UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND
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EXPLORING STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES IN DEALING
WITH INVOLUNTARY CLIENTS. A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

A Thesis submitted by

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Abstract

The practice of dealing with involuntary social service clients raises considerable concerns about effectiveness across the globe. The United Arab Emirates is not an exception. Practitioners are expected to perform with due diligence and empathic care while dealing with resistant clients, nevertheless ensuring maximum service quality. Studies show that practitioners feel significantly challenged in the service delivery process. Clients often show negative reactions to practitioners for a number of reasons. The result is often a conflict-laden environment which delivers sub-optimal outcomes. It is therefore essential to explore the strategies and key challenges to manage involuntary, resistant social services clients. Previous Western-centric strategies and studies have identified several critical factors relating to the management of involuntary clients. Social services agencies in a number of developed countries, Australia amongst them, have been working to develop best practice models and procedures for managing involuntary clients. However, this has not received due attention in UAE both in academic, research, and practical application. Hence, this research explores the current strategies, experiences, and challenges in dealing with involuntary social services clients in the context of Social Services Centres (SSC) in the UAE within the broader socio-cultural environment of that country. This is a single method study. A qualitative method approach was adopted in the form of in-depth semi-structured interviews. Initially, a detailed literature review was carried out to identify the strategies and challenges in dealing with involuntary clients. From this analysis, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 participants comprised of social workers engaged in dealing with involuntary clients from three cities in UAE, which represented different regions and demographic variables. These were Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Gharbia. The technique used to analyse the qualitative interview findings was thematic content analysis. To confirm the results, Leximancer software Version 4.5 was used to reanalyse and validate them. This authenticated the overall qualitative interview findings. The most important and most ubiquitously used strategies are better communication and having a conducive atmosphere. Other major themes comprise a positive attitude, establishing a client profile, and freedom of expression. Further factors worth mentioning are the comfort, training and workshop, rapport building, confidence building, a helping nature, empathy, a calm attitude, safety measures and maintenance of boundaries. During the

qualitative focused interviews, these factors emerged as quite prominent, and the participants stressed these as important for effective engagement with involuntary clients. The qualitative focused interviews revealed some important challenges which these social workers faced at the time of communication: clients' anger, frustration, embarrassment, reluctance and a lack of confidence, discipline and motivation. All these pose huge challenges for social workers because they lead involuntary clients to a situation of poor communication with social workers. The interview outcome further revealed a combination of strategies followed at the three social worker centres situated in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. Findings revealed that social workers are on the same page while dealing with such clients. Apart from the two strategies mentioned in all centres, communication and conducive atmosphere, the prominent themes emerging from these three social service centres were a positive attitude, a client profile, and freedom of expression. The study has opened an opportunity for social science researchers and industry practitioners, managers and educators as the strategies in dealing with involuntary clients in the context of the UAE were addressed in detail. It has created new knowledge for social workers not only in the Middle East but in other parts of the world wherein these strategies can be used to develop effective communication with involuntary clients. Hence, new learning for social workers across the globe has been offered. From the academic standpoint, this study gives in-depth insights into strategies and challenges which itself is an effective contribution to the literature.

Certification of Thesis

This thesis is entirely the work of **Rashed Alketbi** except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Principal Supervisor: Professor Jeffrey Soar

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Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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Abbreviations

UAE   United Arab Emirates

AD   Abu Dhabi

AG   Al Gharbia

AA   Al Ain

SW   Social Worker

HERC   High Research Ethics Committee

USQ   University of Southern Queensland

TCA   Thematic Content Analysis

UNCO   University of Northern Colorado

NASW   National Association of Social Workers

SSC   Social Support Centres

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Chapter overview

The objective of this first chapter is to describe the topic and to provide an outline of this thesis as well as the basis for developing this study. The area under investigation and associated research objective and research questions are discussed. The study's implications followed by the thesis outline is presented. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary. Figure 1.1 diagrammatically illustrates the structure of Chapter 1.

1.2 Introduction	→	1.3 Area under investigation	→	1.4 The UAE outlook
1.7 Significance of the study	←	1.6 Purpose of the study	←	1.5 Study motivation
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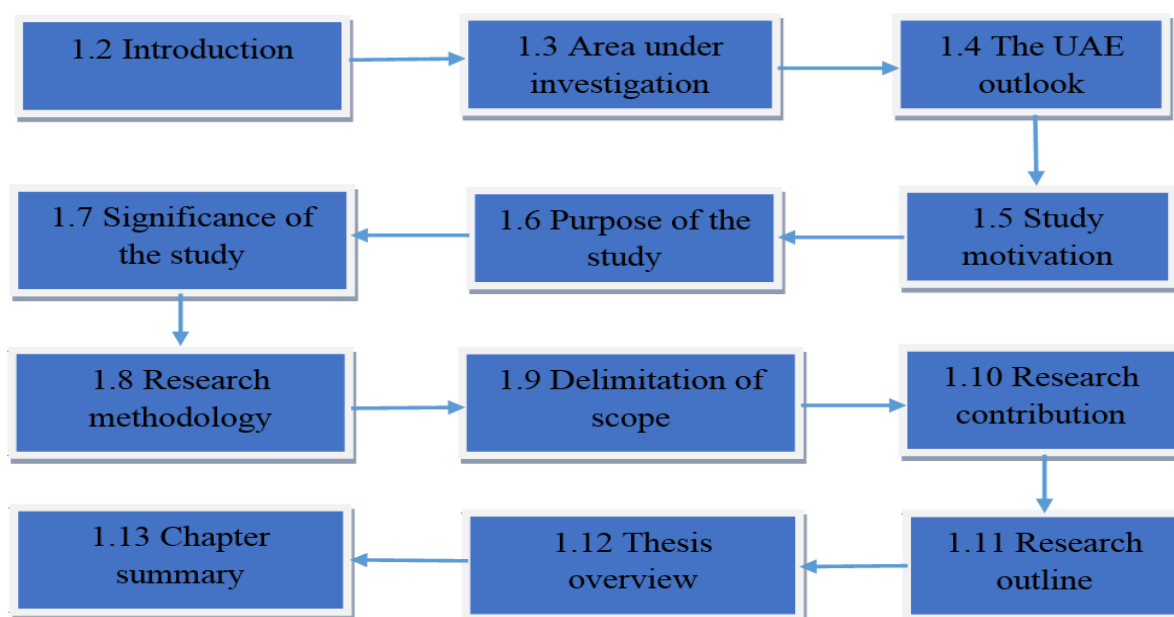
Figure 1.1: Structure of Chapter 1; compiled by the author

1.2   Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is undergoing rapid social, economic and structural change (Crabtree, 2008) and this is posing many new challenges across society, not least in the provision of social services. There is only a limited body of research into social work practice in the UAE (Barise, 2003a, b; Crabtree, 2008; Holtzhausen, 2011). Social workers in the UAE tend to use techniques and approaches developed in Western societies. However, these do not take into account significant cultural differences. Social work and the social services are viewed very differently in the UAE than they are in the West (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a,b; Crabtree, 2008; Dean & Khan, 1997; Graham, Bradshaw & Trew, 2009a,b; Hodge, 2005; Ragab, 1990). The problem of involuntary clients, resistant ones in particular, is attracting an increasing amount of research across the world (Rooney, 1992). This has

received very limited attention in social work practice in the UAE (Crabtree, 2008; Holtzhausen, 2011), even though there has been an upward trajectory of such clients that looks set to accelerate (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a; Ammar 2007; Giladi, 2014).

1.3   Area under investigation

There is a need to explore the issues that affect the quality of services offered by UAE social support centres (SSC), focusing on involuntary and resistant clients. Social work practitioners or specialists are the front line in this challenging task and possess the knowledge that will be required to produce practical solutions. SSC counsellor's perception of their working environment needs further exploration to understand the dynamics of involuntary client management. Many stakeholders would benefit from the more efficient management of such clients in the UAE. These include the clients themselves, the UAE government, the management, and employees of the SSC centres, women's groups, child protection groups, the UAE police, the UAE court system and welfare groups.

This study is informed by an understanding of current processes and potential improvements, ultimately facilitating the adaptation of SSC services to offer contextually appropriate best practice services. This, in turn, contributes to aligning the SSC mission to realize the vision of a healthy UAE society. There is a lack of recognition of involuntary clients in formal SSC policies and procedures, which leads to the uneasiness and social and cultural dissonance experienced by Arab social workers expected to observe a western code of ethics when dealing with Arab clients.

The Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, and the UAE designed and implemented their social work programs with the assistance of Egyptian social educators. Inadvertently, the UAE adopted the US model of social work and practice, as well as the code of ethics developed in the western system. Holtzhausen (2010) argues that this model and code of ethics of social work were transplanted into the incompatible social, cultural, and political reality of the Arab world. Although social work practitioners and policymakers have tried to adapt and indigenize adopted social work practices to UAE values, customs, and beliefs, the SSC formal policies do not even recognize involuntary clients. Social work predominantly shaped by the USA and European socio-cultural contexts from where it originated (Holtzhausen, 2010).

1.4   The UAE outlook

The UAE is undergoing a fundamental societal transformation. The pace of change is so intense that, in a period of fewer than fifty years, the country has transformed itself from a semi-feudal state into an advanced capitalist economy (Khondker, 2009). The social change has accompanied this transformation influences every aspect of UAE society, not least family life and interpersonal relationships (Khondker, 2009). The development of the UAE is best explained by the multiple modernity approach (Eisenstadt, 2000). The UAE is charting its path towards the future, but the country often relies on theories and models drawn from the experiences of the west as a guide. However, the cultural and societal context of social work practice in the UAE reflects modernity that does not mirror that of western countries (Eisenstadt, 2000).

The pace of social change in the UAE has resulted in a dramatic increase in social problems relating to family life and interpersonal relationships (Abdullah 2015; Ammar, 2007; Barise, 2003a; Crabtree, 2008; Haynes, Eweiss, Mageed & Chung, 1997). However, very little focused research has been conducted into family life in the UAE, and the actual impact of change on family life remains an unknown (Crabtree, 2008; Graham, Bradshaw & Trew, 2009a; Giladi, 2014). Khondker (2009) argues that the UAE is an 'oil fare' state, characterized by large-scale welfare support for citizens and a relatively paternalistic approach to their lives. The conflict within families and among ordinary citizens is often subject to mandatory mediation by social service agencies, usually as part of a legal process (UAE Interact, 2003). Therefore, agencies are faced with a preponderance of involuntary clients, many of whom are highly resistant to engagement with the social workers assigned to their cases.

There has been a substantial amount of research into involuntary social services clients (Rooney, 2013; Trotter, 2015) yet very little in the UAE (Barise, 2005a,b; Crabtree, 2008). Involuntary clients are usually subject to a legal mandate (Rooney, 1992) and sometimes engage with social services. However, many are also resistant (Chui & Ho, 2006). This resistance ranges from a lack of engagement motivation to extreme hostility towards the program. This is not always a conscious process and may involve repression, denial or an inability to change (Trevithick, 2011). Resistance is situated within the client-social worker relationship rather than within the client alone. Sometimes, resistance emanates from the

social worker but, whatever the source, it has the potential to escalate and destroy the relationship (Hepworth & Larsen, 1993).

There are a variety of diverse approaches to managing resistance, but many of these lack empirical support (Chui & Ho, 2006). Significant potential exists for empirical work on approaches to the management of involuntary clients in general and resistance in particular, especially as there is no uniform approach (Chui & Ho, 2006). Previous work has focused on power and control (Rooney, 1992), the absence of freedom, problems with the approach of practitioners (Cingolani, 1984), and resentment towards the agency (Hassenfeld 1987). Proposed management strategies include socialization (Rooney, 1992), integration (Trotter, 2004), pro-social modelling and strengths-based case management (Trotter & Ward, 2013). These approaches often focus on relationship building, negotiation and, critically, the de-emphasis of power in the relationship.

The approach of the UAE government is exemplified by the provision of social support centres across the country (UAE Interact, 2003). Two main goals of those centres are to maintain a healthy family where children and women feel safe from abuse and foster happy and educated citizens (Abu Dhabi Police, 2014). These centres offer many services ranging from psychological support, solving family issues, religious and social advice on family matters, and mending family relations in a confidential manner (Khaleej Times, 2003). When a wife, husband or relative approaches a police station due to family matters or issues relating to interpersonal conflict, they are referred first to the SSC in the area. There, a specialist in family affairs offers confidential advice and actively works to resolve the conflict. Other clients are referred directly by the police when, for example, they are the subject of a complaint or potential legal action.

The researcher is an officer at the Al Ain SSC. He has observed the evolution of the centre as a service arm of the government. Since SSC was introduced in 2003, they have gained popularity and become a major hub for dealing with family affairs. This popularity has introduced challenges to operations and often compromised the quality of service. The Al Ain branch has seen an influx of cases but little change in staffing. Three of the key issues that have emerged are the management of involuntary clients, overcoming resistance and a comparatively low 'success' rate regarding the narrow metric used to measure 'success'. Involuntary and resistant clients not only contribute inordinately to this rate but also tend to consume more resources. These clients are often the subject of a complaint and enter the

client-counsellor relationship with negative feelings and little motivation to participate. It is, therefore, critical that policies facilitate the efficient management of involuntary clients are formulated and applied.

There are no protocols in place for dealing with involuntary or resistant clients within the network of social service agencies in the UAE. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the concept of 'involuntary client' is not recognized within their policies and procedures. It is, therefore, this study is essential to explore the strategies and key challenges to managing involuntary, resistant social services clients.

1.5   Study motivation

As a social work practitioner at the Al Ain SSC, I have been tasked to oversee the quality of service and support it provides to the public, looking at challenges and ways to improve the workflow efficiency. It is my responsibility to make sure that not only are the clients satisfied but also that the team works hard to provide the services. Equipped with a master's degree in sociological practice from the University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) in the United States, the researcher has carefully examined the major issues facing the SSCs, and it has become apparent that managing involuntary resistant clients is one of the biggest challenges facing the centres today. The service users should not be blamed for not complying with SSC programs because the problem is associated with the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics that was developed based on western socio-cultural values.

It is reasonable for service users to show resistance because of the tension between the social work models used and their values, beliefs, traditions, and culture. The value tension between the NASW Code of Ethics and the traditions and cultural realities in the UAE lead to some problems, particularly in areas such as managing involuntary clients (Holtzhausen, 2010). While this code requires social workers to address child abuse and exploitation in a highly prescribed manner, such topics, especially child abuse, both male and female, are taboo in the UAE. UAE citizens prefer such matters to be addressed privately in the family setting (Holtzhausen, 2010). These clients consume far more resources than other clients, pose far more challenges regarding case management, and account for a disproportionate percentage of poor case outcomes. Indirectly, these cases also influence the career outcomes of counsellors who are often rated poorly due to negative case results where they have limited control at best. Hence, this motivates the following research objective and questions.

1.6   Purpose of the study

The overall purpose of the study is to explore key strategies to deal with involuntary clients. This broad purpose leads towards sub-research objectives and research questions.

1.6.1   Research objectives

1. *To identify social workers' current strategies to engage with involuntary clients.*
2. *To ascertain the experience and challenges being faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients.*
3. *To determine culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies for dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE.*

1.6.2   Research questions

1. *What are the strategies to be used by social workers to engage with involuntary clients?*
2. *What are the challenges and experiences being faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients?*
3. *Are there any culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies used by social workers to deal with involuntary clients in the UAE?*

To answer the research questions and to fulfil the research objectives, the researcher investigated SSC activities in three UAE cities, namely Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia (please see Figure 1.2, target cities are circled in black).

Figure 1.2: Targeted cities for data collection

1.7   Significance of the study

The UAE consists of seven emirates in which a system of absolute monarchy with internal struggling for power existed for centuries. There is a limited body of research into social work practice in the UAE. Minimal work has been done in the UAE relating to the area of client resistance, and the broader body of literature on this topic remains relatively narrow. Social workers in the UAE tend to use techniques and approaches developed in stable western societies, which have undergone industrialisation centuries ago. These do not take into account significant cultural and historical differences and the fact that social work and social services are viewed very differently in the UAE than they are in the western world. The UAE is undergoing rapid social, economic, and structural change, and this makes it necessary to adapt approaches developed in more stable societies. Having said this, there is a need to develop a model that emphasizes the significance of understanding of the clients' beliefs, worldview, values, and culture. This exploratory research focuses on developing the best strategies for the UAE environment based on the significance of UAE traditions, cultures, and values. This thus allows UAE social workers working with family services to recast the western social work code of ethics and best practice models to conform to the UAE social and cultural practices where the family tends to function as a far more extended and extensive social unit.

1.8   Research methodology

To achieve the research objective and research questions presented in Sections 1.6.1 and 1.6.2, it was decided to employ a single method research design (see Chapter 3 for details). This research began with identifying the key research issues and developed a theoretical foundation of the study. Once the key research issues were identified, the philosophical foundation was then established and discussed, connecting the rationale of this foundation with the study's research objectives. Before the final data collection, a detailed literature review analysis was conducted to identify the key areas related to the subject matter. This was followed by the determination and finalization of the sampling strategy and size. Qualitative data were then collected through 21 in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews between December 2016 and January 2017 with social workers from the capital cities of three of the seven Emirates, which comprise the UAE. These cities are Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. These cities represent the key geographical regions in the UAE. All the interviews were conducted in Arabic and then translated into English. Then used thematic content analysis and Leximancer software Version 4.5. Finally, reliability and validity were established.

1.9   Delimitation of scope

The delimitations are those factors that delineate the scope and describe the study boundaries (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Simon, 2011). This research revolves around the following boundaries. Firstly, the sample size for the study was drawn from the social workers dealing with involuntary clients residing in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. Secondly, the sample was restricted to those individuals who were frequently dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE. Thirdly, as this study concentrated on the UAE, only active social work clients were taken into consideration at the time of data collection. Hence, this study followed a snapshot research approach. Lastly, qualitative focused interviews were used as data collection tools.

1.10   Research contribution

This project will contribute to the body of knowledge as regards resistant involuntary social service clients in general. In particular, it makes an important contribution to an understanding of the dynamics of resistance in societies undergoing fundamental change. Finally, it is anticipated that the project may lead to the development of a model that can be used in practice. This research study offers the following contributions:

Table 1.1 Research contribution

Contribution to theory	1) Limited research has been undertaken in the UAE on involuntary and resistant clients. The SSC initiative has also attracted little exploratory research. Hence, there is a need to fill the void in this body of knowledge. This research uncovers strategies, challenges, and experiences which affects dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE in particular and in the Middle East in general.
Contributions to practice	1. The results and insights gained from this research will assist UAE policymakers to incorporate key stakeholders' viewpoints (practitioners, the UAE court system, UAE police, and involuntary clients) with regard to women's welfare, child safety, human rights, and human rights in family services as they relate to service quality within these organizations in their strategic planning. These stakeholders may be influential in determining the policy outcome of the research because they have divergent views on involuntary clients. This research will inform an alignment of strategies, policies, and practices to help enhance the service quality across these organizations with respect to these social concerns. 2. This study will give service centre managers feedback on how best to design a service workflow that leverages social opportunities to realize the true potential of such centres while adapting to public needs in their daily encounters. The western-based model of social work prevents the genuine potential of SSCs from being realized. 3. The study's enquiry into strategies across the 3 SSCs will provide SSC staff with a model and set of policies and procedures to use in their daily interactions with clients to deal with the impact of socio-cultural belief, women's and children welfare and values harboured by resistant involuntary clients. This will enable SSC staff to better identify and manage such clients.

1.11   Research outline

This thesis comprises five chapters. Figure 1.3 represents the roadmap to the structure of the thesis as recommended by Rao and Perry (2007).
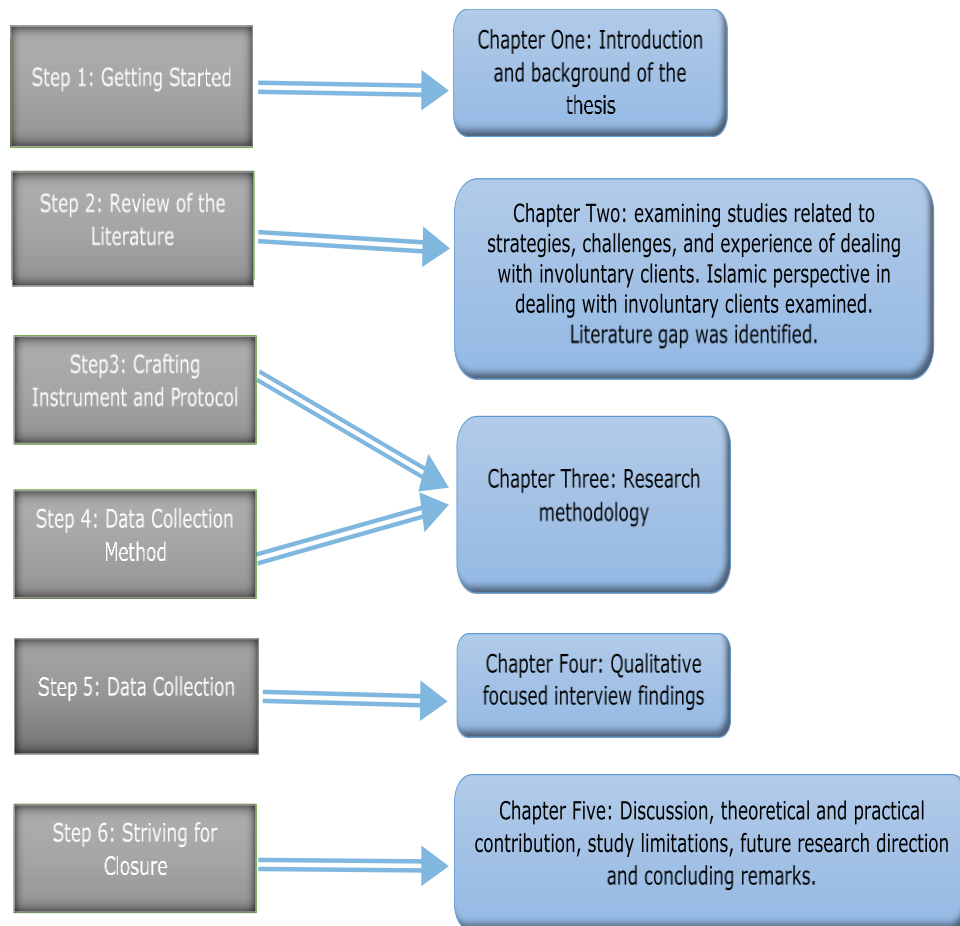
Figure 1.3: Research outline developed from Rao and Perry (2007) for this research

Figure 1.3 represents the research outline followed in this thesis. In the introduction of the topic, the area of investigation followed by its significance and the research objectives were discussed in detail. A detailed literature review was conducted to identify the past studies on involuntary clients and more specifically, the strategies, challenges and experiences in dealing with the same. This review led to the development of the research methodology, which encompasses the research's philosophical foundation and method. The methodology chapter led towards findings derived from the qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews. Lastly, a detailed discussion and conclusion were developed to conclude the study.

1.12 Thesis overview

A summary of each of these five chapters is presented next.

1.12.1 Chapter 2: Literature review

Discussed previous studies related to strategies, challenges and experiences in dealing with involuntary clients form a global perspective. Gaps are identified in the literature, in particular, a dearth of studies from a Muslim majority population wherein the strategies for dealing with involuntary clients are not noticeable. A detailed rationale is also provided to utilize the base theory for examining the subject matter.

1.12.2 Chapter 3: Research methodology

An appropriate research design is developed, and the methodology used in the study is illustrated. Since it is a single method study, the data collection method is discussed in detail, that is, qualitative focused in-depth semi-structured interviews. The processes for the sampling, pilot study and data validation are outlined.

1.12.3 Chapter 4: Qualitative findings

The findings extracted from the qualitative focused in-depth interviews are presented through thematic content analysis (TCA). The complete analysis process is described along with participants' viewpoints, which are discussed at length with sample quotations illustrating particular points. Additionally, Leximancer software Version 4.5 is used to confirm the findings extracted from the TCA. This procedure is outlined.

1.12.4 Chapter 5: Discussion & conclusion

The findings based on the qualitative focused interviews are discussed. The main purpose of this chapter is to match the findings with the research objective in order to articulate their rich detail. Theoretical implications for academics and practical implications for both scholars and practitioners are discussed. This is followed by an evaluation of the study's limitations and several recommendations for future research directions. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks for the overall thesis.

1.13   Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a detailed background to the study by incorporating a discussion of involuntary clients in connection with some of the current literature. The area of investigation was discussed in detail. The UAE outlook along with its importance as a study area, was incorporated. The study's significance was also discussed at length, positioning it as one of the few studies in the Middle East region to deal with involuntary clients. An overview of the structure of the thesis completes the chapter. In the subsequent chapter, a detailed literature review appropriate to this study is given. This includes the global literature on strategies, challenges and experiences of dealing with involuntary clients, followed by Islamic perspectives in dealing with involuntary clients, after which are presented the identified literature gaps derived from the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Chapter overview

In this chapter, the relevant literature is reviewed as it relates to the research. Key concepts are defined, followed by an overview of previous research on the management of involuntary clients, culminating in a detailed discussion of the best practice model widely used in the West. Then, the situation in the Middle East in general and the UAE, in particular, is discussed in detail. Given that there is virtually no research on the management of involuntary clients in this region, the literature review focuses on the (limited) research on social work in the region. Imperatives for localised social work practice are examined in detail, and a tentative model for working with involuntary clients is extrapolated. The chapter then continues with a preliminary conceptual framework which sets the pathway for the following stages of the study. Lastly, a summary concludes the chapter.

