considered a close level.

The results presented in the table also show that there is a significant positive correlation between the supervisors' educational qualification and their performance of roles in assisting social workers. There is also a significant positive correlation between the years of experience of supervisors and the level of performance of their roles. The table proves the validity of the second hypothesis with respect to the years of experience and educational qualification in

all the dimensions of the role (tasks, methods, and skills). It also proves the validity of the hypothesis related to the educational stage in which the supervisors work and the supervisory methods used, as one of the three dimensions. However, it does not provide the validity of the hypothesis in terms of a correlation between the educational stage and the tasks and skills used by supervisors.

Discussion:

The study identified the problems of membership in school activity groups. It exposed the nature, indicators, and causes of these problems. The study also identified the role of professional supervision in helping social workers address these problems.

The results were consistent with some previous studies and inconsistent with others. The current study specified group membership to be the main problem facing school groups. Problem indicators included low membership, hesitance and reluctance to join groups, and the nonpayment of group contributions. These results were in line with Saad's study (1992), which highlighted the problem of reluctance to join groups. The study agreed with Mahfouz's opinion (2004) that nonpayment of contributions an important factor affecting group formation. In addition, Sharif's study (2009) pointed to the lack of participation in group activities.

On the problem of homogeneity and heterogeneity in group membership, the study agreed with Mahfouz's view on the influence of homogeneity factors on group building.

The study was unique in presenting problems of group membership that previous studies had not covered. These problems included membership commitments, identifying the ideal number of members, members' gender, membership motivation, membership requirements. The study succeeded in characterizing these problems by identifying the indicators of each problem as mentioned previously. It focused on the view of supervision in determining membership problems of the school activity groups. This is because supervisors possess higher experience than practitioners, which enables them to identify the problems accurately and comprehensively.

The study presented the views of supervision on the reasons for membership problems in school activity groups. Supervisors identified eight reasons. The lack of attraction in group activities and the absence of appealing advertisement methods are two reasons that were in line with Hamed's opinion. Hamed (2011) had highlighted the absence of successful group programs and the lack of attractive

methods for practicing activities. The study was unique in presenting the other six reasons. Results related to the reasons of these problems give social workers and professional supervision a clear indication that there is a defect in the work of the school activity groups that affects their importance. This defect has to be taken into consideration in practice and in scientific research.

The study results determined the supervision roles as stated in the researcher's procedural definition. Findings detailed the supervisory tasks needed for helping the social workers face membership problems, thus confirming the important role of supervision. This finding falls in line with Cole's study (2003) on the importance of supervision with social workers. Findings also ranked good listening to the social worker's problems and thorough discussion of the details as the highest two supervisory tasks. This finding however is inconsistent with the results of Abdel Hady's study (2005), which presented the social workers' view on supervision. In that study, social workers stated that supervisors focus on general and undetailed issues, and insist on their opinions. The difference between the results lies in the different research community, where Abdel Hady's study targeted social workers, while this study targeted supervisors, and tackled a specific issue. Thus, the study suggests that researchers in the field of social work with groups conduct comparative assessment studies that gather diverse samples of social workers, supervisors, managers and students. The purpose of these studies is to evaluate the professional performance of the elements of practice (social worker - supervision).

Results also highlighted the five most important supervisory methods that supervisors apply with social workers to help them address group membership problems. No previous studies presented these methods before.

In addition, the study results presented the skills needed to assist social workers. Explanation and interpretation skills came in the first rank, followed by teaching and guidance, meeting management, problem solving, and lastly the skills of presentation and observation. These results were inconsistent with Gitterman's study (2008) which highlighted the importance of problems solving and counseling skills for supervisors. This difference is due to the difference in targeted communities and varied needs of each.

Results of the current study also disagreed with Jabri (2012). Jabri pointed to the supervisors' need for skills such as leadership,

observation, communication and time management. This difference is may be because of the different topic of this study, which focused specifically on the membership problems of school groups and the skills needed for supervisors to help social workers address these problems. Jabri's study on the other hand focused on the general needs of supervisors for guiding social workers.

On the research hypotheses, the results of the study confirmed the validity of the first hypothesis. There is a significant relationship between supervisors' gender and their performance in their roles. Results confirmed that male supervisors display higher performance than female supervisors. This may be because 52 percent of the male supervisors held a master's or doctorate degree, while the percentage was only 21.5 percent in female supervisors. In addition, 48 percent of the male supervisors had more than fifteen years of experience, while only 30.7 percent of female supervisors had the same number of years of experience. These factors may have contributed to the higher performance of male supervisors than female supervisors. In addition, this distinction between male and female performance may be due to the culture and customs of the Egyptian society, which placed family restrictions on women's movement and gaining of knowledge, either through postgraduate studies or training. Besides, women tend to give child care and household chores priority over work, unlike men. The higher years of experience among males could be due to the previous practice of giving men precedence of appointment and the delayed acceptance of women's employment in eastern societies.

The results confirmed the validity of the first hypothesis on the factor of age. There is a significant positive correlation between the age of supervisors and their performance. The older the supervisor, the better his or her performance is. This indicates that advancement in age entails a higher level of experience in practice that may contribute to higher performance.

Concerning the second hypothesis, the results point to a significant correlation between the educational stage the supervisor works in and his or her use of supervision methods. However, the results did not prove a correlation between the work stage and the level of detailed tasks or the use of supervisory skills. The researcher deduces that absence of significant factors in the secondary stage than the preparatory stage, or vice versa, may be the explanation for this result. Future studies could address the aspects associated with this result in detail.

The results indicated the presence of a positive correlation between the number of years of experience and the supervisor's performance. This results differed with one of the results of Stien's study (2005). Stien stated that there is no correlation between supervisory experience and the supervisor's role with social workers. This difference might be due to different fields of application and sample, where Stien's study was in solid waste. The results of this study also pointed to the presence of a positive correlation between the supervisor's educational qualification and the level of performance in his or her roles. Supervisors with higher educational qualification, that is M.A. or Ph.D, have greater knowledge, skills, and techniques which reflect on his or her supervisory performance.

Since this study was applied to a random sample of supervisors in all governorates of Egypt, the results could benefit supervisors who work with group social workers in the preparatory and secondary stages. The study described membership problems of school activity groups, presented indicators for each problem, and described the roles of supervision. Future studies of various methodologies could focus on the provided and expected roles.

The researcher faced difficulties in getting the administrative and security approvals for data collection. The researcher overcame this difficulty with the support of interested educational leaders. The General Administration of Social Education, the organizing entity of the forum, got the approvals needed for conducting the forum and for data collection. The researcher had also faced other obstacles, such as the lack of funding from any organization, where he had to personally cover the expenses of the research. Also, in the absence of a team for assisting in data collection, the researcher gathered the data himself during the forum.

The study highlighted new topics that could be studied in detail, such as the seven group membership problems. Future research could address each problem separately and carry out experimental studies to address each problem. Training programs can be developed to train social workers on how to deal with each problem. The study results stressed the importance of integration between elements of practice (social worker - supervisor). It also stressed the importance of holding joint conferences that bring together the social worker, the supervisor, and the management, to reach integrated views on activating the professional performance of practitioners and supervisors. One of the outcomes of the study was presenting its

results to officials of school social work, and providing them with training recommendations for social workers and professional supervisors in different governorates. This agrees with various academic opinions on developing professional practice in the school field, such as the views of Tawfik (2000), and El Gindi (2005).

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