2.2   Background of the study

Social workers within the UAE use various techniques and approaches when dealing with involuntary clients. A very limited body of knowledge exists as regards the practice of social work in general in the UAE while previous research on involuntary clients is virtually non-existent. Moreover, most of the social work approaches used in the UAE, including those applied with involuntary clients, have been borrowed from social work theory and practice in the West (Abdullah, 2015). While these techniques and approaches may work to an extent in the region, they fail to account for the cultural, social and religious differences between Western countries and the UAE. Indeed, a growing number of Middle Eastern scholars are highly critical of the prevalence of the Western practice. They have called for an authentic Arab practice (Abdullah, 2015). The literature review will examine previous research on involuntary clients, focusing on approaches and methods used to manage these clients with due regard to the fact that the vast bulk of research on involuntary clients has been conducted in the West. The review will then examine social work in the Middle East, with particular attention to the UAE. The evolution of social work practice in the Middle East will be examined, as will the dominant approaches currently in use. The increasing critique of the applicability of Western approaches to the Middle Eastern milieu will be examined in some detail, as will the social and cultural artefacts relevant to social work practice in that region. Models for working with clients in the UAE will be presented, from which a model for

working with involuntary clients may be derived. In doing so, a high-level critical review of the literature will be conducted, and gaps identified.

2.3 Definition of involuntary client

Involuntary and mandated clients refer to those individuals obligated or coerced to attend treatment by a legal body or pressure from family members. Parker (2015), who focused on the social worker-client relationship as key to engaging involuntary clients, looked at the issue in terms of the extent to which the client had viable options, asserting that the key test of voluntariness was the extent to which the client actually had other options. Involuntary clients have no options (Ames, 2016).

2.4 Legal aspects relating to the definition of involuntary client

While the social work profession might view involuntary clients in certain ways, each jurisdiction also has a more legalistic definition of what might constitute an involuntary social services client. This definition tends to be framed in terms of the conditions which must be prevalent in order for someone to be referred as a mandated client, for example, issues of child protection or criminal behaviour, the rights, responsibilities and performance requirements of the client and the rights, responsibilities and expectations that will be applied to social services (Duan & Wang, 2012). It is important for the social worker to fully understand all the legal ramifications associated with social work intervention. Potential sanctions are typically prescribed for breaches of court orders, and it is, therefore, important to work within a legal framework as well as a social work framework. It is important for the social worker to help the client understand what is required and assist the client as much as possible to demonstrate compliant behaviour (Rooney, 2013).

2.5 Characteristics of involuntary clients

2.5.1 Involuntary clients are often characterized by intense mistrust of social services

There is substantial research evidence, which suggests that intense distrust is a key problem in the engagement process of involuntary clients (Hutchison, 1987; Rooney, 2018). Moreover, most social work practitioners are likely to have negative perceptions of involuntary clients due to the difficulties they pose, their negativity, as well as their denial (Hutchison, 1987). According to Manktelow (2016), building trust, even on the smallest scale, can be a turning point for the individual. He further argued that trust between the social

worker and the client begins with the simplest elements, for example, actions such as sticking to one's word, honesty concerning the situation and apologizing if a mistake is made. Most scholars in the discipline acknowledge that such simple actions provide the groundwork for progress. Building trust does not entail taking sides with the client but relies on honesty and openness (Manktelow, 2016).

2.5.2 Involuntary clients require time and persistence in the engagement process

Most involuntary clients resent social workers and attach very little importance to their relationship (Trotter, 2015). However, research by Brodsky and Titcomb (2013) showed that time and persistence in the program causes clients to revise their opinions in the longer term. An opportunity for engagement emerges with the passage of time. Hartman and Reynolds (1987) postulated that time and persistence are crucial components in understanding the client's initial resistance and what steps are needed to be taken to overcome the situation. However, it is crucial for practitioners to understand that different clients have different timescales for progress (Allan, 2014) with some clients needing a deeper and lengthier engagement than others. Flexible timescales based on the client's need can assist engagement according to the client's pace as opposed to a formulaic approach (Berghaus & Cartagena, 2014).

2.5.3 Involuntary clients need clear communication

Studies conducted in this area show that the resistance within involuntary clients is rooted in their difficulty or struggle in understanding the underlying problem affecting them (Rooney, 2018). It is evident that their miscommunication regarding this problem affects the engagement process. Through communication, each party's duties, obligations, areas of control and the expected results or consequences are made clear (Cheung, 2013). Contrary to involuntary clients, voluntary ones require minimal coercion and clarification in order to participate in a program. A study by Cohn and Niaura (2016) in the US showed that involuntary clients need clarification on all issues during the intervention.

According to Ames (2016), miscommunication is a crucial source of resistance in involuntary clients. Various forms of miscommunication can arise that affect an individual's perception of a program. A common form is the use of professional acronyms and jargon in explaining the situation to the client. In addition, too much information can be detrimental to progress, particularly when some of the information is of little importance to the client. Most scholars

have shown the importance of sticking to the point as a strategy to minimize resistance and increase cooperation (e.g. Rooney, 2018; Trevithik, 2011).

Hilario and Maniago (2014) conducted research on the clinical factors that lead to effectiveness with involuntary clients. They showed that it is essential for the social worker to confirm with the client to ensure he/she understands and agrees upon the program. In addition, in the delivery of the message, these scholars argue that empathy is crucial at breaking or eliminating the difficulties experienced when dealing with involuntary clients.

2.5.4   Emotions play a critical role in involuntary clients

Generally, involuntary clients are characterized by low levels of emotional intelligence. Pope and Kang (2011) asserted that such individuals fail to control their emotions when placed into programs where there is no freedom of choice. For example, a parent that faces the removal of a child may feel intense regret, anger and guilt. The client's intense emotions or anger displayed to the social worker may be the result of transference or scapegoating (Brodsky & Titcomb, 2013). These researchers argue that working with the client to keep emotions at bay greatly helps the relationship-building process.

Smith and Wilkinson (2011) give an account of clients playing various scripts learned through their lives during admission into a social program. Based on their experiences, certain behavioural aspects can be deduced by the practitioner. This allows the social worker not to take the behaviour of individuals at face value. Underlying causes such as retrenchment, loss of a loved one or a medical condition could be reasons behind alcoholic behaviour. Intense emotions of involuntary clients in most cases give a false representation of a person. Hence, they cannot be relied upon in making decisions about the client (Berghaus & Cartagena, 2014). In some situations, the client's actions may be due to the hostility of the social worker. The attitude and actions of the practitioner significantly affect the behaviour of the client throughout the program. A harsh and resentful practitioner is likely to affect the outcome of the program as the client may respond by being defensive or absconding from the program. There is also a consensus in the discipline that certain behaviours are not allowed in social work, such as directing anger at the client or at fellow practitioners in the industry. Berghaus and Cartagena (2014) assert that the hostility of a social worker towards clients affects overall responses to the program.

2.5.5 Balancing involuntary clients' struggle to accept limitations on freedom of choice with social worker responsibilities

Involuntary clients have no choice as regards meeting with social workers or participating in mandated programs. They are obligated to work with the practitioner in order to meet their legal obligations or even a court order (Manktelow, 2016). Some scholars argue that it is important that social workers fully understand that they have a dual responsibility: to the client and to society (e.g. Maylea, 2016; Thunberg & Degner, 2015). Thus, some individuals require a degree of coercion in order to persuade them to conform to accepted societal norms and legal rules. According to Thunberg and Degner (2015), some formal boundaries are necessary in order to assist clients to fully re-integrate into society as well as discouraging others from engaging in antisocial behaviour. Segal (2013) discussed the importance of reclaiming choice for involuntary clients. The social worker should attempt to guide the client towards accepting the limited choices imposed on them by law and even by their own family members. For example, the client may be granted time and space to work at their own pace with due regard to the fact that involuntary clients tend to be required to follow a strictly guided program.

In most situations, the absence of choice is not absolute. According to Jani (2015), in any involuntary participative context, the client will exercise power over the practitioner as well as some for which the client can only heed the instructions given by the social worker for some elements. It is in this aspect of the involuntary client's situation that conflict arises between social control and the participation of the client. Fincham (2012) called for a collaborative approach where all parties accepted the situation and sought to establish guidelines within the legal framework that permits a client a degree of independence of action.

2.6 The engagement process in dealing with involuntary clients

Most scholars view the engagement process with involuntary clients as characterized by resistance and a lack of motivation. According to Trotter and Sheehan (2012), engagement is best understood as a process of building a relationship between the client and the practitioner for the sole purposes of achieving the desired outcome in a social program. Academics and social work experts have portrayed engagement as a fundamental initial challenge that needs to be overcome before the commencement of an intervention program (Trotter, 2015). The engagement process goes beyond merely assuring attendance and participation in the

program. The scope of engagement extends to areas such as sparking interest within the client, the initiation of trust and a long-term commitment on the agreed or desired goal of the program. For involuntary clients, engagement is particularly critical, and scholars such as Ferguson (2011) and Hoffman (2016) argued that a high level of resource allocation to engagement is essential.

2.7   Elements of effective engagement

According to Trotter and Sheehan (2012), a key element of the engagement process is that it needs to be proactive. Many involuntary clients fail to understand the convention of the 'help-seeking' goal of social services. Consequently, many involuntary programs have adopted the practice of highly focused and targeted identification and support of involuntary clients from the outset. Scholars have acknowledged the importance of a proactive approach in providing the necessary opportunities for building relationships (Rooney, 2009; Trotter, 1997). Turner (2010) argued that it important for organizations working with involuntary clients to clarify goals from the beginning, i.e. "Whom do we see in this program and why?"

The second element of effective engagement is building respect, trust and, through this, positive relationships. The development of a positive, trusting relationship is the main factor influencing engagement in most programs. Mcgarvey and Bonnie (2013) affirmed that involuntary clients have high levels of distrust when interacting with social services. Experiences with uncaring bureaucracies and, on occasion, discriminatory experiences exacerbate the situation. According to Turney (2012), regular planned contacts, allowing the clients to participate, active listening and a commitment to achieving goals and plans facilitate the building of trust.

Most interactions work well when practitioners create friendly spaces for the clients and an environment that encourages such interactions (Howe, 1998). Watson (2014) investigated the impact of creating friendly spaces or conducive environments for engagement. A program does not have to be established according to the desires of the client but must be carefully tuned in order to engage the client. For instance, Dimoulias (2009) recognized the importance of the built environment for the development of youth and children placed in social programs. More importantly, it is also crucial for practitioners to balance authority with support and empathy. Social workers play a crucial role as agents of social control bestowed by statutory powers to protect the community as well as individuals (Plath, 2013). Therefore, a certain

degree of control is handed to the social worker, but this should be tempered for the process to be effective (Plath, 2013). In this respect, this less material aspect is more important in the UAE, where the infrastructure of the built environment is affordable.

Research suggests that clients are likely to feel better able to contribute if they are allowed to prepare and be informed and supported throughout the program (Rooney, 2009). For example, children are capable of partaking in various meetings or conferences. That is true if social workers or advocates who provide positive reinforcement regarding their participation in the program prepare them in advance. Scholars have also suggested that social workers are also able to encourage client engagement by acting as advocates or helping clients to build independence or access medication services. Pope and Kang (2011) go further, suggesting that support through engagement is crucial in situations where the client has a negative issue that is difficult to express. This underlines even further the primary need for trust building to achieve communication where miscommunication is common, such as involuntary client situations.

2.8   Aids to the engagement process

As described earlier, involuntary client engagement is a challenging area for most practitioners. Because of this, certain strategies are employed in order to facilitate the engagement process. These include a client-centred approach, stages of change and a relational approach. This client-centred approach (Seymour, 2012), as the name suggests, places the client at the centre of the intervention. As a potential situation for growth, the aim is for clients to learn more about themselves. The approach includes clients setting goals based on their strengths that encourage them to observe their own thoughts and behaviours. Clients are instrumental in identifying the various areas of their lives that need improvement, and they assume control over the desired direction of these changes. The stage of change model, developed by Prochaska and Di Clemente (1982), aims to assist practitioners in identifying critical stages in the intervention. In the first, stage, a client experiences contemplation and preparation. According to Prochaska and Di Clemente (1982), the client acknowledges the problem exists, and action needs to be taken, but no commitment is made. In the action stage, the client actively works towards creating a change. The final stage entails maintenance, where the clients work to maintain the change. A notable addition to the model is the relapse that was incorporated to assist the practitioners and clients prepare for this possibility. According to Westhuizen (2015), the level of change serves as an indicator of the

client's progress. Scholars have also suggested that the model enables practitioners to identify which stage a particular client is in and tailor interventions to meet their specific needs.

The relational approach postulates that an inherent connection exists between the client and the practitioner. It is grounded on the premise that, during the process of development, various connections and relationships are formed (Duffey & Somody, 2011). The model focuses on the 'we' as opposed to the 'I'. Engagement through the relational model revolves around the building of mutual empathy between the therapist and the client. In a group situation, the stages of the group development model may be applied. This is similar to the stages of change model, with the stages of the group's development serving as an indicator of progress for the client through the group therapy process (Rooney, 2009). The stages include activities such as forming the group, setting rules, and establishing the norms. At the end of the program, the group process ends with the termination of group activities by the therapist as well as the client (Rubin & Babbie, 2016).

2.9   Social workers' perceptions of working with involuntary clients

Cingolani (1984) examined the impact of practitioner attitude towards involuntary clients, arguing that practitioner attitude could have a dramatic impact on client attitude, resistance and relationship building. Practitioners tended to be negative about involuntary clients and often reluctant to engage with them, with some practitioners claiming they would prefer to avoid this type of client altogether. Moreover, such negative perceptions also undermined the practitioners' expectation of change in the client, making progress in the intervention program difficult. Another key inference from the research was that practitioners felt that their professional education was of limited use in preparing the client to deal with the problem or challenge (Thunberg & Degner, 2015). The Cingolani study examined 23 social work practitioners who were working with involuntary clients in a variety of settings. The research supported previous findings that practitioners view involuntary clients as difficult to engage and work with (Randall, 2015). Practitioners tended to view resistance as symptomatic or strategic rather than considering each client on an individual basis. Symptomatic resistance was often viewed as an extension of intractable personality problems while strategic resistance revolved around a practitioner viewpoint that the client had a conscious, directed strategy to avoid engaging with the practitioner. While it is clear that involuntary clients tend to be particularly resistant, it would be more conducive to relationship building if the social worker explored the dynamics of resistance for each client

individually.

2.9.1 The extent of negative practitioner attitudes

There is a strong consensus among scholar that practitioners' negative attitudes have a detrimental impact on outcomes (e.g. Cingolani, 1984; Rooney, 2018). Mollica (2017) argued that practitioner attitudes could be negatively impacted by the presence of concurrent issues, a situation not untypical with involuntary clients. However, Lynch (2014) supported the premise that negative practitioner attitudes are mitigated when involuntary clients with psychiatric and substance abuse demonstrate their intention or motivation to access care. Hence, it is vital for practitioners to promote the positive self-image of clients. Practitioners in social work must balance legal, health, safety responsibilities with the potentially conflicting role of providing care, and fostering a positive relationship focused on recovery (Lindenboim & Linehan, 2017). These authors concede that when practitioners attempt to deliver quality care to clients, sometimes they may display feelings of frustration, resentment and powerlessness in response to the client's ongoing behaviour and lack of engagement. Gregor (2015) established that the negative attitude of staff/practitioners is also associated with a client's negative outcomes such as relapse and increased aggression as well as other invasive interventions.

2.9.2 Addressing negative perceptions of practitioners

According to Ferguson (2011), improving the confidence and capability of the social worker is the best approach to refining his/her attitudes. Various strategies have been acknowledged to effectively improve staff confidence: education, clear policies, procedures, and positive workplace culture. Improved levels of focused education are positively correlated to non-stereotyping attitudes towards involuntary clients during an intervention program. Research by Duan and Wang (2012) showed that creating partnerships between intervention programs and educational institutions provides an opportunity for devising courses that are linked to practice. Through such partnerships, the theory is integrated with practice, which facilitates the clients as well as the practitioners to achieve the desired goals and objectives. Many scholars have argued that on-the-job training in particular, and training focused on dealing with involuntary clients is potentially extremely helpful. That is especially true when the institution has formal policies and procedures in place (Ferguson, 2011; Jani, 2015). Such training programs involve screening, assessment, case formulation and an intervention package that improves the practitioner's confidence in dealing with involuntary clients. An

important factor influencing social workers' perceptions is the duration of exposure and the sharing of views during the training programs.

Crane and Kaighin (2011) argued that clear policy and procedures regarding involuntary clients positively influence practitioner attitudes when handling such clients. Clear theoretical and practical frameworks should be developed in order to manage involuntary clients through the creation of a therapeutic environment in the program. According to Ames (2016), well-defined structures aid the practitioners to feel supported and enabled to assist complex and challenging client groups.

Changing the workplace culture is another effective strategy for reducing negative perceptions about involuntary clients. Studies have shown that negative attitudes towards clients are often deeply embedded in an organization's culture (Brodsky & Titcomb, 2013). In many cases, these organizations deal with involuntary clients in a relatively ad-hoc and unstructured manner. As stated above, it is likely that more structured approaches based on firm procedural guidelines would circumvent at least some of the issues relating to organizational culture, by establishing some predictability, consistency and equality of client treatment.

2.10 Models for working with involuntary clients

Various models exist for working with involuntary clients. These models facilitate an understanding of the nature of involuntary clients, often with a particular focus on resistance, and delineate approaches to working with involuntary clients in order to achieve the best possible outcome in conditions that are often challenging for social worker and client alike. This section will focus on key models that support working with involuntary clients: the social conflict model, the motivational congruency mode, the solution focused model, the dynamic hybrid model and the integrated model.

2.10.1 Social conflict model

Cingolani (1984) proposed a social conflict model, arguing that practitioners and involuntary clients typically do not share common ground about the meaning of the situation and often have conflicting interests. Cingolani (1984) reported that the relationship with the involuntary client often breaks down at the outset, never to recover. The practitioner is typically in a position of power, and the client feels powerless and resentful, at the mercy of the political will of the practitioner and the system.

The social conflict model is particularly strong in its focus on the early part of the client / practitioner relationship and the importance of engagement. This model assumes that the large majority of involuntary clients do not want help, are not willing to engage in rational problem solving and do not respond to acceptance, empathy and support (Cingolani, 1984). The model focuses on relationship building, and particularly on the nature of the relationship. It stresses that the practitioner is essentially a political agent who has power over the client. Attempting to characterise this relationship in any other way is considered fraudulent and highly unlikely to fool clients.

Cingolani (1984) argued that the practitioner defines the nature of the relationship in terms of the role the practitioner chooses to adopt. The *Enforcer* involves using power structures to enforce compliance with little or no regard for the interests or feelings of the client. As much as this role is not favoured in the helping professions, it can be beneficial when the environment is the change agent rather than the relationship, for example, where the practitioner attempts to act as a 'relatively impersonal implementer of rules, expectations and consequences' (Cingolani, 1984, p. 444). The courts and interested members of society, usually family members, impose responsibility on the social worker to assist the client. This role involves the use of structured power by the practitioner to impose compliance by the involuntary client. Duffy and Somody (2011) argued that most practitioners dislike this approach with all its political manoeuvring but they acknowledged that it might be necessary where all the efforts of the social worker have failed to yield positive progress.

The *Negotiator* role involves the practitioner explicitly acting as an agent for society and being totally honest about power differentials (Cingolani, 1984). The practitioner attempts to negotiate or bargain with the client, acknowledging the client's rights and trusting the client to make competent decisions and stand by them. Cingolani (1984) maintained that the practitioner should ideally act as a *Negotiator* and steer a middle path between the interests of the client and those of the mandating agency. With this approach, the relationship that is formed is explicitly based on the client's interests. According to Turney (2012), the goal is to deal with the conflict by changing the demands or the social context of the client. Just like the *Enforcer*, the practitioner is a political actor but leans on the client's side as opposed to the agency. Where the client does not abide by what has been agreed, the practitioner may need to fall back on the *Enforcer* role. Fincham (2012) argued that the practitioner tries to bargain with the involuntary client through acknowledging the client's rights, pointing out

obligations, and trusting that the client will make a competent choice and adhere to it. If the involuntary client fails to abide by the ground rules established during negotiation, the practitioner may be forced to assume the role of an *Enforcer* in the program. If the individual or the client decides to alter or change some aspect of their life, the practitioner provides expert guidance within the interventional context (Lee, 2016). Although the involuntary client may be in conflict with the environment or social problem that is being dealt with, the relationship with the practitioner is in a separate dimension. The social worker does not assume any role as an actor in the conflict but as an agent of either the society or social institution (Meichenbaum, 2013). Cingolani was relatively critical of this role. She noted the likelihood of points of contention where the negotiator tries to adjust the demands of the client to those rewards provided to induce participation. If the practitioner is given nonnegotiable demands and limited ability to offer positive incentives that can address the problem, the process is likely to collapse.

Cingolani (1984) identifies three other roles where the practitioner increasingly identifies with the client but concedes that adopting these roles may not be practical in many agencies. The *Mediator* attempts to take the middle path, representing neither the agency nor the client. This role focuses on relationship building and attempting to achieve a balance between the rights and interests of the client and those of the agency and/or society. The practitioner supports the interests and rights of both parties and areas of consensus are discovered through the engagement process. Parker (2015) asserted that the model focuses on relationship building by trying to attain a balance between the interests of the client and those of the society or agency. This model is reflected in most of the mainstream literature relating to social conflict theory. It is also the preferred model for professionals dealing with involuntary clients (Cingolani, 1984). A challenge of this model of social conflict is that it puts the practitioner in a potentially vulnerable position. Randall (2015) argued that particular weakness of this approach is the assumption of a commonality of interests between the two parties. In practical terms, there is very often a significant gap between the interests of the parties involved, at least as the client perceives them.

Cingoloani (1984) argued that the final two roles are rarely used in agencies but there is some evidence that this is changing (Rooney, 2018). The *Advocate* acts directly to support the client and the client's interest while the *Coach* acts as a guide and facilitator, supporting the client in interactions with the agency. The major difference between the role of an *Advocate*

and a *Coach* is that while the former presents him/herself as a willing and able agent to act publically in the interest of the client. The latter acts as a guide or a facilitator to support the client's interactions with the agency. A practitioner acting as a *Coach* is covert and less visible to others (Watson, 2014). Most scholars acknowledge that this model tends to be the least congruent when working with an involuntary client. Besides, it is necessary for the parties to have a consensus of roles for a client/practitioner relationship to emerge. Moreover, practitioners have found that it is difficult to develop a relationship with an involuntary or mandated client based on advocacy in a system that places sanctions on the practitioner (Cingolani, 1984). Presenting oneself as a *Coach* requires one to play the role of an enabler, sometimes at the boundaries of agency policy, usually in order to establish a relationship based on trust.

Figure 2.1 delineates the dynamics of the model. It is clear that there is often a gulf between practitioners' and involuntary clients' understandings of the situation. As a result of conflicting interests, misunderstanding and resistance are present in both parties. Cingolani (1984) argued that due to embedded social conflict, the relationship between the client and the practitioner breaks at the onset of the program and in most situations, a positive relationship is never formed. This is because the practitioner is in a position of power mandated by law to assist the client in overcoming the social problem. As a result, the client feels powerless and resentful concerning the situation and is at the mercy of the political will of the practitioner (Brodsky & Titcomb, 2013).

SUSTAINABILITY DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

Economic
- Dependency on exporting raw materials, low economic diversification
- Distrust of revenue distribution

Dissatisfaction with the low impact on local development

Concerns about environmental impact on resources necessary for subsistence

Ineffective communication

Social
- Ineffective actions to achieve social license to operate
- Low capacity to address social conflicts

Social mobilization against extractive activities

Environmental
- Low credibility on environmental regulation efficacy
- Lack of participatory mechanisms and communication efforts

Figure 2.1: Dynamics of the model

Source: Adapted from Smith, 2012)

To sum up, as Cingolani (1984) argued, the social conflict model assumes, most involuntary clients do not want help and therefore are not receptive or willing to engage in rational problem-solving. The model focuses on relationship building as a quasi-political process. The practitioner is depicted as the political agent and has power over the involuntary client. The perspectivees and the interests of the various parties involved, including social institutions, are brought to the attention of the client. Cheung (2013) stated that political processes are crucial in the early stages since negotiations or both the practitioner and the involuntary client will seek bargains. According to Coleman and Vallacher (2012), rather than focusing on the internal issues of the client, the practitioner should focus on the differences between their perspectives and definition of the problem or the situation.

2.10.2 Motivational congruence model

This model attempts to achieve as much alignment as possible between the services the practitioner can provide and client motivation (Reid & Hanrahan, 1982; Rooney, 2009). It focuses on a contractually-based approach where the client is provided with full information and afforded as much choice as possible under the circumstances (De Jong & Berg, 2012). A key aspect of this model is that the treatment, as well as the outcome, is negotiated on a contractual basis. The involuntary client retains an element of control over the boundaries within which the practitioner is allowed to operate or navigate. The model is grounded on sophisticated negotiation skills, which may in itself prove to be an impediment in non-expert hands.

2.10.3 Solution focused model

The solution focused model builds upon the motivational congruence model. However, its ultimate goal is not a much compliance but a focus on facilitating sound choices within the terms of the mandate (De Jong & Berg, 2012). The model was developed over many years of in-depth analysis of interventions with involuntary clients (Shazer et al., 1986). The solution-based approach initially focuses on the client identifying goals, future, and change (De Jong & Berg, 2012; De Jong & Miller, 1997). Then, the client expresses a level of confidence as to whether these goals can be achieved, and the level of achievability is discussed. An informal contract is established, and the practitioner helps the client monitor progress on a regular

basis.
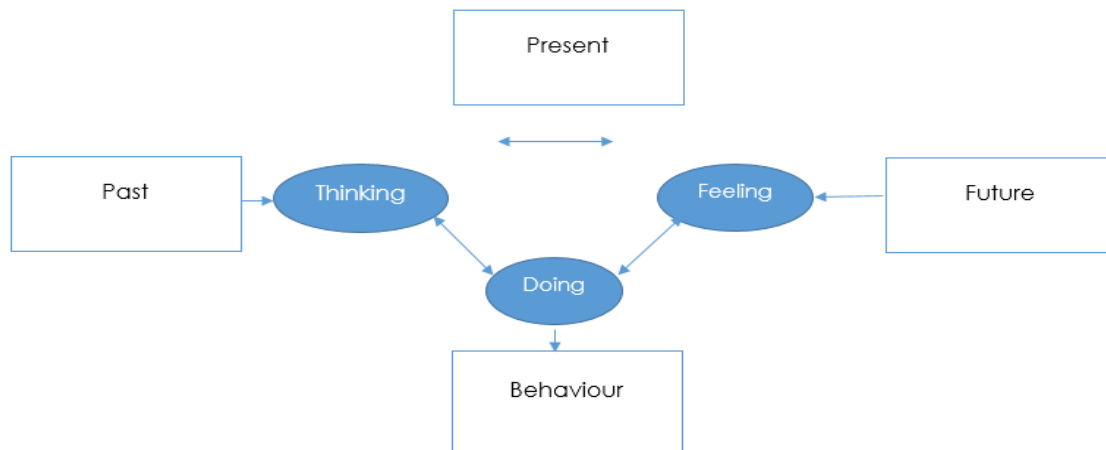
Figure 2.2: Solution focused model

Source: Adapted from Trotter and Ward (2013)

Figure 2.2 above demonstrates the solution-focused model in action. The concern here is not about compliance (problem-solving) but instead about facilitating sound choices. Hilario and Maniago (2014) refer to it as a competency-based model that minimizes the emphasis on past failings and focuses on the client's strengths. According to Turney (2012), the practitioner works with the client's understanding of the situation and desired areas of change. Moreover, in order to solve the problem, the practitioner encourages the client to increase the frequency of useful or positive behaviours. The model attempts to avoid any possible confrontation or advice giving but rather concentrates on establishing the authority of the client and what is important in their lives (Turney, 2012).

The model uses a similar process regardless of the problem brought by the client to the practitioner. Turney (2012) argued that the model concentrates on how the client changes his/her situation as opposed to diagnosing and treating his/her problem. To this end, the social worker throughout the process utilizes a language of change. Signature questions are given to the client by the practitioner, which are intended to induce a therapeutic process. During the interview, keywords and phrases are noted pertaining to the client's wants, needs and successes. Based on the responses, the practitioner formulates follow-up questions that are aligned to the client's keywords and phrases. This is repeated throughout the session. It is through this continuous process of listening, absorbing and connecting with the client that the worker co-constructs a new perspective or meaning that focuses on the solution (Coleman &

Vallacher, 2012). According to Turney (2012), the model resembles other competency-based models such as motivational enhancement. It is also similar to cognitive-behavioural therapy, whereby the practitioner assigns tasks or changes to the client. However, the solution-focused model differs in the sense that the client is encouraged to work on self-growth in line with their personal goals and objectives. In order to attain the desired goals, the model highly relies on setting specific, concrete and realistic goals that the practitioner, as well as the client, can commit to and work towards. A distinctive feature of the model is that most of its programs focus on experiences in painting a picture that depicts the problem.

Duan and Wang (2012) pointed out that the solution-focused model comprises three key components. The first principle is assisting the client, centred on the client's concerns, the client's vision of the situation, their expectations, and what they consider will further preferred outcomes. This enables the practitioner to establish problems and issues that might lead to the client deviating from making progress (Dolinsky, 2014). The second relies upon in-depth interaction with the client where reality is co-constructed, enabling both parties to achieve a shared meaning of the situation and potential pathways to resolution (Bhati, 2014; Crane & Kaighin, 2011). The therapeutic process mostly relies on asking questions concerning the topic of conversation based on previous comments; answers to these are connected to the current situation in order to build meaning. The third is that it does not just focus on the present and future. It permits the co-construction of potential futures with strong reference to experiences, strengths and resources, drawing on resources that are working and have worked for the client in the past (Crane & Kaighin, 2011). The model relies on high levels of collegiality in order to achieve meaningful results. It is essential that the practitioner is positive, respectful and hopeful (Crane & Kaighin, 2011). As a result, the client is more likely to participate voluntarily, demonstrating strength and resilience (Crane & Kaighin, 2011).

2.10.4 Dynamic hybrid model

This model is centred on relationship building and employs high levels of engagement. In this regard, it owes much to the solution-focused model with its emphasis on a reciprocal relationship. The model also minimizes the power distance between the practitioner and the client by focusing on dialogue, building an atmosphere of trust or respect and attempting to overcome the client's resistance throughout the intervention program. Smith et al. (2011) argued that the client/practitioner relationship is crucial for the formation of pro-social

behaviour. In this manner, the social worker serves a role model to the client by working positively to reinforce positive social behaviour.

Many scholars have recognized the multifaceted role of social workers in collaborating with officers of the law (with involuntary clients), monitoring the client, offering therapeutic service and problem-solving (Trotter, 2015). The dynamic hybrid model uses various other approaches such as the cognitive behavioural model, strengths-based therapies and motivational congruency, attempting to integrate the most positive elements of each model in order to develop one optimal for dealing with involuntary clients. This is because reliance on a single model is not a strong factor in the diverse nature of social work. This model is dominant in most western nations due to its evidence-based practice (Duffy & Somody, 2011).

Models focusing on relationship building are usually related to engagement and make use of similar techniques (Howe 1998, 2008). They focus the reciprocal nature of the client/practitioner relationship (De Boer & Coady, 2007; Turney, 2012) Moreover, they minimise power distance where possible, focusing on dialogue and building a climate of trust and respect, attempting to overcome resistance and apathy (Calder, 2008; Howe, 2010; Lawrence, 2004; Smith, 2001; Scott & King, 2007). An offshoot of this approach focuses on using the client/practitioner relationship to model and reinforce the pro-social behaviour (Andrews, Keissling, Russell & Grant 1979; Trotter 1997). In this approach, the practitioner attempts to serve as a role model and works positively to reinforce pro-socially appropriate behaviour on the part of the client (Edmond, 1990; Jones & Alcabes, 1993; Rimm & Masters, 1974; Reid, 1996).

2.10.5 An integrated approach

Trotter (2015) argued that practitioners too often rely on one strategy when working with involuntary clients when research strongly suggests that an integrated approach is called for (Stylianidis & Panagou, 2016). One of the greatest strengths of the integrated approach is that highly client-specific intervention strategies can be designed with due regard to the circumstances of each individual client. The best practice approach involves integrating all the techniques and approaches mentioned above and including, where appropriate, ancillary techniques that work in specific situations. Examples are a structured client/practitioner relationship (Compton, Galaway & Cournoyer, 1989); empathy, optimism and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Majer et al., 2003); self-disclosure (Hepworth et al., 2009; Knight, 2012)

and high quality case management (Gursansky, Harvey & Kennedy, 2003; Turner, 2010).

Figure 2.3 below delineates the integrated approach as the intersection of the major theories of working with clients. The area of intersection is where the elements of each model that have been empirically validated as most effective with involuntary clients are brought into focus. However, it is more dynamic than this. The area of intersection may also be constructed dynamically to meet the needs of each individual client, with due regard to empirical support for strategies that work best for involuntary clients as a group. Social work as a profession is focused on facilitating equity and the development of all individuals within society (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). However, no single theory or approach for social work exists that professionals could adequately rely on for a complete understanding of individuals and their surrounding systems. Hence, many scholars, due to social work's complex nature recommend an integrated, dynamic and evolving system (Duan & Wang, 2012).
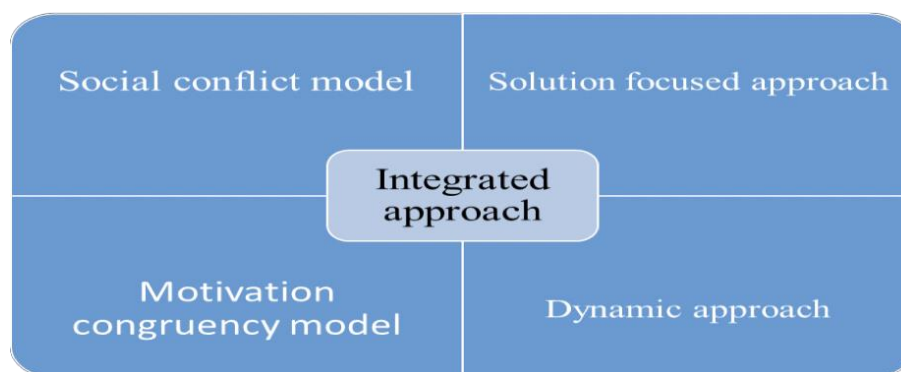
Figure 2.3: developed by the author

2.11   Barriers to engaging involuntary clients

Resistance is the most significant barrier to engaging involuntary clients (Mollica, 2017). The majority of involuntary clients simply do not want to be there, resent the intrusion into their lives, refuse to accept the reasons for the intervention and avoid co-operating with the social worker as much as possible (Trotter, 2015). Relationship building is critical to the success of social work interventions and a key to engaging involuntary clients (Rooney, 2013). However, typically, high resistance makes it difficult to build a relationship, often leading to low engagement from the outset of the intervention (Trotter, 2015). It is also difficult for the social worker to motivate a client in a compulsory setting. Without a strong relationship, demonstrating the relevance of the program, the importance of addressing the terms of the

mandate and the need for change pose significant challenges (Trotter & Sheehan, 2012).

It has been shown that active participation is crucial to the success of social work interventions (Plath, 2013; Reid, 1996; Rooney, 2009). Active participation has been a key barrier for most involuntary clients because many hardly engage at all. Some scholars (e.g. Pope & Kang, 2011) have argued that direct engagement should not be limited to the involuntary client but should extend to family members. Incorporating family members can provide a broader perspective and encourage responsible behaviour, particularly with younger clients in Western settings (Pope & Kang, 2011). As will be discussed later, the involvement of the family is a core aspect of practice in the UAE.

Another barrier to social worker engagement is involuntary client retention (Rooney, 2018). Resistant and unmotivated clients may not even be retained within the terms of the mandate, and it may be necessary to refer these clients back to law enforcement agencies at the outset of the intervention. A client's intention to complete a program is linked to their motivation to participate. This may fluctuate over time. As a result, practitioners cannot rely on a linear model but ought to adopt a flexible program design and be aware of the response to a client's setback (Trotter & Sheehan, 2012). This can be challenging when dealing with involuntary clients. It is usually a major impediment to their progress as they are unmotivated from the outset. Therefore, a core strategy of any intervention must be to motivate involuntary clients.

A proper or adequate case management approach is another necessity for an effective engagement process (Westhuizen, 2015). The approach must encourage the involuntary client's active participation. With due regard to the mandate, a collaborative, flexible and dynamic approach is best (Trotter, 2015). Rigid, formulaic and bureaucratic processes are likely to ensure failure rather than build the groundwork for success (Trotter, 2015).

It is essential that social workers also reflect on, identify and resolve any stereotypes they have of involuntary clients and negative feelings they have about such clients. Stereotyped images are key barriers in the engagement of involuntary workers (Trotter, 2015). The stereotypes may be bi-directional in that the client may view the social worker negatively as an agent of whatever institution is viewed as responsible for the client's predicament.

2.12 Strategies for the engagement of involuntary clients

Intervention programs range from detoxification, rehabilitation, brief interventions,

motivational interviewing and residential rehabilitation (Wesley Mission, 2011). As emphasized above, engagement is critical to the success of the intervention and the first contact is therefore, crucial (Seymour 2012). Ease of access is essential and can significantly affect the engagement process. According to Sotero and Relvas (2014), features of access include but are not limited to geographical location, hours of operation, cultural appropriateness, qualified professional support and the overall level or quality of the service. Most agencies utilize an intake process for both case planning and reporting purposes. Typically, information is sought upon initial contact, and this is used to establish the suitability of the service. Some agencies use specialist intake officers while others rotate this task (Thunberg & Degner, 2015). The bureaucratic nature of this process can lead to disengagement early on, particularly with involuntary clients who are already resistant to coming into the program. A much more focused and personalized approach is more likely to be successful with this type of client (Trotter, 2015). The assessment also facilitates successful interventions. Turner (2010) defined assessment as the process of gaining an understanding of the circumstances of a client to inform the necessary actions a social worker should take. This point-in-time process occurs early in the client engagement pathway and can be formal or informal (Trotter & Ward, 2013). It should be conducted to elucidate where the clients sit in terms of living space and worldview. Caution should be used to avoid over-generalizing from one specific behavioural incident. The focus should be on understanding a broader constellation of risk, protective and contextual factors (Trotter & Ward, 2013).

To conclude, intervention strategies are critically important to interventions. Sotero and Relvas (2014) define an intervention as any purposeful activity or response implemented by a worker or service, designed to promote the wellbeing of a client. A broad range of intervention approaches are available to workers but selecting the most appropriate for a given client is what matters the most. Intervention may focus on the provision of material or practical support and/or advocacy to access resources and institutional arrangements needed by the client in order to effect change. It is uncommon in practice for a particular theory or approach to dominate the intervention strategy, often leading to negative outcomes. The best practice approach embedded within the dynamic hybrid theory (Trotter, 2015) is likely to provide the practitioner with a focused, client-centred strategy that will promote engagement.

As mentioned earlier, case management is an integral component of the intervention strategy. There is a variety of forms of case management, but the key differentiator is the distinction

between approaches that are client driven and those driven by management goals (Manktelow, 2016). They include the clinical approach, the strengths-based approach, assertive community treatment and intensive case management. Case management is a complex process, and there is an impetus away from individual practitioners handling cases towards teams and case panels spread across multiple agencies using coordinated case management systems. According to Manktelow (2016, case management includes references to confidentiality, the communication of information to clients and the appropriate storage of client information. These approaches are often impersonal and bureaucratic, fostering disengagement rather than engagement. A client-centred approach is essential when working with involuntary clients (Trotter, 2015). Having explored the existing literature on the models and principles of working with such clients, the discussion now turns to the cultural context of this research study.

2.13   Social work in the UAE and the Middle East

2.13.1 Localisation of practice

The theory and practice of social work are social constructions (Barise, 2005) deeply rooted in the Western cultures, which spawned the profession early in the twentieth century (Graham, 2005). Paradoxically, while the shaping of global social work practice has been dominated by the United States and a small number of Western European countries, the profession has, in theory at least, been strongly sensitive to a more multicultural approach for at least the last three decades (Payne, 1997; Ragab, 2016; Sloan, Bromfield, Matthews & Rotabi, 2017). There have been repeated calls for a greater degree of localization and indigenisation of social work practice, particularly as professional social work has become ubiquitous via the forces of globalisation and internationalisation (Barise, 2003a.b, 2005; Ragab, 2016). Nevertheless, progress towards authentic localisation has been erratic across the world and highly limited in areas such as the Middle East (Hall, 2007; Holtzhausen, 2011; Sloan et al., 2017). Scholars like Christensen (2015) call for social workers to adopt a 'global' approach by thinking globally but acting locally, in other words, being actively involved in the global community while directly addressing the local culture in their practice.

2.13.2 Calls for localised, authentic practice in the UAE and the Middle East

There is a strong consensus that social work research in the Middle East is in its infancy, particularly regarding authentic localised social work practice (e.g. Albahar, 2011; Al-Darmaki Thomas & Yaaqeib, 2016; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2003a, b; Barise, 2005; Graham,

Bradshaw & Trew, 2009; Hall, 2007; Ragab, 2016; Veeran, 2013; Weatherhead & Daiches, 2015). It follows that there is very limited research into social work in general in the UAE and that research on more specialised topics such as involuntary clients is virtually non-existent (Al-Krenawi et al., 2004; Crabtree, 2008; Holtzhausen, Veeran & Villa, 2013; Sloan et al., 2017; Veeran, 2013). The primary focus of the few papers on social work in the UAE has been the localisation of social work practice, with particular reference to a practice model that is more inclusive of Islamic traditions (e.g. Crabtree, 2008; Holtzhausen, 2010; Sloan et al., 2017; Veeran, 2013).

Albahar (2011) reviewed the status of social work education in the UAE, arguing that social work education and practice in the UAE are essentially a vehicle for globalization and the expression of intellectual colonialism. This researcher also pointed out that social work education in the UAE is typically conducted in English, using American models. Many scholars have argued that does not best serve the interests of the local community (e.g. Albahar 2011; Barise 2003a, 2004, 2005; Holtzhausen, 2010; Holtzhausen, Veeran & Villa, 2013; Ibrahim, 2018; Ragab, 2016; Sloan et al., 2017).

The arguments with regard to the need to localise UAE social work are strengthened when one considers the extent to which social work is a values-based occupation (Dubois & Miley, 2014; Holtzhausen, 2011). Values define the parameters of the profession as well as professional choices and decisions (Holtzhausen, 2010, 2011). Fundamental tensions arise when Western social work is introduced into an arena where the dominant cultural values do not coincide with the Western values inherent in global social work or, worse still, where local values are inimical (Holtzhausen, 2011). Sloan et al. (2017) concurred with Albahar's (2011) view that the imposition of Western social work values into the social work curriculum in Middle Eastern countries is a form of neo-colonialism. Essentially, Middle Eastern students have very different worldviews to Western students and a different conception about what constitutes right and wrong. Sloan et al. (2017) pointed out that, in this way, social work imposes a particular (usually North American) value system upon the countries where North American practice models are dominant.

Some scholars have called for relatively broad-ranging measures to combat perceived problems with values and approaches (e.g. Albahar, 2011; Dwairy, 1999; Haj-Yahia, 1997) while others have acknowledged there is an issue but seek to find a 'middle ground' (e.g. Crabtree, 2008; Holtzhhausen, 2010). Some scholars (e.g. Barise, 2005) have raised the point

that the values of, for example, Islamic societies might be better attuned to the core values of what social work should be than the values prevalent in modern Western societies. Various scholars have argued that the roots of social work in the Middle East can be traced back to French and British colonialism (Albahar, 2011; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2003b; Ragab, 2016). Social work in the region first took root in Egypt and was heavily based on the American model (Holtzhausen, 2010). This approach then spread throughout the area, largely via the appointment of Egyptian and Egypt-trained staff to a large number of universities (Ragab, 2016). By these means and by chance, "an American model of social work and practice, including a code of ethics couched in a Western value system, was grafted onto an incompatible cultural, economic, political, religious and social reality" (Holtzhausen, 2010, p. 193).

Although attempts have been made to improve social work education in the UAE, particularly in terms of localization, the consensus of scholarly opinion is much more work to be done (Albahar, 2011; Holtzhausen, 2010; Ragab, 2016; Sloan et al., 2017). One of the biggest problems facing universities in non-Western cultures is the issue of accreditation and perceived excellence. These remain reliant on models and standards developed in the West (Albahar, 2011) and retard the development of authentic localised practice in the Middle East. Grey et al. (2008) argued that, by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, this derived social work practice in the Middle East continued to emphasize positivism, rationality, individualism and the internal locus of control over the region's culturally important values of interdependence, connectedness, community and inclusion.

Albahar (2011) argued that some progress was made towards a more localised and authentic practice in UAE social work education initiatives during the early years of the 21st century, but these were primarily focused on producing welfare and care workers rather than social workers. The programs tended to produce generalists who were not professional social workers and therefore struggled to find appropriate resources. Furthermore, despite some positive signs regarding the quality of graduates, many graduates struggled to find appropriate work, and there was a paucity of local textbooks and local research. Albahar (2011) has been relatively sceptical about progress since that time. She argued that a revitalization program that commenced in 2004 had not yielded the necessary outcomes. There was a large-scale review of curriculum and organisational structures largely driven by experts from the United States. It was likely to entrench many of the already established

problems. Since then, there have been multiple revisions and ongoing uncertainty about ultimate goals.

Albahar (2011) was particularly critical of the fact that the new social work curriculum in the UAE involved the importation of so many staff members whose native language is English, a focus on general education courses rather than professional development and a very strong emphasis on bilingualism. She sums up the situation as follows (Albahar, 2011 p. 566): "All of these measures and changes were made without any consideration of the social context of UAE society nor of the students' capability in comprehending the subject matter in a language that was not theirs." Albahar (2011) argues that this has resulted in low morale and declines in student numbers and the quality of graduates. She voiced some alarm at the expressed intention of faculty at the leading university in the UAE to make English the only language of instruction for social work education. The question arises whether there has been a significant positive change since Albahar (2011) wrote her critique or whether a high level of personal involvement may have led to a degree of an overstatement. On balance, it is true that many other scholars have adopted a more measured approach (e.g. Al-Darmaki & Yaaqeib, 2015; Holtzhausen, 2010; Ragab, 2016; Sloan et al., 2017) and have generally been more positive. However, they identified many concerns that align relatively well with those of Albahar (2011). More recent research also suggests that the issues have not diminished since Albahar (2011) published her critique (Ragab, 2016; Sloan et al., 2017).

2.13.3 Localisation and the collision of values

As discussed previously, there is a broad consensus that the futures of social work in the Muslim world in general and the UAE, in particular, must focus on localisation. Scholars have agreed that an authentic localised social work paradigm for the UAE must be deeply rooted in core Islamic values (Albahar, 2011; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2005; Barise, 2005; Crabtree, 2008; Hodge, 2005; Holtzhausen, 2010; Khaja & Frederick, 2008; Lambert, 2008; Ragab, 2016; Sloan et al., 2017; Weatherhead & Daiches, 2015). This brings into focus the potential for value conflict where two cultures might have fundamental disagreements about what is right and wrong. Campbell (2003) explored the dilemma around deciding which value system is 'right' while Holtzhausen (2010) warned against the dangers of imposing Western value systems on other cultures, arguing that this is essentially an act of cultural colonialism.

There has been some debate amongst scholars regarding whether Islamic values are compatible with 'Western' social work. Many scholars agreed that an incompatible model of

social work practice, developed in the USA, has been forced upon the UAE and that this model is out of touch with the UAE's religious, social, political and cultural reality (Albahar, 2011; Barise, 2005; Holtzhausen, 2010, 2011; Midgley, 1981; Ragab, 2016). Holtzhausen (2010) explored the way in which the NASW code of ethics was transplanted willy-nilly into the Arab world, and remains in place today, even though the authors of that code probably did not envisage it being used in a socio-cultural context so fundamentally different to that in which it was developed. Some scholars have pointed out that Islam itself is fundamentally well aligned with the essential goal of social work, the betterment of society (Abdullah 2015; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2001; Ragab, 2016; Sloan et al., 2017) but Crabtree and Baba (2010) suggested that there are basic tensions in a number of specific areas, which is elaborated on below.

Crabtree and Baba (2001) addressed the issue of the indigenization of social work and potential conflicts that might arise, with particular reference to Muslim societies. They pointed out that social work in the West is characterised by a secular approach, whereas religion plays a central role in life in Muslim countries. Haynes et al. (1997) researched the foundations of the Islamic welfare state, which is based on five values, and the five pillars of Islam, all of which will be explored in more depth later. Although the Muslim precepts of equality, caring, and social justice align well with Western social work values, the fact that religious and social values are so closely intertwined does not sit well with the reality of the purely secular approach in the West. Crabtree and Baba (2001) pointed out that the division between personal and social work values, which is so integral to Western social work would be unintelligible to Muslim social workers. Ow and Saparin (2014) argued that, in the Muslim world, religion and social relations cannot be separated while Crabtree and Baba (2001) highlighted some issues that emerge from this duality: the traditional family, with strongly defined gender roles, results in significant value conflicts in areas such as single parenthood; the status of women and alternative lifestyles; and domestic violence. They focused on the situation in Malaysia and suggested the introduction of topics devoted to these issues in the social work curriculum. However, it appears that they were suggesting the topics would be taught from a Western perspective. Although they called for the incorporation of non-Western approaches into the broader global social work paradigm, they argued that a universal code of ethics determines the shape of social work across cultures and that localisation must be subservient to the demands of this universal code.

The question arises to what extent the universal code is a purely Western artefact. Certainly, in the intervening years since Crabtree and Baba (2001) published their article, calls for a strongly localised approach in the Middle East have only gathered momentum, particularly from scholars based in Middle Eastern countries (e.g. Albahar, 2011; Barise 2003a, 2005; Holtzhausen, 2010, 2011; Ragab, 2016; Veeran, 2013). Ragab (2016) perhaps best summed up the position of these scholars by calling for Islamic theology and the Islamic worldview to be integrated with the 'best' that the behavioural and social sciences have to offer, with the demands of localisation seen as of paramount importance. It is not the intention of this researcher to become embroiled in a philosophical debate about universal values versus local values, but the existence of fundamental tensions must be acknowledged and, within these, the deep reservations on the part of some Western scholars about the coexistence of religious and secular values in a profession whose 'universal' code is secular. However, some Western scholars (e.g. Jeffries, 1999; Sorokin, 1962) have argued that an insistence on a purely secular approach is one of the key problems facing the social sciences today.

2.13.4 Integralism and the golden rule

Sorokin (1962) examined cultures throughout history and concluded there were three types of culture: ideational, sensate, and idealistic. He argued that culture is not static, and the dominant culture in a particular region varies over time. Each of the three culture types is associated with a dominant system of truth and knowledge: reason, sense, and faith, respectively. Sorokin argued that the full potential of the social sciences could only be achieved via the integration of these three systems. He believed that an integralist approach would help bridge the divide between science and religion. However, as Jeffries (1999) pointed out, it is a challenging task to reconcile the idea of faith with that of rationality. A solution may be found by looking at the major world religions for broader categories of doctrines, ideas, and precepts that apply across all religions (Hunt et al., 1991; Selznick 1992). In this way, fundamental religious truths can be derived, which can then be integrated into the social sciences (Hick 2004). Jeffries argued that all major religions revolve around two categories of ideas: metaphysical (or supernatural) ideas and ideas relating to moral and ethical principles.

There is significant scope for incorporating the moral and ethical principles of the major religions into social work practice, but it must be conceded that incorporating metaphysical elements poses a more significant, but not insurmountable, challenge (Jeffries 1999). In terms

of the former, scholars have argued that the Golden Rule is central to all major religions: strive to do well to all people and avoid doing harm (Berger, 1969; Gouldner, 1960; Jeffries, 1999). Furthermore, there is a significant degree of accord on a wide variety of core ethical principles beyond this rule (Berger, 1969; Hunt et al., 1991). Hick (2004) argued that there is a Global Ethic that underpins all the major religions which can best be summarised along the lines of doing to others what you would like them to do to you. However, the Global Ethic goes well beyond the notion of reciprocity to include ethical principles such as charity, care, altruism, and social connectedness (Gouldner, 1960; Selznick, 1992). In terms of metaphysics, the Golden Rule also has such an element, which, in concrete terms, may be expressed as centeredness on a transcendental reality rather than the self, which in turn leads to self-growth in search of transcendental perfection (Hick, 2004).

It is self-evident that, in terms of Sorokin's (1962) analysis, social work which is assertively secular (and rational) in nature cannot work in a society whose dominant system of truth and knowledge is based on religion. Furthermore, adopting a secular approach slightly to incorporate a few religious elements could be construed as condescending at best and an example of cultural imperialism at worst. Nevertheless, the integralist approach of Jeffries (1999) offers hope for a degree of compromise. There are sufficient commonalities between the Golden Rule and the universal code of ethics of social work to serve as a solid base for social work practice. The great strength of the integralist approach is its acceptance of diversity and compromise. Given that there are different types of culture, an integralist approach would take issue with the approach discussed above (e.g. Crabtree & Baba, 2001) that a single universal code of ethics must hold sway whenever a conflict of values arises. An integralist approach would allow for a degree of accommodation while remaining true to the system of truth and knowledge that is dominant in a particular culture. In essence, it could be argued that it is better to have an approach that accommodates local culture and works than an approach that sticks to the 'fundamentals' and does not work.

2.13.5 Characteristics of the Islamic religion

Islam has a global presence and is the second largest and fastest growing religion in the world (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a; Graham, Bradshaw & Trew, 2009) with well over one billion followers (Waines, 2003). Nevertheless, very little research attention has been paid to Islamic communities or social work within those communities (Graham et al., 2009; Hodge, 2005). A very high proportion of Arab people are Muslim, and Islam acts as a meta-narrative for their

lives, as it does for many millions across the globe (Graham et al., 2009). Islam acts as a prism, permitting the individual to attain understandings of the self, the broader community and the world (Hodge, 2005). Therefore, Islam is much more a comprehensive way of life than a mere belief system (Ali & Liu, 2004; Hodge, 2005). The word *'Islam'* literally means 'submission' and those of the Muslim faith follow the precepts of faith contained in the *shari'a,* which governs all aspects of the life of each adherent (Hodge, 2005; Waines, 2003). Muslims understand the *Quran* as the word of God as revealed to the Prophet Mohammad.

Significantly, neither Islam nor the Arab world should be viewed as homogenous in nature (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000b; Waines, 2003). However, the majority of Muslims in the world, including the UAE, are Sunnis (approximately 90 per cent) while the others are Shiite, based primarily in Iran (Hodge, 2005). In Sunni Islam, there is more emphasis on the relationship between followers and God, whereas Shiite Islam is more hierarchical, with legal scholars responsible for interpreting the word of God. Hodge (2005) argued that Islam is a contested construct among its followers, and there is much disagreement as to what constitutes a 'true' Muslim. Contextual variables such as the local culture, political imperatives, and issues of interpretation mean that a significant variety of beliefs and practices are possible (Waines, 2003). It could be said that the broader global Muslim community comprises a number of smaller communities, each with a distinctive flavour of Islam. For example, Islam, as practised in the UAE, would have specific characteristics. This strengthens the calls of scholars such as Albahar (2011) for a focused, localised social work practice in the UAE.

Although there are a number of distinctive approaches to Islam according to tradition, geography, and ethnic background, the community of the faithful (*unmah)* is unified by religious values and traditions that are viewed as overarching pillars of the faith and of ritual practice (Crabtree, 2008; Eickelman, 2001; Esposito, 1988). These values and traditions are all-encompassing in the life of the practising Muslim. Following Islam is more than practising a religion – it is a way of life (Barise, 2005; Crabtree, 2008; Eickelman, 2001; Hodge, 2005; Ragab, 2016; Waines, 2003). Barise (2005) presented the six pillars of faith and the five pillars of ritual practice, drawn from the *shari'a*, that are central to the Islamic way of life. Hodge (2005) took a slightly different approach, labelling the five pillars of ritual practice as described by Barise (2005) as the five pillars of faith. These five pillars are the declaration of faith (*shahadah)*; ritual prayer (*salat);* almsgiving (*zakat)*; yearly fasting

(*sawn)*; and pilgrimage (*hajj)*. Hodge argued that the extent to which a Muslim adheres to the five pillars is a strong indication of the extent to which Islam is critical to their living space. Crabtree (2008) argued that the pillars of faith of Muslim societies should be extended to include equality, the importance of the collective good, and consultation. She pointed out the importance of the principle of honour (*izzat),* which offers significant potential for conflict with Western social work values. It is clear that social work in Muslim countries would be ineffective if the pillars of faith are ignored and why many scholars (e.g. Albahar, 2011; Al Krenawi et al., 2004; Holtzhausen, 2010, 2011) have argued that these values must be the point of departure for social work practice in Muslim countries. Therefore, the pillars of faith and ritual practice and their impacts on social relations and the social structure will be examined in great detail.

The six pillars of faith revolve around metaphysical issues and define the relationship of the believer with God (Ali, Liu & Humedian, 2004; Barise, 2005). The core principle is the belief that God has created all things and will sustain them. Muslims believe that there is only one God who is named Allah in Arabic but who has 99 names. They also believe in the existence of angels who are perfect in the sense that they always obey God, unlike imperfect humans (Eickelman 2001). Followers believe in the reverence and literal truth of all the revealed scriptures and all the prophets, from Adam to Mohammad (Barise 2005). They believe in life after death where humans will face the judgement of God for their deeds while alive and in the notion of freedom of will even though nothing can happen without God permitting it (Barise, 2005). These six pillars of faith are deeply intertwined with the five pillars of ritual practice, although the latter has a more direct impact on the life of the Muslim faithful and their relationships with the community.

The declaration of faith (*shahadah)* revolves around the affirmation that there is only one God (Allah) and that Mohammad is the prophet of God (Hodge, 2005; Waines 2003). God has created all things and sustains them while revelation is via the scriptures (which include the Torah and the Bible) (Crabtree, 2008; Esposito, 1988). Humans have a free will (Crabtree, 2008), but God is omnipotent and omniscient, involved in the affairs of human beings, compassionate and merciful (Hodge, 2005). Eickelman (2005) argued that the declaration of faith creates a strong sense of a community of believers who share ideas and values, while Hodge (2005) emphasized the duality of materialism and metaphysics within Islam. Barise (2005) argued that this pillar of faith makes adherents less egocentric and more

committed, with fewer conflicts of loyalty. The centrality of the declaration of faith in the lives of Muslims, with its metaphysical elements, offers the potential for significant conflict with a social work paradigm that is vehemently secular (Holtzhausen, 2010, 2011; Sloan et al., 2017).

Ritual prayers (*salat)* involve the adherent praying five times each day while facing Mecca, a holistic practice that incorporates the use of the mind, body, rationality and emotion (Hodge, 2005). These prayers have a powerful effect in terms of incorporating the religious practice into the routine of everyday life so that life and religion become intertwined (Eickelman, 2005). The ritual and uniform nature of prayer, where Muslims from all walks of life come together so frequently, reinforces the notions of equality, common purpose and community (Crabtree, 2008; Hodge, 2009). As Barise (2005) pointed out, the preferred method of prayer is communal, thus promoting a deep sense of community, fraternity, and equality, not to mention a disciplined focus on God as the centre of the universe. Mernissi (2001) pointed out that the focus is on spiritual rather than social or material equality, although community spirit does foster equality of more material nature as well. Mernissi also explored the tension between freedom and obligation; the adherent has obligations to God and the community, which temper the unbridled expression of individual freedom.

Almsgiving (*zakat)* is required for all adherents who possess the necessary resources (Hodge, 2005). It is customary that a percentage, usually two and a half, of accumulated wealth and income is donated to address inequality in society and promote welfare (Eickelman, 2001; Hodge, 2005). Almsgiving is seen as an act of purification and is a fundamental component of Islam's commitment to equality. Almsgiving is not only an act of service to the community that builds community ties but also an act of worship (Hodge, 2005). Crabtree (2008) pointed out that *zakat* is effectively an alms tax where both the rate of taxation and methods of redistribution are prescribed by religious law. She drew comparisons between the roots of social work in Christian charitable obligations, which have not given way to a secular, rights-based approach. However, the Islamic approach is more directly focused on the promotion of social justice than the Christian approach. In the Christian approach, the act of welfare is, in effect, an act of atonement and the recipient has no right to expect favour. However, in Islamic societies, the poor do have a claim to aid from the wealthy and, in this way, the five pillars of Islam actively seek to achieve a redistribution of resources where required and build an egalitarian community (Crabtree, 2008).

The annual fast (*sawm*) takes place during the month of Ramadan. In this period, all adults who are physically able to do so abstain from drinking, eating, smoking, and sexual activity from dawn to sunset (Eickelman, 2001; Hodge, 2005; Waines 2003). This pillar of Islam facilitates spiritual renewal and helps followers re-focus on their closeness to God. It is also a time when community and family ties are strengthened (Eickelman, 2001). Barise (2005) pointed out that the annual fast also facilitates spiritual growth, self-discipline, generosity, empathy for other human beings and communal solidarity.

All adherents of Islam who are physically and financially able to do so are required to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives (Hodge, 2005). This pilgrimage is often the seminal event in their lives. Beyond permitting the faithful to get closer to God and identify more strongly with Islam, the pilgrimage builds community spirit and again stresses that all pilgrims are equal before God (Eickelman, 2001; Esposito, 1988).

2.14   The Islamic worldview and its relevance to social work practice

In the previous section, it was established that religion is an integral and vital part of daily life in the Muslim world. The point was also made that social work in an Islamic context could not work without taking into account the impact of religion on life. The pillars of the Islamic faith and ritual practice also serve to foster a worldview, which must be actively addressed by those who wish to offer a localised, authentic social work practice in the Muslim world.

Given that the forces driving social work in the West are secular and tend to follow a variant of the scientific method, it is important to explore potential conflicts with epistemology in the Muslim world. Religions, along with its supernatural and metaphysical aspects, are a determinative dimension of the Muslim worldview (Bowen et al., 2014; Daneshpour, 1998; Hokenstad, Khinduka & Midgley, 2013; Mir, 1999). There are two types of knowledge in Islam: revealed and acquired. The source of revealed knowledge is God's word (in the sacred texts) and the traditions of the prophets while human interaction with God's creation is the source of acquired knowledge (Bokhoubza, Barise & Lakhim, 2003). Islam seeks to integrate all received and acquired knowledge into an integrated whole (Zafar, 2001), and social workers draw upon both sources of knowledge (Barise, 2005). However, given that received knowledge is infallible and cannot be questioned, scholars appear not to have found a solution to the problem, which arises when there is a conflict between received and acquired knowledge. Some scholars argued that there is never a contradiction (e.g. Boukhabza et al.,

2003), but this seems unlikely. Other scholars (e.g. Barise, 2005) contended that contradictions are a product of the fallibility of the human intellect, i.e., the contradiction is between human conceptions of revealed and acquired knowledge. In such cases, Islam requires social workers to apply 'speculative' revealed knowledge, i.e., the word of God as interpreted by humans (Barise, 2005). Addressing this type of tension in day-to-day practice is likely to be problematic for the social worker in the Middle East, particularly as scholars do not offer a seamless solution, Nevertheless, it is clear that any approach that is adopted must lean strongly towards one that relies upon revealed knowledge (i.e., an Islamic solution). This aligns absolutely with the many calls for localization of social work practice.

Barise (2005) conceded that the conflict between a purely secular approach to social work and an approach deeply rooted in religious belief requires a different (he phrased it as 'unique') conception of human existence. He argued that being a Muslim involves accepting the presence of supernatural beings such as angels and the interplay between free will and predestination. He pointed out that the ideal state of being for all Muslims is a situation where there are peace and harmony according to God's will and laws. Thus, free will is subject to abiding by God's will (and law), the avoidance of boundary transgression and the acknowledgement of the rights of others. This has clear connections to ethical considerations.

Although many scholars have called for Islam to be the driving force in social work with Muslims (e.g. Abdullah, 2015; Albahar, 2011; Al-Dabbagh, 1993) and provided compelling practical justifications for their argument, Barise (2005) provided a reasoned philosophical justification. He viewed one of the primary goals of social work as an emancipation from all forms of subordination with one critical exclusion – subordination to God (and, by implication, God's law). Given Islam's focus on peace, Barise (2005) therefore viewed the goal of social work as helping the client achieve harmony inner and outer peace and synchronicity. These goals, along with the Islamic focus on human dignity, almsgiving and social justice are not at all dissimilar to the goals a purely secular approach might espouse but, critically, a core element of harmony, peace and synchronicity involves alignment with God's will and law (Barise, 2005; Mullaly, 2002; Turner, Lopez & Barise, 2002). From a fundamentalist perspective, the client/social worker relationship could be viewed as part of the struggle between good and evil (Barise, 2005). The forces of good (God) act to support positive outcomes in the client/social worker dyad while the forces of evil work to prevent positive outcomes and create new problems.

2.15 Characteristics of Arab societies relevant to social work interventions

Ethnic Arab societies are heterogeneous, based on a variety of national, ethnic, socioeconomic, sectarian, tribal, and linguistic identities (Al-Krenawi & Graham 2000a.b; Bowen et al., 2014). Although there are multiple faith traditions, the fundamental tenets of Islam are relatively uniform in most Arabic countries, except for the differences between *Sunni and Shi'ite* traditions noted previously (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a). The Arab world has been undergoing a massive and fundamental transition for several decades, often combining highly sophisticated infrastructure with traditional societal and economic structures (Barakat, 1993). Of particular significance to social workers, Arab societies are high context rather than the typically low context found in Western societies (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Therefore, Arab societies place a far greater emphasis on the collective than on the individual, value social stability and tradition and experience a much lower rate of social change (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1996a, b, 1997b; Barakat, 1993; Bowen et al., 2014; Hall, 2007). This emphasis on the collective means that Arab societies are often dominated by complex, subtle patterns revolving around patriarchy, extended family relationships, relationships within primary groups and inter-group relations – all within an environment that places great value on an interaction style that is spontaneous and expressive (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997a,b; Barakat, 1993; Bowen et al., 2014).

2.15.1 Family and gender

The family stands at the core of Arabic society, although the gradual transformation of that society is bringing change and challenges. Indeed, the process of transformation is responsible for a significant proportion of the social issues facing these societies (Barakat, 1993; Bowen et al., 2014). The family provides the individual with a cornerstone but also serves as an indicator of social and economic status (Barakat, 1993). The complex patrilineal kinship structure that underpins the family in Arabic society is called *hamula*. Males are dominant and hold the positions of leadership in their own households, business, and politics (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1996a, 2000a, b; Barakat, 1993). Although there is some variation in intensity, women are often regarded as weaker than men are, and some scholars have argued that women are essentially powerless and subservient in the most traditional Arab societies (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Arranged marriages remain commonplace, and women are more likely to remain at home caring for families than to forge careers, with even highly educated women frequently deferring to men when it comes to family decisions (Al-Krenawi

& Graham, 2000; Bowen et al., 2014; Grossbard-Schecthman & Neuman, 1998).

Uneven social transformation across Arab societies means that some have a more 'Western' approach than others do, but this does not always result in a more flexible view of gender roles. For example, some scholars have maintained that the encroachment of what is perceived as Western cultural hegemony can result in some societies exerting a high level of social control over women in an attempt to preserve an Islamic cultural identity (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a). Of particular significance is the impact of divorce on women. Women often endure very difficult marital circumstances in order to avoid divorce because there are restrictions on remarriage and child custody can be problematic (Al-Krenawi & Graham 1998, 2000a, b).

The impact of gender roles on social work practice in Muslim societies is significant. As discussed previously, the Islamic worldview differs significantly from the Western worldview of gender roles. The fact that gender roles, particularly those of women, tend to be highly refined and highly structured, partly to support the traditional family structure, makes impossible some interventions that would be commonly used in the West (Graham et al., 2009). In some more liberal Islamic societies, gender roles are sometimes a source of intra-family and inter-generational conflict (Al Krenawi & Graham, 2000a; Graham et al., 2009). The social worker will often face a very complex family situation where it may be difficult to comprehend the dynamics fully.

There is a stigma associated with seeking social work or mental health assistance, and this applies particularly to women, who might be resistant and less than forthright in order to preserve the unity of the family (Graham et al., 2009). Crabtree (2009) argued that *izzat* (particularly family) honour continues to play an important role on Muslim societies although some scholars have contended that the influence of honour is less powerful in Middle Eastern societies than, for example, in India and Pakistan (Bowen, Early & Schulties, 2014). Nevertheless, family honour does exert a significant influence in the Middle East. The family is the core institution of society, and the collective good of the family is more important than that of the individual (Bowen et al., 2014). Therefore, there is often extreme pressure on individuals to conform to social norms and family expectations. On the one hand, this can have positive outcomes such as respect and care for elders, but Crabtree (2008) claimed that, in some cases, *izzat* results in vulnerable adults and children being exposed to the tyranny of the family.

In Islamic society, the notion of family honour is deeply tied to gender roles. In its most extreme form, this involves women remaining largely restricted to the home (and family) while men engage with the outside world (Bowen et al., 2014). However, societies such as the UAE are much more flexible, but the roles of men and women within the family remain different. Bowen et al. (2014) argued that men continue to hold a higher status inherently, but this is offset by a higher degree of responsibility towards the family and society in general. Paradoxically, a woman tends to derive significant status from being in a family, but her actions are more likely to potentially harm the family than the actions of the male. There is a strong relationship between very powerful and ubiquitous family honour codes and his restriction of rights for women as well as institutions such as arranged marriage (Bowen et al., 2014).

2.15.2 The impact of family values

Many Muslims place great value on the (extended) family unit, particularly where it is the basic social unit (Graham et al., 2009). The welfare of the family is of paramount important and always supersedes the welfare of the individual, resulting in a situation where interdependence and cohesion are highly valued while independence is denigrated (Hall & Nicholson 2006). There is great emphasis on the unity and privacy of the family, resulting in a situation where there is an impetus to resolve problems within the family and exceptional reluctance to discuss any issue relating to the family with outsiders (Al-Issa, 1990; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a, b; Youssef & Dean, 2006). Coincidental with feelings of responsibility to the family and extended family come feelings of guilt when responsibilities cannot be met. Social workers are often viewed with suspicion and hostility as outsiders who wish to break up families (Graham et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important that early assurances and clarifications be provided the goal of the social work intervention is to help the family build stronger relationships and adapt to circumstances (Crabtree, 2008; Graham et al., 2009). Some scholars (e.g. Graham et al., 2009) proposed that significant emphasis must be placed on keeping the family together in these societies.

2.15.3 Societal structure and implications for individual development

The father generally dominates in Islamic societies; the father is the head of the family, occupying the highest position of respect and legitimate authority (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000b; Barise, 2005; El-Islam, 1989, 1994). In Arab societies, the head of the family defers only to the head of the clan who in turn defers to the head of the tribe, and so on – although

these structures are changing slowly in some Arab countries (Bowen et al., 2014; El-Islam, 1989; El-Islam & Abu-Dagga, 1992). In this way, each family unit serves as a mini autonomous society within an increasingly broader society, with the head of the unit acting as the intermediary with the outside world (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a, b). In Middle Eastern societies, Arabic culture and Islam dominate the school curriculum regardless of whether ethnic Arabs are the majority (Barakat, 1993). The teacher is a very strong authority figure, in line with the hierarchical structure of the society (Barakat, 1993), and is perceived as a source of knowledge worthy of inherent respect (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a, b). Although some scholars have been critical of the approach in Arabic schools, particularly the focus on rote learning and limited emphasis on creativity (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a), others have argued that the approach instils strong values and a powerful sense of culture (Barakat, 1993).

2.15.4 Faith and spirituality

Although there are variations in the intensity and degree of religious observance within and across Muslim societies in general and Middle Eastern societies in particular, Islam is central to the lives of many and always has a significant impact on societal norms (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000a; Barise, 2004, 2005; Hodge, 2005). Graham et al. (2009) argued that, for social workers, the impact of Islam presents something of a duality. One hand, it can be an asset in social work interventions, but on the other, it can present challenges and impediments to progress. Thus, religious structures can help the social worker with issues such as self-actualization, group support networks, and procedures for conflict resolution but could also challenge the authority of any professional decisions made by the social worker. In many families, the mosque and Islamic clerics will have a significant influence on the family, including issues such as socialization, gender roles, religious observance, social and charitable obligations, ethics, and standards of social behaviour (El Azayem & Hedayat, 1994; Matthews & Marwit, 2006; Weaver et al., 2003).

Religious practice impacts many aspects of everyday life, including interactional style. Indeed, El Azayem and Hedayat (1994) contended that religion has a significant influence on individual psychology and worldview while Hall and Livingston (2006) pointed out that, for many families, the commitment to Islam has passed from generation to generation, has very deep roots, and permeates every dimension of life (Kelly et al., 1996). Many scholars have been highly critical of Western approaches that work on the assumption that religion can

somehow be separated from other aspects of life and have maintained that religion should be as integral a part of any social work intervention as it is of everyday life (El Azayhem & Hedayat, 1994; Hall & Nicholson, 2006; Kelly et al., 1996).

2.16 Working with clients in the UAE

While there is very limited research on social work in the UAE, a few scholars (e.g. Barise, 2004; 2005; Crabtree, 2008; Holtzhuasen, 2011; Holtzhausen et al., 2013) have focused on this country. A number of themes relating to working with clients in the UAE have emerged from the work of these scholars, most notably calls for a strengths-based approach. Although there has been no research focusing on involuntary clients in the region, these general themes are likely to be valuable when working with this type of client, although some adaptation may be required.

As has been discussed previously, values are central to the practice of social work. Although the disparity in worldviews between Western countries and the UAE might be narrowing, a significant gap still exists. The question, therefore, arises as to whose values should be applied. In the Western world, it is a matter of fundamental principle that social work should remove itself from politics and religion. However, in the Middle East, people have a holistic worldview that incorporates interweaving strands of religion, social values, politics, and education (Woodrow, 2001). Nevertheless, scholars such as Spano and Koenig (2007) insisted that Western values must be applied equally across all cultures. Holtzhausen et al. (2013) argued that this is a naïve approach at best and cultural imperialism at worst. Many scholars have proposed a culturally sensitive approach at the very least (e.g. Hotzhausen et al. 2013). Many Middle Eastern scholars arguing for an approach that is deeply embedded in the cultural, social, political and religious reality of the Middle East (e.g. Abdullah, 2015; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2003a, b; Barise, 2003a, b; 2005; Crabtree, 2008; Graham et al., 2009; Ragab, 2016; Sloan et al., 2017).

Crabtree (2008) stressed the importance of consultation and mediation within the Islamic worldview. Informal and formal processes are interlinked in such a way as to encourage conflict resolution, reinforced by various festivals and religious practices that facilitate social cohesion. Crabtree argued that it is important to align social work interventions to make optimal use of Muslim family dynamics in Middle Eastern countries. The most important of these is her suggestion that a strengths-based approach is used to utilise the natural optimism

in Muslim families (Saleebey, 2013). Beyond that, the resilience of Muslim families favours a capacity-building strategy while the depth of commitment to a family orientation accommodates a networking strategy. The importance attached to family responsibilities, community ties and mediation supports strategies that revolve around advocacy, intercession and the brokerage of amicable relations. Crabtree's suggestion that an emancipatory approach is adopted to leverage flexibility in Muslim families is more problematic. Scholars such as Albahar (2011) might argue that the use of the term 'emancipation' implies a lack of freedom in the first place and that the imposition of Western values is the solution.

There is a strong consensus among scholars who have focused on social work in the UAE that all the factors discussed in the previous section must be taken into account when working with UAE clients and should actively inform practice (Albahar, 2011; Al-Krenawi et al., 2004; Barise, 2003; Sloan et al., 2017; Veeran, 2013). These factors include context, family and gender roles, family values, social structure, individual development, faith, and spirituality. Indeed, in Islamic societies, many of these are crucial to the formulation of potentially effective social work intervention strategies. Barise (2003) suggested a model for such practice in the UAE that takes into account all of these factors.

2.17 Barise's model for social work practice in the UAE

Barise (2003) argued that social work practice in the Middle East should be rooted in religious and cultural realities. He proposed a model that revolves around several core principles of Islamic faith, proposing that social work practice aligns very well with these principles. He noted that the process should be adapted according to the level of devoutness the client exhibits. Thus, with highly devout clients, there would be a very strong emphasis on the Islamic scriptures and traditions. With less devout clients or, of particular relevance to the UAE, those who are from outside the faith, there would be more flexible but always with due regard to the fact that the society as a whole function within the Islamic religious, social and legal traditions.

2.17.1 Relationship building

Successful social work interventions are highly dependent upon relationship building (Rooney, 2018; Trotter, 2015). Barise (2003a) pointed out that empathetic, respectful communication is very important in any interaction. A high degree of attention to the individual and focused interaction also helps to build relationships. Assertive and non-

decorous behaviour is likely to elicit resistance. It is essential to acknowledge the complex pattern of relationships in which a client is involved and, where possible, to leverage these relationships to facilitate the client/practitioner relationship (Ragab, 2016; Veeran, 2013). Certainly, a deep understanding of these relationships is critical in order to fully comprehend the context of the client's living space. A successful social work intervention will often entail building a relationship with one or more of the client's extended family group and potentially involving family members' in-group interventions (Bowen et al., 2014; Crabtree & Baba, 2001; Dwairy, 1999; Hall, 2007).

2.17.2 Identification and internalisation of problem areas (assessment)

Barise (2003a) argued that the Islamic principle of *Qamwah* (spiritual) is a powerful tool in terms of helping the client achieve full awareness about the realities of the situation. Clearly, this is particularly useful for work with involuntary clients, many of whom will deny that any problem exists. Barise pointed out that, in the Islamic worldview, all problems have a spiritual dimension, which is often likely to be dominant. Therefore, a direct invocation of the principle of *Qamwah* will provide a spiritual dimension to the relationship from the outset. The social worker should emphasize that there is a reason that the client is there, that the status quo (or state of equilibrium) has been disturbed. Once that has been achieved, it should be established that the problem is not trivial, particularly when working with involuntary clients where the issue at hand is always likely to be relatively serious. The social worker should emphasize the passage of time and the need for some form of transformation.

Once the client accepts that there is a (serious) problem, the next step is *starting building confident (*a consultative process) (Barise, 2003a). In this phase, the client and social worker collaborate on what is essentially a data collection process. This may involve consulting others, for example, family members and Muslim clerics as well as any sources of information that may be helpful in clarifying the problem and potential solutions. Barise claimed that it is essential to consult environmental and revealed sources. Clearly, sources deeply embedded in the scriptures and traditions of Islam are highly relevant to all phases of this process and used directly. Once data has been collected, *Taffakur* (a period of contemplation) follows but this should not be seen as an essentially passive period. This is a time for looking at all viewpoints, all the information available and attempting to understand the situation fully. This phase involves goal setting and creating tentative strategies. At this stage, the social worker will have a reasonable idea of what intervention strategies are

appropriate while the client will have an idea of what must be done from a personal perspective. Barise stressed that all these processes must be highly collaborative. Indeed, he argued that a key goal of *Taffakur* is to increase awareness and motivation, very often of a spiritual nature, which means that this sub-process is in operation throughout the social work intervention.

Barise (2003a) proposed that, after the reflection phase, an intervention plan should be formulated. The extent to which the client is a devout Muslim is critical here. For non-Muslims or those who are not devout, an action plan rooted in the norms, folkways, legal requirements and traditions of UAE society might be appropriate. However, for those who are at least relatively devout, probably the majority of clients, Barise suggested an approach deeply focused on religious practice. This begins with *Istikharah* (weighing up the situation) where the client seeks guidance from God as to the best course of action once the problems have been identified. With guidance from the social worker, this will permit the client to achieve *Basirah* (faith) where goals and strategies become clear. Part of this process involves envisioning a situation where the problem has been resolved, and the client is once again reconciled with the ideal path. Finally, the social worker and the client should collaborate to achieve *'Azm,* (willpower) to deal with the nature of the problem, what must be done to resolve it and an action plan for this resolution. The social worker should continue working with the client as the action plan is implemented, helping the client resolve unexpected events and other tensions. Barise argued that this approach has significant psycho-spiritual benefits in that the client is highly motivated and feels empowered. However, the fortitude of the client is strengthened because the client believes that, ultimately, God is supporting the endeavour.

Next comes *'Amal* (the action phase) (Barise 2003a). At this juncture, the social worker supports the client, as does God, but ultimately, it is the responsibility of the client to bring about the necessary change. *Muhsabah* (evaluation) is both formative and summative. Barise contends that the reflection on whether goals have been reached and strategies successfully applied is akin to the evaluation process in mainstream Western social work with one important difference: there is no distinction between the temporal and spiritual elements of the intervention. Indeed, he identified two pervasive processes that operate throughout the social work intervention, both of them rooted in religious practice. *Isti'aanahor* relates to seeking God's help to achieve change. The devout client would view God as the ultimate

source of assistance, with all external players, including the social workers involved, no more than instruments of God. *Muraqabahor r*efers to a self-monitoring process where clients are honest with themselves in the face of God. The social worker should strive to encourage honest self-evaluation, as it can be an exceptionally valuable tool. Indeed, this is often lacking in social work clients in general and involuntary clients in particular.

Some areas of Barise's model fit relatively well with established social practice methods across the world but, as mentioned before, the pervasive presence of religion in the model is clearly at odds with the fundamental precepts of Western social work practice. Nevertheless, it could be argued that an authentic localised social work practice in an Islamic country should adopt something akin to the Barise model. It might be possible to sustain this argument when the country involved has an overwhelming number of (devout) Muslims. In a country such as the UAE, which is multicultural by Middle Eastern standards and w the population is less uniformly devout than in some other Muslim countries, adopting this model as the determinative approach is risky. Abdullah (2015) recognised this fundamental problem but also conceded that the religious dimension is critically important. She proposed an approach based on the Islamic concept of *Fitra* (one's true nature of purity), which she argued is well aligned with the strengths-based approach in social work. Many scholars (e.g. Rooney, 2018; Trotter, 2015) have argued that a strengths-based approach is particularly effective with involuntary clients.

2.18   An adapted strengths-based approach to social work in the UAE

Abdullah (2015) concurred with Barise (2003) that the client's worldview along with the cultural and religious value system is exceptionally important. Indeed, she argued that culturally relevant social work practice is essential in order to achieve successful interventions. She pointed out that, unlike in the West, the practice of helping professions such as social work has not become detached from its spiritual roots and secularised. Abdullah (2014) maintained that Islam is central to personal and communal life in Muslim countries to the extent that it could be argued that nothing is secular, i.e., every aspect of life is deeply laden with religious connotations. In this way, Abdullah focuses on Muslim society as a unified completely rather than on the degree of religious observance of the client. Thus, an Islamic approach is suggested for the UAE with due regard to the fact that it is a multicultural society. Abdullah (2015) believed that all Muslims would benefit from this approach, as would the majority of non-Muslims in the country because the cultural norms

and the legal system are highly Islamic in nature.

Abdullah (2015) therefore proposed a high-level approach to social work with Muslim clients, particularly appropriate for involuntary clients, which aligns the Islamic concept of *Fitra* with the strengths-based approach that is well established within Western social work. *Fitra* relates to the concept of original purity and is often used in the Islamic context to build hope, resilience and motivation (Abdullah, 2015; Bowen at al., 2014). The strengths-based perspective takes a positive view of humankind, proposing that all humans have intrinsic value and typically possess the capability to be resourceful, independent and resilient (Saleeby, 2009; Weick et al., 1989). Saleeby (2009) argued against a paternalistic approach where it is assumed that the client will resist change in favour of an approach that emphasizes the capacity for personal growth, problem-resolution, and strength in adversity. This does not imply that the social worker is not actively involved but rather that the client/practitioner relationship is highly collaborative. The approach relies upon relationship-building, empathy, active listening and an environment that encourages the client to explore areas of strength in addition to the problems faced (Saleeby, 2009). The goal is to make use of these areas of strength in the problem resolution and goal attainment process.

The strengths-based approach has been used extensively in social work settings, particularly with involuntary clients (Abdullah, 2015; Gray, 2011). Some scholars have critiqued the perspective. For example, Gray (2011) argued that it lacks clarity and neoliberal credentials while Staudt et al. (2001) contended that it is closer to a value stance than a model that can be used in practice, raising concerns about integrating too great a focus on strengths with client acceptance of problems faced and the need for change. Nevertheless, Abdullah (2015) concluded that scholars generally acknowledge that the strengths-based approach constitutes a dynamic and positive movement within social work, away from an emphasis on dysfunction towards an emphasis on each person's unique strengths that can facilitate transformation. Indeed, scholars such as Smith (2006) argued that the strengths-based approach is closely aligned to a self-righting mechanism, strengthens inherent survival skills, and is likely to have archetypal, biological origins. Critically, this self-righting mechanism is deeply embedded within cultural identity, meaning that group identity and derived strength from the cultural community strengthen the individual's self-righting mechanism (Smith, 2006). Previous research suggests that the strengths-based perspective is particularly effective in cultures where religion plays an important role (Bell-Tolliver, Burgess & Brock, 2009;

Chazin, Kaplan & Terio, 2000) which is not surprising given that the approach originated in attempts to improve upon traditional counselling methods for minority groups (Smith, 2006). Abdullah (2015) pointed out that not only has the strengths-based approach become a mainstay in social work across the globe but also a highly effective tool for engaging clients from religious backgrounds into an environment that is holistically embedded in its cultural context.

Fitra relates to the concept of one's original purity and is an innate impulse that propels humans towards spiritual growth and overall well-being (Mohamed 1995). At the religious core, the concept relates to following the path set by God and all humans are viewed as having been born into this path. However, individual, social, and environmental circumstances can cause people to deviate from the path (Abdullah, 2015). When *Fitra* is fully self-actualised, the person is on the Divine path. However, deviations from the Divine path exhibit themselves as problems with *Fitra*. One of the great benefits of strengths-based social work with due regard for *Fitra* in Muslim societies is that, whereas many Western approaches focus purely on the client, it makes use of inner and environmental resources (Abdullah, 2015; Hodge & Nadir, 2008). In Islamic societies, these would include immediate family, extended family, community and religious resources, i.e., several people may be involved in the intervention.

Al-Krenawi and Graham (2005) also pursued this theme, arguing that pathologizing clients is counterproductive. They also suggested a holistic, strengths-based approach that makes extensive use of outside resources such as relatives and fully taps into the psychological, spiritual, family and community dimensions of the client. Chaudry and Li (2011) proposed a similar approach that is solution-focused. They suggested a model that focuses on finding solutions embedded in the Islamic worldview and concentrating on strengths. This model uses family, community and religious resources while remaining deeply aware of the Islamic doctrine, norms, and society. Their approach is highly focused on empowerment and context.

Abdullah (2015) proposed that *Fitra* be dynamically used in social work interactions to encourage clients to return to the true path. In this way, issues that have been instrumental in leading to the referral of an involuntary client could be seen as a deviation from the true path of *Fitra.* Thus, by addressing these issues, the client returns to the divinely inspired path of wholeness and authenticity. Although *Fitra* is a religious concept and there is significant religious content in the way it is likely to play out in social work interventions, it is much

more. A strengths-based return to the true path of *Fitra* often involves religious resources, such as clerics and religious texts, but it also involves social and community connections, including family – it is the essence of holistic practice (Abdullah, 2015; Chaudry & Li, 2014). Using *Fitra* in this way may also overcome one of the key barriers facing social workers in Muslim countries, namely client resistance due to the stigmatization of professional social work and psychological services. For example, Al-Darmaki (2003) found that UAE students are reticent to seek professional help apart from medical practitioners, stigma is an important factor, and students resist self-disclosure. There is a strong likelihood that using *Fitra* in its broader sense will facilitate a degree of self-disclosure even though this is difficult outside close family situations.

2.19   Approaches to working with Muslim clients in the UAE

Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) presented a number of approaches that would facilitate social work interventions in the UAE. They did not present a comprehensive model, but their strategies would work well within a strengths-based approach.

2.19.1 Stigma and cultural expectations

Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) echoed the work of other scholars regarding the stigma attached to social work interventions and argued that working towards a non-stigmatizing environment would be most helpful, for example, housing services in a medical setting. Al-Krenwai and Graham warned against mixed gender client/practitioner dyads. They proposed that it is best to involve the family whenever possible and avoid challenging family hierarchies and role patterns.

2.19.2 Relationship-building

Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) raised an exceptionally important point about relationship building in the Arabic context. They pointed out that Arabs value relationships far more than they did value problem-solving. Relationship building is, therefore, central to social work intervention. Durst (1994) pointed out that trust is the essential component in building a relationship in an Arab society, but it cannot be built in situations where there is a very limited degree of intimacy. Relationships are, therefore built upon intimacy and trust, making it difficult to maintain a relatively detached professional distance (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Bowen et al., 2014; Veeran, 2013). Relationship building is therefore critical but also laden with duality and complexity. It is appropriate to go beyond Western levels of intimacy

when the social worker is working with a client of the same gender. In those less than ideal situations where there is a relationship across genders, a high degree of reserve, including very limited eye contact and low levels of intimacy are called for (Durst, 1994; Kizilhan, 2014; Mass & Al-Krenawi, 1994).

2.19.3 The context of social work interventions

In the West, psychological and social work interventions are an extension of the doctrine of individualism where the self-realisation, independence, and freedom of each client is of critical importance (Crabtree, 2008a; Gray et al., 2008; Ragab, 2016). However, as has been discussed above, social work with Arab clients must be conducted in the broader context of the immediate and extended family, the community and even the tribal affiliation. Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) pointed out that an integral element of human development in individualistic Western societies is the process of separation from parents where the individual forms an independent, autonomous identity. However, as Hofstede (1984) pointed out, this process does not occur in collectivistic Arab societies where the individual remains deeply embedded within a collective identity for the complete life span and the family is the focus. In Arab societies, individuals do not live in isolation or within the relative isolation of the nuclear family. Social life is dominated by frequent interactions with close and extended family, decisions are made with the good of the group in mind, and allegiance to the group supersedes personal ambitions (Barakat, 1993; Bowen et al., 2014; Hofstede, 1984).

2.19.4 Incorporating the collective into interventions

Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) maintained that, in Arab societies, the individual could only be viewed through the prism of the collective. In the West, internally driven guilt is often a strong motivator, whereas externally oriented shame is much more powerful in Arab societies. Barakat (1994) explored the advantages and disadvantages of the collectivist orientation in Arab societies. A close affinity to the collective increases the sense of belonging, security, and readily available support when things go wrong, at the expense of a sense of self. When the individual is out of touch with the norms of the group, negative reactions can occur, including isolation and ostracism at the extreme. This provides the social worker with potential leverage but also means that others (outsiders) need to be incorporated into the identification of the problem, the action plan and even the process of intervention. Paradoxically, privacy is highly valued outside the family but almost non-existent within the family. The involvement of the immediate and extended family is particularly critical, raising

potential difficulties for the social worker when issues of family conflict are present. Family members will often be protective and secretive, sometimes challenging the decisions and authority of the social worker (Al-Kranawi & Graham, 2000a, b). Social workers also face the problem of having to build trust and even a degree of intimacy with family members whose level of outcome expectation is often unrealistically high.

2.19.5 Communication patterns

Western approaches to communication are unlikely to achieve much leverage with Arab clients. As much as intimacy and trust are important in building the relationship, communications patterns tend to be formal, restrained and impersonal (Al-Kranawi & Graham, 2000a, b). Arab clients find it very challenging to divulge information to outsiders, i.e., anyone outside the family group, or indeed to discuss problems within the family group to non-family members at all. These clients are often neither expressive nor candid, tending to rely on indirect descriptions of the problem by using a complex system of metaphors and proverbs in conjunction with non-specific, circular arguments (Al-Kranawi & Graham, 2000; Al-Issa, 1990; Bowen et al., 2014). Thus, the social worker needs to adopt a patient, probing and supportive approach rather than becoming highly direct and abrasive. Essentially, the social worker needs to adopt a communication style not dissimilar to that adopted by many clients, avoiding confrontation whenever possible.

2.19.6 Expectations of clients

As discussed above, progress is very difficult to achieve until a strong relationship based on trust has been achieved. Once that point is reached, the expectations of Arab clients are very different to those of clients in Western countries (Al-Kranawi & Graham, 2000; Bowen et al., 2014; Ragab, 2016). The Arab client is likely to view the social worker as akin to a teacher, focusing on explanation and instruction and expecting the social worker to become intimately involved. While short-term, directive interventions seem to work best, clients are often unhappy when timeframes for discussions are too rigid. Arab clients will often expect social workers to provide direction and even solutions (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Thus, the social worker not only has to work on building the relationship but also on finding ways of addressing the problem. Working with a passive client who expects the social worker to resolve the problem can be very demanding, and it could be that building the concept of *Fitra* into the process will greatly facilitate the task of the social worker.

2.19.7 Religion as a component of interventions

In sum, Al-Krenawii and Graham (2000) stressed what has been extensively discussed before: religion and religious practice are likely to be an important factor in the majority of interventions in Arab countries, including the UAE. Indeed, the core of the intervention may be framed in religious terms, for example by using *Fitra* as the primary driver or, perhaps with devout Muslims, using an approach along the lines of that proposed by Barise. In some circumstances, involving clerics and even traditional healers may be appropriate (Al-Krenawu & Graham, 1997; El-Islam, 1994). The appropriate use of religion will be unique to each intervention and rely upon the social worker's judgement. Therefore, social workers should have an in-depth knowledge of the local culture and religious practice.

2.20   Research gap

There is a substantive body of research on involuntary clients emanating from Western countries and focusing on social work practice in those countries. Mature models have emerged from this research, and much work has been done on the empirical validation of these models, not least the work done daily by practitioners as the models are applied and refined in the real world. A sign of the maturity of research on involuntary clients has been the emergence of integrated and best-practice models, which build upon work over many decades. Trotter's (2015) best practice model is an excellent example of one that draws widely on the breadth of research available, making extensive use of the dynamic hybrid model, which in turn dynamically incorporates elements of the social conflict, motivational congruence, and solution-focused models. While all the earlier models addressed particular aspects of working with involuntary clients, empirical evidence suggests that none were sufficiently comprehensive. Although working with involuntary clients remains a major challenge for social workers, empirical evidence suggests that integrated models of a dynamic nature, drawing from elements of other models as appropriate, offer the best way forward.

There is a very limited body of research into social work in general in Muslim and Middle Eastern countries, including the UAE. Of even greater consequence, research into social work practice with involuntary clients is virtually non-existent in these contexts. In the UAE, work with involuntary clients has focused on the loose and haphazard adaptation of Western models to take into account some aspects of local culture. Few, if any, formalised procedures exist for managing involuntary clients. As is the case in many Middle Eastern countries, the

UAE is undergoing fundamental societal and social re-alignment. These forces of social disruption have led to a situation where there is great pressure on social services to deal with rapidly increasing numbers of involuntary clients. Therefore, there is not only a gap in the literature in this particular context but also a gap that needs to be urgently addressed in the short term.

There is a strong consensus among scholars that social work must be contextualised within the culture and worldview, extending to culturally appropriate interventions in multicultural Western societies. Nevertheless, Western theories and models continue to dominate across the world, including the UAE. While the overwhelming majority of Western academics advocate the localisation of practice and the deep consideration of local culture, there is a strong current in the research, which argues that this must be done within the broader context of the values inherent in the theories and models developed in the West. However, the research often does not fully take into account the fact that many societies outside the West have value systems that are fundamentally different and even antithetical to the value systems that are prevalent in the West. Previous research from Western researchers has not adequately addressed this fundamental tension. Some scholars have argued that practice and theory must be localised, but the core (Western) values must be retained as a matter of principle, ignoring the reality that there can be no localisation of practice in such circumstances. A few scholars, including some working in the Middle East, have proposed unconvincing 'magic bullet' approaches that would permit social work practice aligning two worldviews that are diametrically opposed in several key areas, most notably the sacred and secular dimensions.

A growing number of academics based in the Middle East and the UAE have a much more realistic, if sometimes overly messianic, view of the situation. They call for an authentic, localised practice for Arab countries, including the UAE, deeply embedded in the prevalent cultural and religious practices. These researchers convincingly argue that those who call for core Western values to be retained in all social work contexts are merely extending the hegemonic practices of the past where Western values and practices have been imposed willy-nilly in cultural contexts where they have not been suitable. The scholars point to decades of social work education in the UAE that has been wholly based on Western models and has paid scant attention to local culture. As much as the calls are compelling by scholars in the UAE for a localised, culturally appropriate practice, they do tend to discount the fact that the UAE is undergoing fundamental societal change and is becoming more

'Westernised'. They also do not sufficiently acknowledge the extent to which the UAE is a multicultural society where a single Islamic approach might not be appropriate for all clients. Nevertheless, research supports the contention that a significant majority of involuntary clients in the UAE will respond best to social work practices that are deeply embedded in UAE culture and religious practice.

Given that very little work has been done on the management of involuntary clients in the UAE, the research gap is very large, almost a 'greenfield' situation. This study will focus on a best practice model for dealing with the typical client seen by social services in the UAE, permitting subsequent research to examine practice with involuntary clients in the unique multicultural context of the UAE. Paradoxically, while social workers in Western countries work to adopt Western approaches to cater for those with different worldviews living in Western societies, countries like the UAE might in due course need to adapt their localised models back into Western approaches when managing specific groups of clients. Nevertheless, this study responds to the call from UAE scholars for localised, authentic social work practice, and this is the point of departure.

2.21   Chapter summary

This literature review has focused on previous research on the management of involuntary clients in Western countries and, in the absence of specific research on involuntary clients in the Middle East and the UAE, social work practice in this context. The meaning of 'involuntary clients' has been explored, as have the difficulties surrounding interventions with these clients and four models for managing involuntary clients that have emerged from decades of focused research: the social conflict, motivational congruence, solution-focused and dynamic hybrid models. The review includes an examination of barriers to working with involuntary clients alongside techniques to address those barriers, culminating in Trotter's best practice model for managing involuntary clients.

The researcher examined in some depth the strong arguments that Western social work in general, and by extension, approach to managing involuntary clients, are often not applicable in the Middle East or the UAE. Many Middle Eastern scholars have argued that the imposition of Western values in social work practice is nothing short of colonialism and the overwhelming majority have called for an authentic, localised practice. The fundamental value differences between Western and Islamic societies have been explored. While some

elements of practice in the West may be adapted for use in the UAE, others are unsuitable. The UAE is a society rooted in a religious and collectivist identity rather than an individualist and secular one. Religion is fundamentally and inextricably woven into everyday life, and the collective is more important than the individual is. The literature suggests that social work practice in general and practice with involuntary clients, in particular, must take into account social and cultural realities, focusing on a strengths-based approach firmly rooted in religious and cultural practices. Some of the specifics of such localised practices have been outlined.

In the following chapter, the methodology used to conduct the research is presented. The details of the qualitative stages of the study are discussed, and justification is provided for the methodology selected for this study's objective.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Chapter overview

In the previous chapter, a critical analysis of the literature on the process of engagement was presented. This process is a central factor of every therapeutic relationship. Specific attention was given to the engagement process with involuntary clients. The review identified the gaps and important areas to be discussed in this study. This chapter outlines the research methodology that was used to collect and analyse data to try to answer the research problem that this thesis addresses. The discussion starts with a brief overview of the research philosophy and methodological paradigm of the study, followed by an outline of the methodologies used in the different phases of the study, with their justifications. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and a chapter summary. Hence, the chapter follows the sequence illustrated in figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1: Methodological sequence

Source: Developed for this study

3.2   Aims of the research

1. *Grounded on the research questions developed in this study, the following are the aims of the research:*

2. *RO1: To identify social workers' current and future strategies to engage with involuntary clients.*

3. *RO2: To ascertain the experience and challenges being faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients.*

4. *RO3: To determine culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies for dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE.*

3.3   Philosophical perspective

A philosophical perspective for a program of research provides the ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches underlying the research. The research revolves around philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), theoretical assumptions about what is known (epistemology), and the approaches, assumptions and techniques peculiar to this specific study (methodology) (Creswell, Clark, Hanson & Morales, 2007). A philosophical perspective is fundamental to decisions regarding approaches to research and methods used within research and requires further explanation (Crotty 1998). Four research paradigms dominate namely positivism; constructivism, critical theory and realism (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Four key research paradigms

Element	Positivism	Constructivism	Critical Theory	Realism
Ontology	Reality has a tangible existence and is apprehensible	There are multiple realities, all of them the product of individual sense-making.	Reality is shaped by social, economic, ethnic, political, cultural, and gender values, crystallised over time	Objective reality exists, but the perception of reality is imperfect and probabilistic.
Epistemology	Findings represent a 'true' reflection of objective reality, external to the researcher.	Findings are constructed – the researcher is intimately involved in the research, and the results reflect the meaning attached to the work by the researcher.	Findings are mediated by values.	Findings may reflect objective reality, but researcher bias is acknowledged. Multiple approaches used to confirm research, e.g. triangulation.
Methodology	Revolves around testing, theory, model, hypotheses. Generally quantitative.	In-depth unstructured interviews, participant observation, action research, and grounded theory research	Action research and participant observation	Usually, qualitative methods such as case studies, focus groups and convergent interviews

Adopted from Guba and Lincoln (1994, p109)

3.4 Research ontology and epistemology

Research is typically conducted within a framework or paradigm. A paradigm revolves around assumptions about the nature of truth (ontology) and what constitutes knowledge (epistemology). Ontology and epistemology are branches of the sub-discipline of philosophy called metaphysics. Figure 3.2 explores the interplay of ontology and epistemology under the broader umbrella of metaphysics.
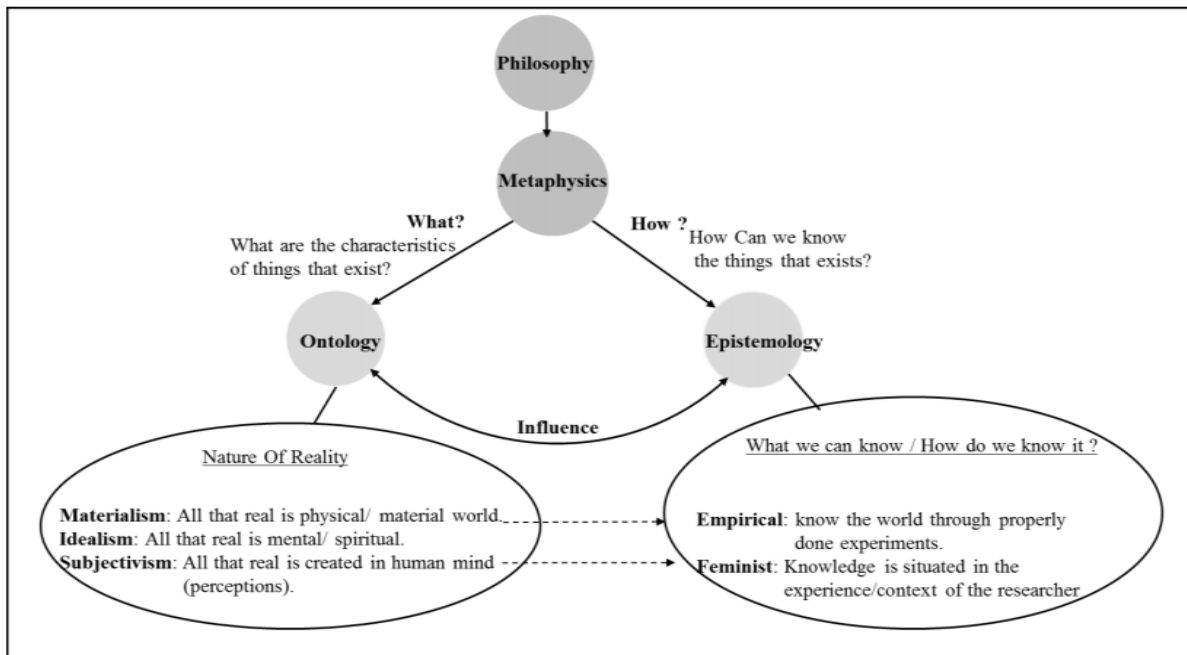
Figure 3.2: Ontology vs epistemology

Source: Adapted from Willis (2007 pp. 9-10)

The primary concern of ontology is the nature of reality. By contrast, the domain of epistemology revolves around the extent to which reality can be known and ways for achieving this. The three most important conceptual branches of ontology are materialism, idealism and subjectivism. Materialism focuses on the material world and physical nature of everything that is classified as 'real'. By contrast, idealism proposes that reality resides within the individual, the product of mental processes. Subjectivism is akin to constructivism and draws upon the tents of idealism in that it proposes that an independent physical reality does not exist. Reality is a construct involving the interplay of complex cognitive and perceptual processes within the individual (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

These various conceptual branches of ontology, or positions, greatly influence epistemology. Materialism is associated with an empirical epistemological approach that is quantitative in nature and proposes that the world (external reality) can be known via controlled experiments that are conducted with precision. By contrast, subjectivism is associated with qualitative approaches that seek to capture reality, as individuals perceive it. One example is case studies or in-depth interviews (Flowers, 2009).

A paradigm encompasses theoretical assumptions, precepts, research methodology and guidelines about appropriate research designs and approaches (Willis, 2007). The paradigm

essentially determines the path that the research will take, from conceptualisation to completion (Flowers, 2009). Rubin and Rubin (2001) argued that using the paradigm provides the researcher with:

1. Guidelines on how the research should be conducted.
2. Research methods and procedures.
3. Research standards.

This study was deeply rooted in a specific paradigm, with due regard to the relevant implication for ontology and epistemology. The point of departure of the study was a subjectivist ontology and, in consequence, a constructivist epistemology that relied heavily on qualitative methods. The research was based on the premise that reality is subjective. In this case, reality exists in the experience of social workers while dealing with involuntary clients. The research approach was to focus on the subjective knowledge of social workers via a series of in-depth interviews, permitting participants to share the deep meaning they attach to these interactions. It should be noted that this research could not pretend to be value-free, which is the norm for subjectivist research. The research was impacted by the values and preferences of the researchers as well as those of the participants (Flowers 2009).

3.5   Philosophical foundation

With due regard to the ontological and epistemological considerations discussed above, this research adopts a constructivist paradigm to facilitate a deep understanding of the lived experiences of social workers while dealing with involuntary clients.

Constructivism proposes that different people construct meaning in different ways, even when experiencing the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). Three of the core assumptions of constructivism identified by Crotty are central to this study: (1) Open-ended questions facilitate the sharing of ideas and views, drawing on the deep experiences and meanings constructed by individuals as they experience their world; (2) historical, cultural and social factors are fundamental to the way in which humans engage with the world and (3) the process whereby meaning is generated is social in nature, the product of interaction between human beings. This implies that the research interpretations and findings in qualitative research in general and this study, in particular, are context-specific.

Constructivism is highly appropriate for exploratory research, where in-depth knowledge is of critical importance. Stake (1995, p. 99) argued that, out of all the roles that researchers

play, the role of gatherer and interpreter is central: 'Most contemporary qualitative researchers nourish the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered. The world we know is a particularly human construction'. Stake (1995, p. 99) defines constructivism as a 'belief that knowledge is made up largely of social interpretations rather than awareness of external reality'.

This dissertation's research is based on the interpretations of social workers working with involuntary clients. The study's participants constructed reality based on their individual and shared experiences. How they interacted with and made decisions based on the actions and reactions of involuntary clients is complex, and reflects the constructivist epistemology.

In terms of analysis, the interpretive theoretical perspective provided a framework for understanding the ways those social workers made meaning of the involuntary clients' data they collected and analysed. The interpretive tradition asserts that researchers should begin by examining the context to be studied through actions and inquiry, as opposed to predisposed assumptions. This study was specifically focused on discovering how social workers collected and interpreted their data and how the data guided and informed their programmatic decisions in the UAE organisations where they work.

3.6 Inductive and deductive approach

A research method can be explained as the preparations and measures for the study, which comprise its process. These are founded on broad assumptions and involve the complete methods of gathering, analysing and understanding the data (Saunders et al., 2009). The methods adopted in a specific research study may be deductive, inductive or a blend of both. In this study, both are used, first inductive then deductive.

The inductive method is centred on phenomenology, a philosophy that is focused on the facts that are connected to the instant understanding gained from people's expressions and experiences. Furthermore, it is constructed on the experiences as defined in the phenomena instead of any artificial or physical reasons and explanations concerning the reality (English & English, 2006). As the interpretations begin, an inductive approach is started, which leads to the development of hypotheses and theories during the research (Goddard & Melville, 2004; Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

There are four vital stages in inductive research. Noticing phenomena is the first step, which compresses varied and comprehensive raw data into a summarised arrangement. The second is the investigation of patterns and themes, which then frames the themes for the data important to the study. The third is the drawing together of associations in the data; in other words, setting up clear links among the summarised outcomes resulting from the data and the objectives of the research. Lastly, the researcher develops a model or theory based on the links, which are noticeable in the data (Cavana et al., 2001; Thomas, 2006). Figure 3.3 demonstrates these steps.

A research design that is articulated based on a hypothesis extracted from a preceding theory and the testing of this hypothesis is typical of the deductive approach (Thomas, 2006). The deductive approach is extremely rational. The present study utilises the empirical observations from in-depth interviews to transfer and confirm the conceptual and theoretical framework (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

There are four important stages in deductive research. Firstly, assumptions are inferred from the theory (i.e. further theory is logically reasoned out). Secondly, the researcher is required to express this in operational terms (by formulating hypotheses). Thirdly, these operational terms are articulated in terms of their associations to one another (through collecting and analysing data). Finally, a conclusion is drawn around these relationships and speculations (i.e. the hypothesis is either accepted or rejected) (Cavana et al., 2001; Patton, 2002; Robson, 2002). Figure 3.3 explains these steps.

In certain research studies, both inductive and deductive approaches are utilised to explain phenomena in a more comprehensive way (Thomas, 2006). In this study, to refine the data's flexibility and to explore and assess the themes drawn from the research data, an inductive approach was used (Saunders et al., 2009).
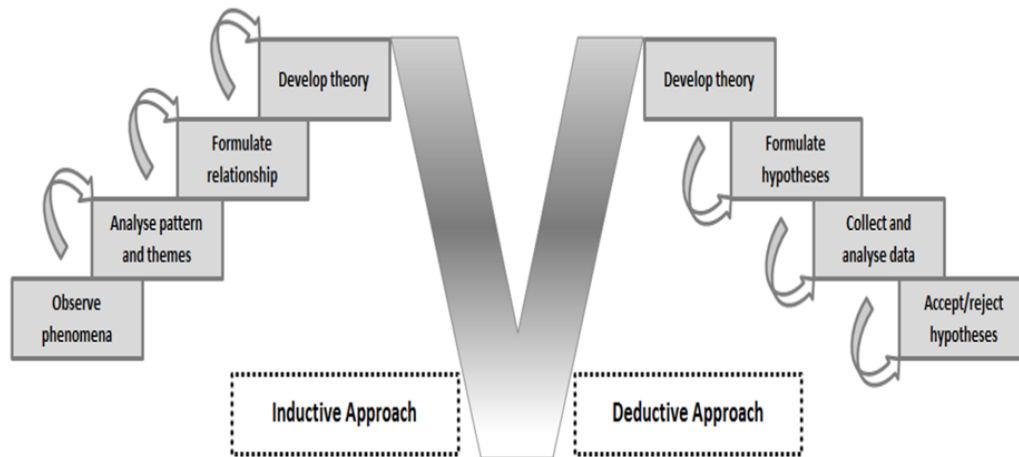
Figure 3.3: Inductive vs deductive approaches

Source: Adapted from Cavana et al. (2001)

3.7   Research methodology: The qualitative approach

The second dimension of a research paradigm is methodology, which may be defined as the 'identification, study, and justification of research methods' (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 589). The fundamental proposition of qualitative research is that social research involving human beings and / or social situations is subjective and meaning-centric (Robson, 2011). Qualitative research focuses on the experiences of individuals and the meanings that are attached to these experiences, in particular, the way in which the individual understands experiences and interprets the social world (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative approach permits participants in a study to address a topic or phenomenon in their own terms rather than within a framework constructed by the researcher (Hollensbe et al., 2008). Qualitative methods are particularly effective in providing insights into sense-making of the world and provide valuable insights via encouraging people to reflect on lived experiences (Luzio & Lemke, 2013). Qualitative approaches are particularly powerful as regards uncovering new variables and relationship, an in-depth analysis of complex phenomena and all the complexities inherent in the broader social context in which participants operate (Birkinshaw et al., 2011).

There are four dominant approaches within qualitative methods: phenomenology, ethnography, case study, and grounded theory. However, there is much more flexibility than is the case with quantitative methods. Indeed, given time and resources, multiple approaches could be used in a study or a qualitative descriptive methodology can be used as an

alternative or adjunct to the more mainstream approaches (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen & Sondergaard, 2009). Qualitative descriptive studies are the least embedded in the theory of all the approaches. These studies seek to examine individuals or groups in their natural settings and provide a comprehensive summary of experience (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). This study sought to capture the deeper meanings embedded in the descriptions provided by the participants in order to inductively identify patterns and develop an understanding of the nature of the socially constructed reality of the participants. Therefore, a qualitative approach was deemed most suitable for the study.

3.8   Overview of the research methodology

Table 3.2: Research phases

Research phases		Activity
Phase 1a	Exploratory stage	Review of existing literature (preparatory stage)
Phase 1b		Qualitative focused interviews designed to provide data for qualitative analysis
Phase 2	Confirmatory stage	Final qualitative focused interviews

This study comprised two main phases, as shown in table 3.2. The first phase (literature review and qualitative focused interviews) was exploratory. The key objective of this phase was to analyse the current literature on the topic of dealing with involuntary clients and to describe and identify the themes or concepts. The second phase, which was the qualitative (confirmatory) stage of the study, was designed to develop, use, and analyse the results of an interview protocol to explore the strategies to deal with involuntary clients in the UAE context.

The exploratory phase is often the leading phase of research design. As Creswell, Fetter, and Ivankova (2004) acknowledge, this step permits the researcher to have a preliminary understanding of the subject being studied. It is an opportunity to identify the topic's significance and gives a rounded view of the nature of the phenomenon. Mason, Augustyn, and King (2010) highlight that the exploratory period is critical for allowing the researcher to diagnose the research problem, develop research objectives, describe the constructs and concepts and prepare hypotheses, also helping the researcher to design the later stages of their study more efficiently. This phase plays an important role in the development of the research tool. For the research instrument's design, the features of the construct must be postulated.

This is critical to how measurement is made following this stage (Cresswell, 2003). Figure 3.4 shows the research phases, the aims of each phase, and the resultant research methods used.
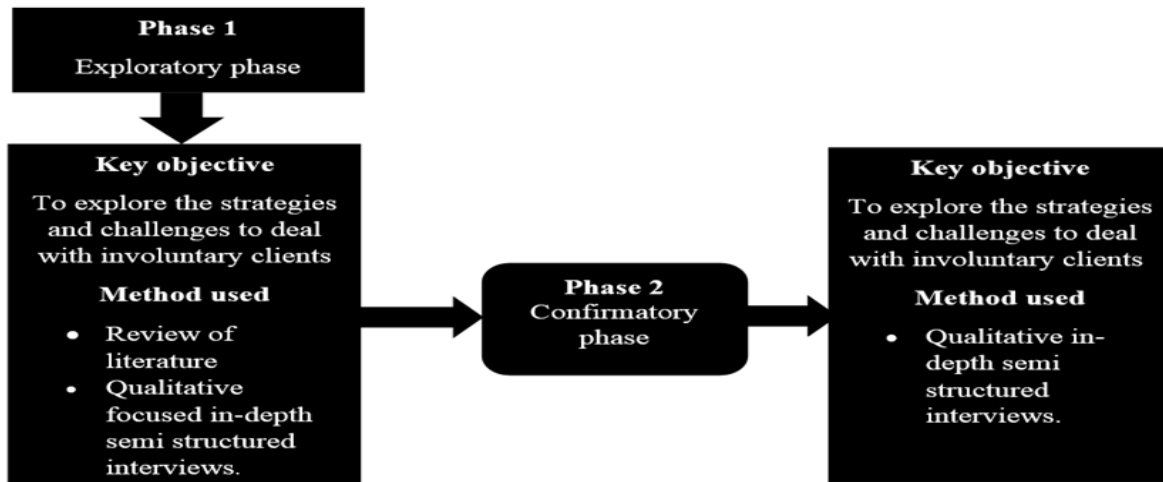
Figure 3.4: Sequential research design of the study; developed by the author

3.9   Exploratory stage

3.9.1   Phase 1a: Literature Review

It is essential to ascertain the research problem, construct theories, and build methodology throughout the initial stage. Academic peer-reviewed articles relating to the study were investigated. Apart from these, articles presented in conference proceedings, books, government publications, in government reports and on websites were considered for further material on research problems (Walsham, 2006).

In carrying out systematic reviews, to achieve correctness and completeness of the attained records, an electronic exploration is essential (Brettle & Long, 2001; Golder et al., 2014). This research followed a recognized search approach for the literature review. Please refer to figure 3.3. For this search plan, various aspects were taken into consideration. (1) The specific keywords that covered the research topic were carefully selected (Golder et al. 2014; Higgins & Green 2011) as the optimal quality of the information is dependent on the preparation of accurate search strategies for each database (Golder et al., 2014; Higgins & Green, 2011). (2) The search plan should comprise two or more electronic databases to increase its depth, and manual searching of the lists of references in the contained papers should be carried out (Ali, 2012; Pucher, 2013; Shea et al., 2007). (3) For achieving optimal

research data in the chapter devoted to the literature review (Chapter 2), the researcher used all the available tools and methods for each database for regulating the results of the search constant with the prerequisite for completeness and detail in information (Aleixandre-Benavent et al., 2011; Ali, 2012; Golder et al., 2014; Higgins & Green, 2011). (4) An additional important phase in the search strategy comprised a review of the title and abstract of the articles (Golder et al., 2014; Higgins & Green, 2011; Pucher, 2013). (5) Lastly, the researcher examined complete texts of certain articles to attain a higher quality for the data (Ali, 2012; Pucher, 2013; Shea et al., 2007).

In this research, an electronic literature search was conducted from July 15, 2015, until May 11, 2016. In total, five strategies were adopted. The first strategy involved the assortment of the exact keywords pertaining to the research topic. The researcher used the AND; OR; NOT; and the truncation symbol * all work in the Web of Science database (Golder et al., 2014; Higgins & Green, 2011). The search terms used to fetch data comprised the following important words: "social work" AND "involuntary clients"; "involuntary clients" AND OR "factors affecting" AND "social workers" OR "involuntary clients"; "challenges faced by social workers in dealing with involuntary clients". These keywords were explored in isolation or in a grouping with others.

The second strategy involved selecting more than two databases to enhance sensitivity (Ali, 2012; Pucher, 2013; Shea et al., 2007). The key databank that the investigator used for the literature review section in this thesis was the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) database and its associated databases. Primarily, the literature review was initiated with the computer-based sources such as databanks comprising the following: Scopus, Business Source Complete, Emerald management e-sources, EBSCO open access journal, SAGE management, and Market line and some government websites. These databanks were selected because they delivered a good volume of accessible articles relating to strategies and challenges in dealing with involuntary clients. The research fields were limited to the research subject for the objective of proofing the databases within which the searches were carried out. Table 3.3 shows evidence on the number of entries and results gathered on various databases and how these results were selected and tapered down. This is just one case of the most frequent keywords described above during the search of pertinent themes. Table 3.3 shows the main databases utilised in the research at the same time displaying all, initial, relevant, and selected results of the research. Some changes in the keywords provided a

multitude of sources, which were all filtered via search options.

Table 3.3: Database search results

1st Strategy	2nd Strategy		3rd Strategy	4th Strategy	5th Strategy
Keywords Selection	Database Selection	All Results	Initial Results	Relevant Results	Selected Results
"Social work" AND "Involuntary clients" AND "Social work challenges" AND "involuntary clients" OR "factors affecting" AND " Dealing with involuntary clients" AND " challenges faced by involuntary clients"	Scopus	85	55	37	25
	SAGE	79	75	44	20
	Emerald e source	199	175	75	60
	Business Source Complete	110	90	45	21
	EBSCO open management	163	101	71	38
Total		**636**	**496**	**272**	**164**

The third strategy was to make optimal use of the tools available in each database to narrow down the research results by selected published year, the field of research, and document type (Aleixandre-Benavent et al., 2011; Ali, 2012; Golder et al., 2014; Higgins & Green, 2011). The first step was to narrow down the number of articles by using the database tools to decrease the research results by selected published year, the field of research, and document type (initial results). For instance, 55 articles in Scopus met the requirement, 75 articles in SAGE, one hundred and 75 articles in EMERALD, 90 articles in Business Source Complete and one hundred and one articles met in EBSCO open management.

The fourth strategy was to check the title and abstract of articles (Ali, 2012; Golder et al., 2014; Higgins & Green, 2011; Pucher, 2013) to confirm that they complement the goals of the research, with results shown in Table 3.3. Thirty-seven articles in Scopus met the criterion, 44 in SAGE, 75 in EMERALD, 45 in Business Source Complete and 71 in EBSCO open management.

The final strategy was to scrutinise the chosen articles in their entirety. This involved checking for methodological rigour in the research methods, authors' details and the result presented in the articles (Ali, 2012; Pucher, 2013). The selections shown in Table 3.3 were then further scrutinised via more detailed analysis. The articles which contained information relevant to this research were then selected for specific inclusion. Scopus produced a final number of twenty articles, SAGE twenty, EMERALD e source 60, Business Source Complete 21 and EBSCO open management 38.

3.9.2 Phase 1b: In-depth interviews

After completing a literature review, focused in-depth interviews were employed to assemble the qualitative data because individual lived experience and thoughts could be captured by an in-depth interview formulated to attain the stated purpose (Carson et al., 2001; Rao & Perry, 2007). This offered the researcher an opportunity to underpin current issues and opinions about the theories and knowledge interrelated to the research (Rao & Perry 2007), to ascertain the problems regarding the research by a technique which was practicable and to deliver stability in information (Rao & Perry, 2003). By executing in-depth interviews, the researcher was able to analyse the interview answers, and the subjectivity of the qualitative method was reduced (Rao & Perry, 2003).

Qualitative inquiries are critical to increasing an understanding of the topic at the initial stages of the research (Sarantakos, 2005). Kvale (1996, pp. 17-18) emphasised the significance of interviews, stating 'If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them?' Hence, to increase an understanding of the importance of the elements being employed in the framework, participants were requested to answer open-ended questions to determine whether the factors they drilled into were essential or whether further adjustment was required. In this study, a further series of interviews were also conducted. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted, and participants were probed (Malhotra et al., 2012) to attain substantial social worker insights. This also helped the researcher to recognize themes and gain information about areas that might not have been predicted (Pfeifer 2000).

3.9.2.1 *Data collection technique*

There are numerous interview techniques, basically comprising face-to-face interviews and telephone or online interviews (Zikmund et al., 2013). Face-to-face interviews are a flexible method consisting of a two-way discussion between the interviewer and participant. One of

their key benefits is the prospect of gaining thorough information from the participant (Zikmund et al., 2013). The data quality attained through telephone discussions or online via Skype has been considered to be equivalent to that gained through face-to-face interviews where participants are eager to give complete and reliable information. The two key advantages that inspire the investigators to use the telephone or online Skype interviews are: (1) the speediness of data collection; (2) the cost of the interview. It has been estimated that such interviews are 25 per cent less expensive than face-to-face interviews (Zikmund et al., 2013).

In this study, the researcher decided to conduct face-to-face interviews to collect the data from the social workers in the UAE. The main motive for choosing this over telephone or Skype interviews was that face-to-face interviews allowed the interviewer to understand the participants' gestures and feelings when sharing their experiences, which is hard to capture during Skype and telephone interviews. Thus, this aided the researcher to record even minute details (Zikmund et al., 2013).

Interviews are particularly well suited to research where the objective is to gather thick descriptions in order to achieve a deep understanding of participants' thought paths and choices (Freeman, 2014; Usunier, 2013). Granot et al., (2012) stated that in-depth interviewing work on the fundamental assumption that the meaning assigned to an experience impacts engagement patterns in that experience. Surveys research cannot capture deeply personal experiences and the meanings assigned to these experiences. Interviewing facilitates the expression of deeply personal feelings, the meanings attached to these, the context which everything occurs and even the opportunity for participants to reflect on their own thoughts and behaviour (Granot et al., 2012).

In-depth interviews were deemed more appropriate for this study than focus groups because focus groups can be subject to group processes and undue influence exerted by small numbers of participants, leaving some effectively voiceless (Andrews & Boyle, 2008; Stokes & Bergin, 2006). In this study, gauging the social workers' experiences is imperative, and this is a sensitive concern, where others' opinions may easily influence individuals' reflections on their attitudes and practices. As the aim was to have participants reconstruct their experiences and the way they are enacted, confidential individual interviews were the best methodological option. The interview protocol was set to the following sequence:

- A screening question to identify the right interview participants
- Challenges and strategies in dealing with involuntary clients
- Experience in dealing with an involuntary client(s)

3.10 Sampling and selection

Sample selection is of crucial importance in qualitative research (Coyne, 1997). In this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is strategic in nature, aiming to achieve as high a level as possible between the research questions and the sampling (Bryman, 2004). The inclusion criterion was that participants are social workers and engaged in dealing with involuntary clients. Participants were interviewed on the bases outlined in the following section.

3.10.1 Sample design

Malhotra et al. (2006) proposed a sampling design process involving five closely interrelated steps, ranging from the initial problem definition to the final presentation of results. These steps are: define the target population, determine the sample frame, select the sampling technique, determine the sample size, and execute the sampling process. Please refer to figure 3.6 below:

Figure 3.5: Five steps in the sampling design process

Source: Adapted from Malhotra (2006) page number missing

3.10.2 Defining the target population

The target population is the 'theoretically defined aggregation of population elements of interest to the researcher, or to which the researcher wishes to generalise findings' (Zikmund et al., 2010). The target population is defined in terms of sampling units, leading to a unit of analysis for this study of social workers from three designated branches in the UAE, namely

Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Gharbia. Male and female social workers were selected, with more than three years' experience of dealing with involuntary clients.

3.10.3 Determining the sampling frame

A sampling frame is a depiction of the elements of the target population (Malhotra, 2006). For this study, it was social workers from three different social community centres in three cities of UAE and residing in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Gharbia. Table 3.4 below highlights the complete sampling frame information for this research.

Table 3.4: Sampling frame

Gender	Experience	Occupation	City	Education level
Male and female	Minimum 3 years and up to 6 years +	Social worker	Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Gharbia	Bachelor and Master's degree

3.10.4 Determine the sample size

In qualitative research, the completeness of the information garnered from transcript analysis has a significant influence on sample size. Completeness of information is also known as saturation (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012), or a situation where little new information is likely to emerge from increasing the sample size. Therefore, the qualities of the interview and participant diversity are more important factors than the sample size (Kerr et al., 2010). Sound (or adequate) sampling is achieved when it can be demonstrated that saturation has been reached, with good depth and breadth of information (Bowen, 2008). The sample size for this study is presented below with a breakdown of those from each city. For each city, saturation was reached when answers to questions that were a repetition of previous answers from other interviewees began to appear.

Table 3.5: Sample size (region and city wise)

City	Number of interviews
Abu Dhabi	7
Al Ain	7
Al Gharbia	7
Total number	21

Source: Developed by the author from interview data

3.11 Development of interview questions and other activities

The protocol for the interview comprises its planning, its introduction, establishing the interview relationship, and maintaining objectivity (Kvale, 1996). Each of these steps is outlined below in more detail. The planning for the interview protocol consisted of defining the required information regarding the research problem. The framework for planning in-depth interviews in this research was developed and adapted from various sources (Carson et al., 2001).

The introduction was developed to notify the particular participants about the aim of the interview. The shortlisted participants were approached by telephone and email. During these conversations, the investigator and participants became more familiar with each other, and the researcher provided a brief explanation of the research topic and the research's main purpose. Also mentioned was the type of information required from the participants, why they were chosen, and what kind of participation was required (Carson et al., 2001). Conducting the qualitative interviews, ethical clearance was obtained through the University of Southern Queensland Higher Research Ethics Committee at Toowoomba, with the approval number **H17REA106** (see Appendix B). Once the introduction was completed, the researcher made sure that the participants went through the participation information sheet and signed the consent form (see Appendix C and D).

The participation information sheet and consent form provided the participants with information about the research topic, the rights of interviewees, and contact details of the researcher. Confidentiality of the respondents' information was also emphasised (Rao & Perry, 2007). Furthermore, the selected interview participants were notified that they were permitted to withdraw their consent to interview at any point of time during the interview process (Johnson, 2001). Participants were also informed that the decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, would not affect the participant's treatment and relationship with the researcher.

3.12 Establishing and managing contact with the interviewees

The interview procedure was cautiously and properly executed and consisted of the time setting. An introductory question, following up on exact problems, probing questions, and the conclusion of the interview (Gaskell, 2000; Rao & Perry, 2007) at which point the interviewer acknowledged the participants for their time and the information shared. Each of these steps will be mentioned briefly next.

For the smoothness of the interview process, the researcher made sure to secure the meeting place and get confirmation from the participants beforehand about the nominated place and time (Carson et al., 2001; Rao & Perry, 2007). The selected participants were contacted around a week prior to the interview, and a follow-up call was then given to confirm that they had received it. Appropriate interview time was decided by the researcher with each participant (Carson et al., 2001). The researcher made sure that there are adequate space and privacy and also the audio recorder in order the day prior to the finalized interview date. This initial formation of interaction and setting is vital for the interview members (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). The in-depth interviews took between 20 to 30 minutes. All 21 interviews were conducted face-to-face.

The second step was for the researcher to start with a formal introduction by going through the research purpose and read the agreement form out to the participant in order to confirm the interviewee wished to contribute, recording the answers to fulfil the research purpose.

The third part of the process was the gathering of descriptive questions followed by open-ended questions pertaining to participants' experience in dealing with involuntary clients (please refer to Appendix C). The opening questions were articulated for the respondents in order to obtain responses which were representative of their thoughts about the research topic (Carson et al., 2001). Every interview began by a screening question linked to the research topic such as: "from which branch are you and since when have you been dealing with involuntary clients" and "what is the nature of your work with involuntary clients?" followed by "please explain". The open-ended questions provide great benefit to the interviewer. They enabled the interviewees to share their experiences and ideas without being fearful of giving improper data or feeling unprepared (Nair & Riege, 1995). These types of questions permitted the researcher to become involved with the participants and develop a relationship. The open-ended questions allowed the interviewer to build up a contextual understanding of the information the respondents had to offer so that later, questions that are more direct could be developed which might uncover specific or more complex issues (Carson et al., 2001).

Further, the interview protocol also involved probing questions (Carson et al., 2001). These kinds of inquiries were mandatory to reach the reasoning connected to the participants' replies or to inspire participants to share the information in much detail. The total number of probing questions increased as more information was collected. The interview questions had some probing questions to provoke further details about factors such as "hostile client

behaviour when a client becomes violent and aggressive". In addition, the researcher used the prompting questions during the interview process, providing hints to the participants to answer in detail about, for instance, good usage of teamwork, seeking help from colleagues etc.

The final step of the interview process was to conclude it. The interviewer acknowledged the participants for their contribution and guaranteed the confidentiality of their interview data. In addition, the researcher informed them that they could request a copy of the analysis on their data once it became accessible (Rao & Perry, 2000).

3.12.1 Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted in Abu Dhabi (UAE) in December 2017 with the objective of testing the semi-structured interview questions. The participants for this were also selected by purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique (Etikan et al., 2016). Before the pre-test, the respondents were provided with a participation information sheet and consent form, which needed to be signed, confirming that they had no objections to the interviews being audio recorded. These audio files were transferred from the recording device and saved in the researcher's computer in MP3 format.

Seven people were interviewed for the pre-test. After the seventh interview, data saturation had been reached, and the researcher considered that he had adequate input from respondents to adjust the interview questions to be used in the qualitative phase of the study. All seven interviews were conducted in the participants' respective workplace branches. The average time to complete them was around 25 minutes.

During the pre-test interview, a number of issues became evident. Once the first interview was completed, on reflection of how it had progressed it was observed that the question related to the challenges in dealing with involuntary clients needed to be explained in more depth to the participants as this clarity was important to move forward. This approach was adopted from the second interview, onwards. Other issues faced during the pre-test interview were addressed by the researcher adding clear prompting and probing questions, especially when the researcher was posing questions about the key challenges and experiences. After reviewing these, the researcher again thoroughly checked the interview questions again, revised the probing and prompting questions to enhance clarity and a smooth progression of questions so that participants would not encounter issues when responding to the questions in

the main in-depth interview phase of the study.

3.13   Phase 2: Confirmatory phase

3.13.1 Main qualitative focused interviews

Data collection took place in the month of January 2018. As mentioned above, the researcher covered three UAE cities, namely, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia for data collection (please see figure 3.6). As these are key UAE cities, their selection ensured the generalizability of the research outcome (Gobo, 2008). The average interview time was still 25 minutes. The total number of interviews was 21, wherein 14 of the respondents were males, and seven were females.

As discussed by Minichielo et al. (1999), interviews must follow a calm rather than an invasive style. The interviewer focused on providing a degree of structure to each interview, thereby improving consistency and significance while establishing an informal interview climate that motivated participants to divulge their perceptions and thoughts. These semi-structured questions facilitated pace and flow without detracting from a strong focus on the topic at hand. Each interview was audio recorded using a cell phone recorder, and the interview files were kept in MP3 format on a computer hard drive.

A sufficient number of participants ensured a variety of viewpoints and a wide range of responses. Participants were interviewed until it became apparent that minimal incremental advantage could be gained from further interviews as a convergence of responses began to appear. Malterud et al. (2016) proposition held firm in this study i.e. the more information a particular participant is able to provide, the lower is the number of participants needed. The decision to terminate an interview aligned with Bowen's (2008) position that data saturation involves adding new participants until data replication and redundancy suggest that the data set is approaching a complete state. In other words, saturation is reached within each city through different numbers of interviews when the researcher gathers data to the point of diminishing returns when nothing new is being added. Since the research has incorporated three UAE cities, the sample size, based on the saturation point determination was reached at, 21 with participants comprise of 14 males and 7 females.

Figure 3.6: Map of UAE (United Arab Emirates)

3.13.2 Interview transcript translation

Interview participants were allowed to use Arabic (the national language of the UAE) as a mode of communication. This helped them to express their views and experiences in a much more comfortable way. However, this arrangement also created a challenge for the researcher to transcribe the data. For this, the researcher hired a professional translator to ensure that the meaning of the responses was not distorted or lost. As per Choi (2012), it is important to highlight the purpose of the study to the translator to ensure accurate translation of the interviews, an imperative step before the actual translation begins. Thus, the researcher had a meeting with the translator and provided him with key information regarding the research project before he initiated the translation.

3.14 Qualitative analysis technique

In this research, the in-depth interview data were analysed using the thematic content analysis method and with Leximancer software Version 4.5.

3.14.1 Thematic content analysis

Thematic content analysis (TCA) is a research technique for understanding the content of text data by categorizing it systematically in order to carry out coding for the identification of patterns or themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Patton (2002) defined this analysis method as a meaningful data reduction attempt, which considers a quantity of qualitative data and tries to recognize steady patterns and interpretations. TCA is a process of analysis that creates evidence for supporting the analysed content of research work and investigates its results (Friman & Edvardsson, 2003). It is both a composed and transparent data processing method.

The composed content is categorized into an assortment of groupings as per the chosen criteria, such that the frequency of words or terms ascertains their importance to the research topic (Friman & Edvardsson, 2003). TCA was commenced as an initial step in the research analysis. It comprised three types of functions: data preparation, data coding and data interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

3.14.2 Data interpretation

The final stage of the data analysis focused on coalescing the analytical codes and categories into broader themes, testing these themes against the core premise of the study. The emergent themes were the foundations of the findings and conclusions presented later. Triangulation was performed using a variety of approaches, including validation of responses against the previous literature; using objective auditors such as the research supervisors to review the findings and their consistency, and cross-validation of responses. Once the data was interpreted, the data structure was developed on the basis of 1st order concepts and 2nd order themes (details about these are mentioned in Chapter 4). This data structure not only permitted the researcher to arrange the data into a practical visual representation but it also graphically illustrated how the researcher progressed from the raw data to the final content-rich themes in conducting the analyses.

3.14.3 Leximancer software analysis

Qualitative data can be analysed by using a number of computer programs such as Leximancer and Nvivo (Verreynne, Parker & Wilson, 2011). The key objective of these programs is to arrange the qualitative data efficiently and in a professional manner (Verreynne, Parker & Wilson, 2011), which they do by establishing visual presentations that help the researcher to analyse the data. This also permits the researcher to comprehend the thematic categories' linkages clearly (Verreynne, Parker & Wilson, 2011).

Once the TCA was manually completed, data were evaluated for the second time using Leximancer software Version 4.5 to enhance the qualitative findings' reliability (Middleton, Liesch & Steen, 2011; Smith & Humphreys, 2006). Leximancer is qualitative software that undertakes the conceptual analysis of text information. It has the capability to highlight ideas in the text data and conveys important points, which require the reader's attention (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith, 2007). The software has the capability to detect key terms in the text by means of word frequency and co-occurrence usage (Stockwell et al., 2009; Verreynne et al.,

2011). It delivers a theoretical map that demonstrates the key ideas established within the text and clusters these concepts into themes. This offers a 'holistic view' of the gathered data (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith, 2007). There are four stages followed by Leximancer software to process the data: load the data, generate the concept seeds, generate the thesaurus, and run the project. Each of these stages will be discussed next.

3.14.3.1 Loading the data

Prior to loading the data, the researcher selected the qualitative interview transcripts in Word document format that needed to be processed. Once the data were loaded into the software, the software selected and processed the files concurrently. The combined transcriptions obtained from the 21 participants have entered into the system accordingly.

3.14.3.2 Generating the concept seeds

This stage comprised two different processes. The first, recognized as setting the text handling or text processing choices, was used for converting raw data into a preparation suitable for processing, which consisted of the marking out of sentences and boundaries of paragraphs (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith, 2007). For this study, the sentence boundaries were fixed to automatic, and the number of names and sentences in each block was set to '2 normal' for all analyses. In the second procedure, concept seeds identification, the software automatically extracted key notions from the text, which were simple keywords that repeatedly occurred in the text. This permitted the software to explore numerous keywords and ideas that the manual TCA may not have recognized.

3.14.3.3 Generating the thesaurus of related words

There were two different phases in this stage. In the first phase, known as concept seed editing, the researcher could remove unrelated concepts, combine likely concepts or add additional concepts that the software may not have documented (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith, 2007). For this research, the inclusion of concepts through this stage was fascinating because of the structural method followed in the analysis and the investigator's experience and opinions. The second phase is known as the concept learning setting or the thesaurus-setting phase, where concepts, which were essentially sets of words, were moved as a whole throughout the document (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith, 2007). This step recognized and collected words that were related to the key terms determined in the preceding stages of the software.

3.14.3.4 Running the project

This stage consisted of three different processes. The first is known as compound concept editing. The second is called developing the classification settings (also known as the concept coding settings). Using this method, the investigator could match the manual coding in the previously conducted TCA. When the concepts' descriptions were learned, each block of text was tagged with the names of the concepts contained in it (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith, 2007). The final stage is known as making output choices (also known as project output settings). In this stage, the researcher generated a type of map. For this study, a topical network map type was selected. A topical map, by comparison with a social map, is more spread out, highlighting the co-occurrence among items. It tends to highlight differences and direct associations and is best for discriminant analysis. The topical map is also much more constant for highly linked entities, such as topics.

3.14.3.5 Concept map

The concept mapping was the last process of the software. These maps developed and illustrated the relationships among the concepts, both graphically and statistically. The combined usage of both Leximancer and TCA described the themes and concepts and collected the magnitudes of the content (Middleton et al., 2011; Smith & Humphreys, 2006). It also gave further insight into the particular phenomena of interest, the strategies behind dealing with involuntary clients in three cities of UAE.

3.14.3.6 Data cleaning process in Leximancer

Before loading text interview data in Leximancer, the researcher cleaned the data by deleting all interview questions and other probing questions asked during interview sessions so that words frequently used in the interview session do not appear as leading concepts. To explore the main themes and concepts, the researcher separated answers relating to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 from the master transcript files and created 21 separate files. A single Leximancer file was created, inserting all these 21 separate files. Thus, the data cleaning process was rigorously followed to develop the appropriate findings from Leximancer.

3.15   Establishing reliability and validity

Thoroughness in qualitative research involves a commitment to detailed planning and cautious attention to the phenomenon under investigation in order to render fruitful, beneficial results. This research focuses on a direct response to managing reliability and validity in qualitative studies as proposed by De Cuir-Gunby, Marshall & McCulloch (2011).

3.15.1 Trustworthiness

To increase the trustworthiness (that is, the credibility) of the study's findings, (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012), the researcher employed strategies suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) by undertaking the following tasks:

1. Participants were sent a transcript of their responses for self-validation, comment, and final approval. (Shenton, 2004).
2. Requested peers and colleagues (3 domain experts) to review the findings (Horsburgh, 2003).
3. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study findings developed an audit track (Shenton, 2004) that is a comprehensive clarification of the methods of data collection and analysis as well as decision-making procedures as the study progressed.

In addition to triangulation, member checks, peer review, an audit trail, and thick, rich description, Merriam (2002) recommends that credible and trustworthy researchers followed these guidelines:

a) *Reflixivity*

Engaging in critical self-reflection by the researcher regarding assumptions, biases, and their relationship to the study, which may affect the investigation.

b) *Engagemnet*

Allowing for adequate time to collect data, such that it becomes saturated.

c) *Maximum variation*
Purposefully seeking variation or diversity in sample selection to allow for a greater range of application of the findings by consumers of the research.

Finally, the researcher's self-reflexivity, which necessitates an ability to evaluate one`s positionality and impact on the research process, is believed to encourage more rigorous research and higher ethical standards during the interview process (Seidman 2013). Moreover, the exercise of self-reflexivity allows readers to evaluate the study in terms of the "quality, accuracy, and usefulness of the research outcomes (Hosking & Plunt 2010). Keeping in view the interviewer's biasness, the aspect of self-reflexivity is used by the researcher before initiating the interview process and to further ensure the trustworthiness of the data. While performing the self-reflexivity, the researcher himself addressed the concepts related to interview questions on a piece of paper and made sure that these

questions must not arrive during the interview process. Hence, in this way interview's biasness was controlled. Also, requested the domain experts to conduct the interviews ensuring if the researcher and domain experts are reaching at the same conclusion. Lastly, engaged the multiple researchers for the analysis of transcriptions to ensure if the results are same. With these techniques, researcher ensured the interviewers biasness.

3.16   Ethical considerations

There are ethics and standards linked to the research of any field, which need to be followed by every single researcher. The research can only be acknowledged if all moral principles are adhered to throughout conducting the study or analysing the research outcomes. For example, the privacy of participants must be preserved (Cavana et al., 2001) and the researcher cannot disclose the individuality of a participant to his/her organisation (Cooper & Emory, 1995).

The Higher Research Ethics Committee (HREC gives) detailed guidelines on ethical standards to all researchers so that all potential ethical issues can be avoided during research. This research complies with such ethical obligations and follows the guidelines of the HREC at the USQ. These rules about ethics were applied to all documents involved in the research: the consent form (for interviews); participation information sheet (for interviews); interview instrument and confirmation letter. These were all submitted to the HREC at USQ before initiating this research. To seek the HREC's approval, the researcher made all the necessary adjustments following every comment received from it and gave in-depth details to clarify these modifications. After that, the HREC reviewed the researcher's solutions to their concerns and gave approval to this research, with the approval number of **H17REA106** (see Appendix A).

The participant information sheets were given to the participants after getting approval from the HREC at USQ. This information shared the details and purpose of the research with participants. It was also disclosed that participation would be voluntary. The participants were informed that they had the right to exit from being part of the research at any time and they were asked to contact the researcher and the supervision team for questions on their own (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002).

A consent form was distributed among participants to get their approval and their willingness to participate in this research. This gave participants the right to agree or disagree with engaging in this research. The consent form was first completed to move towards initiating

research and for the collection of participants' inputs and data. All participants were given full opportunity to read the details and purpose of the research before becoming voluntary participants in it.

3.17 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the research methodology and study design, exploring the inter-dependencies between research philosophy, objectives, aims and purpose. The methodology of this study adheres strongly to an interpretive / constructivist approach. The study was based on a descriptive qualitative approach and utilised in-depth semi-structured interviews to address the research questions. Ethical issues were explored in detail, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, deception, and protection from potentially adverse effects of participation. Detailed attention was given to a description of applicable data collection and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter overview

In the preceding chapter, the research methodology used to gather and analyze data to answer this thesis's research questions were discussed. In this chapter, the data analysis and findings of the exploratory stage of the research are presented. The purpose of this qualitative analysis was to identify the strategies and challenges facing social workers in the UAE when working with involuntary clients and to explore if there is a difference in strategies within different social service centres. This exploratory study involved 21 in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with social workers, both males and females, employed at social service centres in three UAE cities: Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. Participants were selected through a sampling frame, discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first concerns is the demographic profile of social workers in the UAE. The second describes the methods used to determine the qualitative interview findings via thematic content analysis and Leximancer software. The third comprises the explanation and analysis of themes emerging from qualitative interview findings. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a summary. Figure 4.1 shows the geographical location of the targeted cities: Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia.

Figure 4.1: Targeted cities for data collection

4.2 Demographic profile of participants

Spread evenly across the three cities, 21 interviews (with 14 males and 7 females) were conducted to discover the respondents' strategies and challenges while dealing with involuntary clients. Participants were interviewed at their respective social service centres. The key criterion in selecting participants was that they were social workers and dealt with involuntary clients. The 36 to 45 age group was the largest cohort with nearly half of the participants (48 per cent). With regard to their highest academic qualifications, most had Bachelor degrees (62 per cent), and a third had Master's Degree as well (33 per cent). However, only one participant, (roughly 4 per cent), had a PhD Table 4.1 below illustrates the demographic profile of participants.

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of participants

Element	Characteristics	No. of participants	Percentage response
Gender	Male	14	67
	Female	07	33
Cities	Abu Dhabi	07	33
	Al Ain	07	33
	Al Gharbia	07	33
Work experience	0 – 3 years	03	14
	4 – 5 years	08	38
	5 – 10 years	10	48
Education	Bachelors (Undergraduate)	13	62
	Masters (Postgraduate)	07	33
	PhD.	01	04
Age bracket	22 – 35	06	28
	36 – 45	10	48
	45 +	05	24

4.3 Methods used to determine qualitative results findings

An in-depth analysis was conducted using inductive reasoning methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The main reason for choosing inductive reasoning for the analysis was because this approach is centred on phenomenology, a philosophy which is dedicated to the facts that are related to the learning of immediate understanding achieved from individuals' expressions and experiences. Besides, the analysis is built on immediate experiences as described in the phenomena instead of any simulated motives and second-level clarifications regarding reality (English & English, 2006). To perform the analysis, the transcribed interviews were imported

from MS Excel, and a dedicated section was created for each question. Inductive reasoning was then applied to each response (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) in order to detect the leading and less dominant themes. Each response was categorized and coded individually. Answers to certain questions were similar for most participants, while others were unique. The following analytical methods were used:

4.3.1   Thematic content analysis

Once the interview transcripts of the 21 interviewees were completed and compiled, the answers provided by the interviewed social workers were subjected to a qualitative or thematic analysis process.

Thematic content analysis (TCA) is a research technique for understanding the content of text data by categorizing it systematically in order to carry out the coding and identification of patterns or themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Patton (2002) defined this analysis method as a meaningful data reduction attempt, which considers a quantity of qualitative data and tries to recognize steady patterns and interpretations. TCA is a process of analysis that creates evidence for supporting the analysed content of research work and investigates its results (Friman & Edvardsson, 2003). It consists of both composed and transparent data processing methods. In this method, the composed content is categorized into an assortment of groupings as per the chosen criteria, such that the frequency of words or terms ascertains their importance to the research topic (Friman & Edvardsson, 2003). TCA was commenced as a first step in the research analysis. It comprised three types of activities: data preparation, data coding, and data interpretation (Creswell, 2003).

First, the transcripts were read a few times thoroughly in order to obtain an understanding of the discussions that took place as well as the context provided by the interviewed social workers. Then, the transcripts were separated out one by one. Each transcript was then re-read, with the research questions in mind. Interesting or relevant sections were highlighted at this time. This process was carried out thoroughly for each transcript. Following this, using the highlighted sections in each transcript, themes were found. Subsequently, relevant sub-themes under each of the themes were found.

These themes and sub-themes were then arranged in tables alongside their relevant quotes. This them analysis of the qualitative data was performed along the lines of the methods prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006) who considered thematic analysis as foundational for

qualitative research. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

This manual analysis consisted of six phases, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- Familiarization with the data
- Generating initial codes
- Searching for themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes
- Producing the report

4.3.2 Data cleaning process in Leximancer

Before loading the interview text data into Leximancer, the researcher cleaned the data by deleting all interview questions and other probing questions asked during interview sessions so that words frequently used in the interview session do not take the place of leading concepts. To explore leading themes and concepts, the researcher separated answers relating to RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 from the master transcript files and created 21 separate files. A single Leximancer file was created, inserting all 21 files. Thus, the data cleaning process was rigorously followed to develop the appropriate findings from Leximancer.

4.3.3 Leximancer software analysis

Qualitative data can be analyzed by using a number of computer programs such as Leximancer and Nvivo (Verreynne, Parker & Wilson, 2011). The key objective of these programs is to arrange the qualitative data efficiently and in a professional manner (Verreynne, Parker & Wilson, 2011). Such computer programs establish visual presentations which help to analyze the data further. This also permits the researcher to comprehend the thematic categories' linkages clearly (Verreynne, Parker & Wilson, 2011). Once the TCA was manually completed, data were evaluated for the second time using Leximancer software Version 4.5 to enhance the reliability of the qualitative findings (Middleton, Liesch & Steen 2011; Smith & Humphreys, 2006). Leximancer t undertakes the conceptual analysis of text information. It has the capability to highlight ideas in the text data, thus conveying important points which require the reader's attention (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith 2007). The software detects the frequency and co-occurrence of words to identify key terms in the text (Stockwell et al., 2009; Verreynne et al., 2011). It delivers a map that demonstrates the key ideas

established within the text and clusters the concepts into themes. This offers a 'holistic view' of the gathered data (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith 2007). The Leximancer software processes the data in 4 stages: loading the data, generating the concept seeds, generating the thesaurus and running the project. Each of these stages is discussed next.

4.3.3.1   Loading the data

The researcher first selected the qualitative interview transcripts in Word document format that needed to be processed. Once the data were loaded into the software, the software selected and processed the files concurrently. The combined transcriptions obtained from 21 participants residing in three cities of UAE were entered into the system accordingly.

4.3.3.2   Generating the concept seeds

This stage comprised two different processes. The first, recognized as setting the text handling or text processing choices, was used for converting raw data into a preparation suitable for the processing which consisted of the marking out of the boundaries for the sentences and the paragraphs (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith 2007). For this study, the sentence boundaries were fixed to automatic, and the number of names and sentences in each block was set to '2 normal' for the whole analysis. In the second procedure, concept seeds identification, the software automatically extracted the main notions from the text, which were simple keywords that repeatedly occurred in the text. This permitted the software to explore numerous keywords and ideas that may not have been recognized in the manual thematic content analysis.

4.3.3.3   Generating the thesaurus

There were two different phases in this stage. In the first, known as concept seed editing, the researcher could remove unrelated concepts, combine likely concepts or add additional concepts that the software may not have documented (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith 2007). For this research, the inclusion of concepts through this stage was fascinating because of the structured method followed in the analysis and the investigator's experience and opinions. The second phase is known as the concept learning setting or the thesaurus setting phase, where concepts which were essentially sets of words were identified as a whole throughout the document (Cretchley et al., 2010; Smith, 2007). This level recognized and collected words that were related to the key terms determined in the preceding stages of the software.

4.3.3.4   Running the project

This stage consisted of three different processes. The first is known as compound concept editing, where outlying or nonsensical groups of key terms were eliminated. The second stage is developing the classification settings (also known as the concept coding settings). Using this method, the investigator could match the manual coding in the previously conducted thematic content analysis. When the descriptions of the concepts were learned by the software, each block of text was tagged with the names of the concepts contained in it (Cretchley et al. 2010; Smith, 2007). The final stage is called setting output choices (also known as project output setting). In this stage, the researcher generated a type of map. For this study, a topical network map type was selected. The topical map, by comparison with the alternative, which is the social map, is more spread out, highlighting the co-occurrence among items. It tends to highlight differences and direct associations and is best for discriminant analysis. The topical map is also much more constant for highly linked entities, such as topics.

4.3.3.5 Generating the concept map

The concept map was the last process of the software. These maps developed and illustrated the relationships among the concepts, both graphically and statistically. The combined usage of both Leximancer and the manual TCA process described the themes and concepts and collected the magnitudes of the content (Middleton et al., 2011; Smith & Humphreys, 2006). It also gave further insight into the particular phenomena of interest in the three cities in the UAE.

4.4 Themes emerging from both manual and leximancer software analysis

For each research question, the data analysis is presented below. The process of data structuring is also explained with examples of first-order concepts matched with their second-order categories and the emerging themes. The findings are illustrated for each research question respectively using two analysis techniques; first, the findings from the manual analysis have been provided; second, the findings from leximancer software analysis have been provided.

4.4.1 Findings from manual analysis of RQ1 data

'What are the current and potential strategies to be used by social workers to engage with involuntary clients?'

When social workers engage with involuntary clients, it is proposed that their thinking influenced by their previous experience and strategies, and this influences the way in which they think about dealing with those clients. Therefore, based on the literature (Lewis, 2015; Trotter, 2015), the following strategies are relevant.

Ambiance or atmospher	Comfort	Better communication	Training and workshops
Rapport building	Confidence building	Client profile	Helping nature
Freedom of expression	Empathy	Positive attitude	Calm attitude
Safety measures	Maintain boundaries		

Figure 4.2: Themes emerging from qualitative in-depth interviews

4.4.1.2   Data structure and reporting

The data structure is developed based on 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes and aggregate dimensions/themes. Table 4.2 represent examples of the data structuring from this qualitative phase of the study, which is an essential step in qualitative research data analysis. The data structure not only permits the researcher to arrange the data into an applied graphic aid, but it also demonstrates a visual illustration of how the researcher advanced from raw data to themes in guiding the analyses. This is a key constituent of representing rigour in qualitative research (Lewis, 2015).

Table 4.2: Data structure and reporting process

1st order concept	2nd order themes or categories	Themes emerging
Having a nice healthy environment could help. A large place with colourful furniture could help.(P#06)	Climate, mood and feeling	Ambience or atmosphere
Provide them with a friendly environment at the time they enter the social service centre (P#10)		
Make them realize that they are in their comfort zone; you need to make them realize that they are mentally stable and you are here to assist them (P#17)	Relaxation and calmness	Comfort
Listening and more listening. You should give him/her the freedom to talk and express the feeling. That is part of the solution so don't rush and be patient (P#04)	Affinity, togetherness, harmony & bond	Rapport building
Regular discussion among the teams or social workers on how they deal with these clients. The discussion may assist in getting better ideas about engagement (P#20)	Training, seminars, interaction	Training and workshops
Attending workshops may be a better idea to know more and better strategies to deal with involuntary clients (P#16)		
A thorough background of the involuntary client. Highlighting the key issue, demographic profile and every minute detail of the client would help you to move on with the discussion (P#01)	Affinity, empathy, bond, relationship	Client profile and history
I truly believe that better communication solves most of the issues, if we communicate clearly, listen to them and advise of the best solution, then there are brighter chances that these involuntary clients will understand what we are trying to educate them about and an opportunity to bring their life back. It's all about effective communication. (P # 08).	Disclosure, transmission and reporting	Better communication
Confidence is the key, and if we talk to them and make them realize that they are important, then it enhances their confidence level, which is really important in dealing with such types of clientele. (P#15).	Trust, faith and conviction	Confidence building
One needs to have a helping mind set; you need to have an attitude that you have to help someone who is already in trouble and with this attitude, you can win the battle. (P#03).	Assistance, support and aid	Helping nature
Let them talk and vent, it's really important. If we allow them to speak, then it gives them more confidence to share their problems. (P# 11).	Declaration, announcement and articulation	Freedom of expression

1st order concept	2nd order themes or categories	Themes emerging
You need to understand their problem and listen to their issues with full attention and understand their feelings. (P#05).	Affinity, appreciation and warmth	Empathy
Attitude makes the difference, and if you demonstrate a positive attitude towards their problem by giving them the best advice and showcasing the brighter side, then the problem is half solved. (P#02).	Optimistic, hopeful and focused	Positive attitude
You need to be calm while dealing with these involuntary clients and must show positive body language. (P#18).	Quiet, peaceful and restful	Calm attitude
Safety is really important when dealing with involuntary clients; you never know when they might lose control (P#20).	Protection, security and well being	Safety measures
To deal with involuntary clients, we need to draw some lines so that effective communication can take place (P#21).	Border, limits and partition	Maintain boundaries

The statements above illustrate the process of how data structuring was conducted. The second order themes represent an abstraction from this raw data, and these are then refined to the themes listed on the right.

Social workers often rely on managing clients' feelings. On occasion, clients may become angry, hostile or even violent. In uncomfortable and potentially inflammatory situations such as these, the highest level of professional conduct is required to ensure a safe and productive environment for all concerned. It is critical that social workers are properly trained and equipped to negotiate these potentially uncomfortable or unsafe situations. Described below are the dominant themes that emerged from the qualitative focused interviews regarding managing clients who present with anger. A detailed discussion of the themes illustrated in Table 4.2 is provided.

4.4.1.3 Ambience / atmosphere

During the qualitative interviews, the factor of the ambience, in other words, the atmosphere, was discussed by the interview participants. Almost half (14/21) revealed that the ambience or atmosphere plays an important role in connecting well with involuntary clients. A positive environment assists the social workers in creating a positive rapport with the involuntary clients who are not willing to share their personal issues. An environment which is

welcoming, generally positive and conducive, with an emotionally supportive colour scheme and non-harsh lighting and is one of the key strategies in building the initial contact with involuntary clients. The findings of a Danish study suggest productivity and satisfaction can be enhanced via improvement of the physical dimensions of the work environment (internal climate) (Buhai, Cottini, & Nielseny, 2008). Some participants' statements are given about the ambience and atmosphere as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'The place where the conversation takes place needs to be client-friendly, must have a life or, I might say, must give them a comfort zone so that they can talk freely. So, the ambience is also one of the factors'. (Participant # 07)*
>
> *'Having a nice healthy environment could help. A large place with colourful furniture could calm them down'. (Participant # 13)*
>
> *'A better friendly engagement environment may be helpful. (Participant # 03)*
>
> *'A healthy environment and nice colourful meeting rooms may help to give a positive message to the involuntary clients'. (Participant # 10)*

4.4.1.4 Comfort

The interviews revealed comfort as one of the strategies for dealing with involuntary clients. The notion was broadly discussed, with the general view that to maintain a good conversation with these clients, a feeling of comfort in the situation is of critical importance. Clients who have been forced to attend these sessions need to be in their comfort zone first, and this can be achieved by giving them a friendly welcome, greeting them with complete enthusiasm, making them feel that they are in safe hands and that the social workers are there to help them. All the positivity from the social workers eventually builds an affirmative relationship with the involuntary clients and thus leads to the development of a comfort zone for these resistant clients. Some participants' statements follow about comfort as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'There are many strategies to engage with the involuntary client. The first and foremost is to make them realize that they are in their comfort zone, you need to make them realize that they are mentally stable, and you are here to assist them'. (Participant # 21)*
>
> *'We need to pass on positive energy to them and show the brighter side; this keeps them comfortable during the conversation'. (Participant # 12)*

'Let them realize that they are in safe hands, and we are here to help them'.
(Participant # 08)

4.4.1.5   Rapport building

During the interview process, the social workers also discussed the element of rapport building. This notion was extensively stressed. Participants were of the view that there has to be a close and harmonious relationship between social workers and involuntary clients during communication. In this way, both parties can understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well. Thus, this bridges the gap between social workers and these involuntary clients and therefore reaches a desirable solution. What follows are some participants' statements about rapport building as a strategy to deal with the involuntary clients:

'Listening and more listening. You should give him/her the freedom to talk and express the feeling. That is part of the solution, so don't rush and be patient'. (Participant # 04)

'Without proper rapport building, one cannot initiate discussion, especially with involuntary clients'. (Participant # 11)

To bridge the communication gap, rapport building is the most important thing to address'. (Participant # 17)

4.4.1.6   Workshops/training

The element of workshops and different kinds of training to deal better with involuntary clients was discussed during the interviews. Over half of the social worker participants (16/21) reported that training and workshops are a powerful way to learn new techniques. These give them the confidence to apply such techniques to handle involuntary clients. They also assist them to benefit from better engagement. In-house training sessions from experienced experts are also an ideal strategy as this helps them to learn from such experience and apply it in practice. Sharing ideas, including both good and bad experiences in group discussions and monthly meetings, are important for learning about and dealing with involuntary clients. Participants also raised the case study method where such academic learning also aids social workers to explore various strategies to deal with involuntary clients. Professional courses and out of office training were also mentioned. Various kinds of training techniques arose in the interviews. Below are some of the participants' statements about workshops and training as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'Regular discussion among the teams or social workers on how they deal with these clients. The discussion may assist in getting better ideas about engagement'. (Participant # 20)*
>
> *'Attending workshops may be a better idea to know more and better strategies to deal with involuntary clients'. (Participant # 16)*
>
> *'The case study method and professional courses can aid the learning of social workers to deal better with these clients'. (Participant # 19)*

4.4.1.7   Client profile and history

In the exploratory interviews, the element of client profile and history was discussed at length. Almost half of the participants (11/21) considered understanding the client profile and history to be very important. This provides first-hand information about clients' demographic characteristics, professional standing, and personal details. This also helps social workers to ascertain if they have a history of the issue; they would like to address. Participants also suggested that access to the case history and profile of involuntary clients helps in the preparation phase, as in-depth knowledge of the problem is essential before the engagement commences. Essentially, it is very important to understand the circumstances and case history of each client fully, listen actively to clients' experiences, gain, and understanding about their true feelings concerning the intervention. Clients should also be given access to complaints and feedback procedure, which they could realistically use. Some participants' statements are provided about the client profile and history as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'A thorough background of the involuntary client. Highlighting the key issue, demographic profile and every minute detail of the client would help you to move on with the discussion'. (Participant # 01)*
>
> *'The client background is important, and it aids the social workers to have a thorough understanding before addressing the client's problems' (Participant # 07)*
>
> *'It's really important for us to have complete client information beforehand, it helps us to advise of the right solution to their problems'. (Participant # 11)*

4.4.1.8   Better communication

Communication is the key when it comes to positive social interaction, and so the qualitative interviews explored the theme of better communication. Most participants (18/21) reported that open and honest communication should be part of the relationship between social

workers and involuntary clients. They also expressed the opinion that the fastest way to improve your communication with these clients is to stop talking and listen to them first. Less talking provides space for more and better listening. Listening also facilitates a communication perspective focused on 'we' rather than 'I'. The participants also emphasised that improved communication in any relationship is based on the willingness and ability to approach and perceive issues in a non-judgmental way. They also reported that if communication is diminished or hampered, the entire goal of dealing with involuntary clients suffers. The social workers added that communication should always be viewed as a two-way process that encourages dialogue between the parties involved. Listening is also a mark of respect for the client and allows the social worker to understand the issues that must be addressed. Participants also reported that many involuntary clients experience difficulties understanding the process and even what is happening, causing major problems with engagement. Many participants stressed the need for clarity and structure in the engagement process. At each contact point, the client should be provided with detailed information about the purpose of the intervention, the dynamics of control (i.e. what the client is able to control and what is out of the client's control), what is likely to happen next, and the various consequences associated with actions and responses. Indeed, communication should be comprehensive, clear, focused, and structured. Following are some participants' statements about better communication as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'I truly believe that better communication solves most of the issues, if we communicate clearly, listen to them and advise of the best solution when there are brighter chances that these involuntary clients will understand what we are trying to educate them about and an opportunity to bring their life back. It's all about effective communication'. (Participant # 12)*
> *'It is important to communicate effectively with these involuntary clients as this leads to proper understanding and rapport building'. (Participant # 10)*

4.4.1.9 Confidence building

Throughout the interviews, the element of confidence-building arose during the discussion. Almost half of the participants (11/21) reflected that building confidence in involuntary clients is crucial and makes them realize that they are important, which thus leads to healthier communication. Participants also reported an element of fear and anxiety in involuntary clients, and if they helped them become more self-confident, it is much easier to handle them and learn more about their experiences. By doing so, clients' fear and anxiety can naturally

be replaced by greater confidence in the social worker, the process and the institution involved. They further added that a lack of confidence could lead to a fear of addressing and overcoming problems, along with a lack of trust. Some participants' statements are presented below about confidence building as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'Confidence is the key, and if we talk to them and make them realize that they are important, then it enhances their confidence level, which is really important in dealing with such types of clientele'. (Participant # 15)*
> *'You need to create confidence in the clients who are shattered emotionally and have no confidence'. (Participant # 11)*
> *'If we want to solve the problems associated with involuntary clients, then confidence is the key'. (Participant # 17)*

4.4.1.10 Helping (or caring) nature

A helping nature was discovered as a prominent theme during the qualitative interviews. Out of the 21 participants, 7 reported that helping the involuntary clients when dealing with them is important. They stated it is good to help because it makes them feel good about themselves and at the end of the day; it makes them seem like a better person and have others view them in more favourable terms. Social worker participants also stressed that volunteering time and energy to help others does not just make the world better, it also makes one better as an individual so that the ultimate goal of handling involuntary clients is achieved. In addition, assisting involuntary clients gives one a sense of self-worth and makes one feel good about oneself. Respondents further reported that the client may be presenting as angry due to circumstances outside the control of the social worker or may simply be expressing anger and resentment towards the situation. Where the social worker is perceived as part of the problem rather than part of the solution, it is beneficial to remind the client that the social worker is concerned about the best interests of the client, working collaboratively for change and is there to assist. One of the participants also reported that one act of kindness turns into countless acts of kindness. Following are some participants' statements about a helping or caring nature as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'One needs to have a helping mindset, you need to have an attitude that you have to help someone who is already in trouble and with this attitude, you can win the battle'. (Participant # 03)*

> *'A helping nature is the prerequisite to dealing with involuntary clients'.*
> *(Participant # 06)*
> *'Our having a helping nature is the trait which involuntary clients need so*
> *that they can be assisted in a better way'. (Participant # 09)*

4.4.1.11 Freedom of expression

In the context of this study, participants viewed freedom of expression as the right of individuals to hold and express opinions as well as the right to seek and convey ideas and information with nearly half (10) reporting that while dealing with involuntary clients it is necessary to allow them to speak and put their perspective on the table. These clients already lack both confidence and trust in the people around them and, in this scenario, if they are allowed to freely express their emotions, stories and whatever that have in their minds and hearts, it is the first step to help and assist them successfully. Participants also revealed that when clients are permitted to speak, they become more confident and truthful. While stressing the importance of freedom of speech in relation to involuntary clients, participants stressed that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, a cornerstone of many other human rights. Effective and deep communication relies upon a climate where all parties feel comfortable with expressing opinions. Giving free rein to the client also uncovers important information, provides the client with a space to vent feelings, and creates an environment where relationships built on trust can be established. Below are some of the participants' statements about freedom of expression as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'Let them talk and vent; it's really important. If we allow them to speak, then*
> *it gives them more confidence to share their problems. (Participant # 11)*
> *'We should allow them to speak, and this makes them comfortable and*
> *confident'. (Participant # 09)*
> *'It's really important to give them freedom of speech as this makes them*
> *emotionally satisfied'. (Participant # 13)*

4.4.1.12 Empathy

During the in-depth interviews, participants spoke of the element of empathy. Empathy is crucial for maintaining engagement, and the social worker should maintain empathy even when the issues under discussion are confronting. More than half (12) participants stated that empathy is highly important, especially when dealing with involuntary clients. Their view

was that, as social workers, they need to have those feelings to understand clients' issues listen to them attentively and share their issues, only then can they help these clients. Participants further added that it is important to reflect on the meaning of empathy. When empathy is expressed, it should go beyond a surface-level approach. The social worker should aim for an empathetic approach that is sophisticated and enhances the social work process. Most involuntary clients are likely to be facing significant stressors in their lives. The extension of empathy can serve as a bridge-builder and enable the client to feel safe within the client/practitioner relationship. Essentially, a strong commitment to compassion and care for clients can serve very well to establish and maintain relationships. Some participants' statements are given below about empathy as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'You need to understand their problem and listen to their issues with full attention and understand their feelings'. (Participant # 05)*
> *'As social worker, feelings are important to understand the issues and once feelings are there then handling these issues is not a problem'. (Participant # 10)*
> *'When we consider their problems as our problems, then it gets much easier to understand the scenario'. (Participant # 12)*

4.4.1.13 Positive attitude

Attitude plays an important role when dealing with involuntary clients. When interviewed, 7 participants revealed that when the social workers show a positive attitude while dealing with involuntary clients, this calms down the situation, keep the clients at peace and fosters a friendly environment. In this regard, when the social workers see the positive outcome in the complex situations, then it becomes easier to reach a concrete conclusion. Respondents also emphasised the importance of a positive attitude while dealing with involuntary clients. A positive attitude helps social workers to cope more easily with complex situations; it brings optimism in every situation and makes it easier to avoid negative thinking. Adopting this attitude when dealing with clients, would bring constructive changes into their daily dealings with diversified client groups. Following are some of the participants' statements about positive attitude as a strategy when dealing with involuntary clients:

'Attitude makes the difference and if you demonstrate a positive attitude towards their problem by giving them the best advice and showcasing the brighter side, then the problem is half solved'. (Participant # 02)

'Your positive attitude towards involuntary clients solves half of the problem'. (Participant # 04)

'Your positive action towards a situation helps both the parties to develop a cardinal relationship during the conversation'. (Participant # 07)

4.4.1.14 Calm attitude

A calm attitude was another theme which emerged from the interviews. It was reported that remaining calm is critical in most situations and essential when facing an angry client. Participants revealed some important points, and it was suggested that the social worker could act as a role model for calm and composed behaviour to create an environment where the client feels safer and more relaxed. Participants stressed the use of positive body language and breathing techniques to facilitate at least an appearance of composure. Posture was also noted, for example, avoiding leaning over clients and cutting back on excessive hand movements. It was further stated that a calm environment fosters good communication in that the social workers are better able to hear, understand, and engage with clients when the climate of the interaction is relaxed. Following are some statements made about a calm attitude as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

'You need to be calm while dealing with these involuntary clients and must show positive body language'. (Participant # 18).

'If the social workers are calm and composed, then it's much easier to build a good and effective conversation with the involuntary clients'. (Participant # 12).

4.4.1.15 Safety measures

Precautions for safety was a further theme extracted from the interview findings. Over two thirds (15) participants reported the significance of safety measures when dealing with involuntary clients. Participants were particularly concerned about anger management and stressed the importance of pre-emptive precautions based upon the likelihood of anger and confrontation during a meeting with a client. Techniques for taking adequate measures included arranging meetings in open areas, ensuring that other people were either present or within sight and/or earshot and informing supervisors or colleagues about the meeting and

asking them to serve as monitors (explicitly or implicitly). Where appropriate, it was suggested it might be necessary to involve security and even law enforcement when a highly confrontational meeting is envisaged or in progress. It is important not to take risks when working with clients who are angry as anger can create unpredictability. Safety should always be the first priority. Participants recommended reviewing agency policies with supervisors and creating a plan ahead of time. Some of the participants' statements are provided below about safety measures as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'Safety is really important when dealing with involuntary clients; you never know when they might lose control'. (Participant # 20)*
> *'To deal with involuntary clients, personal safety is paramount'. (Participant # 13)*
> *'We as social workers, need to take some precautionary measures before interacting with the involuntary clients as prevention is better than a cure'. (Participant # 16)*

4.4.1.16 Maintain boundaries

The qualitative focused interviews revealed an interesting theme of maintaining boundaries. Two-thirds (14) of participants reported exposure to shouting, bad language and even feelings of physical danger. They stressed the need for a very firm policy in this regard affirming that clients should be made aware of the protocols and rules for civil conversation and reminded of these when exchanges become uncivil. It was stressed that the social worker should remain calm and objective throughout while clients should be reminded that respectful communication is essential and expected. It was considered best to establish a framework for respectful, civil communication at the outset of the intervention, thereby providing the client with clarity as to the boundaries. Following are some participants' statements about maintaining boundaries as a strategy to deal with involuntary clients:

> *'To deal with involuntary clients, we need to draw some lines so that effective communication can take place'. (Participant # 21)*
> *'There is a need to maintain a distance between social workers and clients as this leads to respectful communication'. (Participant # 21)*

4.4.2   Findings from leximancer generated an analysis of RQ1 data

'What are the current and potential strategies to be used by social workers to engage with involuntary clients?'

4.4.2.1 Data processing and reporting

The first question was to understand the (current) strategies used by social workers to engage with involuntary clients. Before loading text interview data in Leximancer, as mentioned earlier, the researcher had cleaned the data by deleting all interview questions and other probing questions asked during interview sessions so that words frequently used in interview sessions do not emerge as themes. To explore leading themes and concepts, the researcher separated answers relating to RQ1 from the master transcript files and created 21 separate files. A single Leximancer file was created, inserting these 21 separate files. Inside the concept seed editor of Leximancer, four separate but similar words were observed and they were merged into two words. That is to say, 'strategies' and 'strategy' were converted into 'strategy' while 'clients' and 'client' were made into one word 'clients'.

The researcher attempted to generate themes using two independent iterations: Iteration One, see figure 4.3, shows eight themes, at 50% theme size. These eight themes, along with their connectivity scores and their 26 related concepts (see Table 4.3) are groups, clients, social, experiences, issues, engaged, time and engagement. Relative connectivity scores imply the importance of the theme in the data structure considered for RQ1.

Table 4.3: Eight leading themes under 50% theme size- Leximancer Iteration One

Theme	Connectivity	Related concepts
Groups	100%	Group, individual, deal, dealing, key issues, professional
Clients	94%	Clients, strategy, problem, key, communication
Social	27%	Problem, solution, time
Experience	19%	Social , work , job
Issue	17%	The issue, listen, background
Engaged	16%	Engaged, positive, facial
Time	05%	Time
Engagement	04%	Engagement

The scattered pattern of themes shown in figure 4.3 implies that some themes are related while others are isolated.

As the first thematic map looked scattered, the researcher re-clustered it to make it tighter. In the second iteration, the researcher found a tighter thematic map, see figure 4.4, with the same theme size of 50%. Table 4.4 shows the five themes of this second iteration, their connectivity scores, and 26 ranked related concepts. These five themes are clients,

experiences, problems, social and engaged. The themes are contextually interconnected. For each iteration, the 26 concepts see Table 4.5 are exactly the same.

The five themes covered in figure 4.4 are considered to be the most influential strategies that social workers are currently using to engage with involuntary clients. Clients, which is the leading theme as well as the focal point, is indicated by the red colour and then the remaining four themes (experiences, problems, social and engaged) are indicated by different colours orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. An initial interpretation of figure 4.3 and the related concepts listed in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 might suggest that social workers are client oriented.

Table 4.4: Five leading themes under 50% theme size- Leximancer Iteration Two

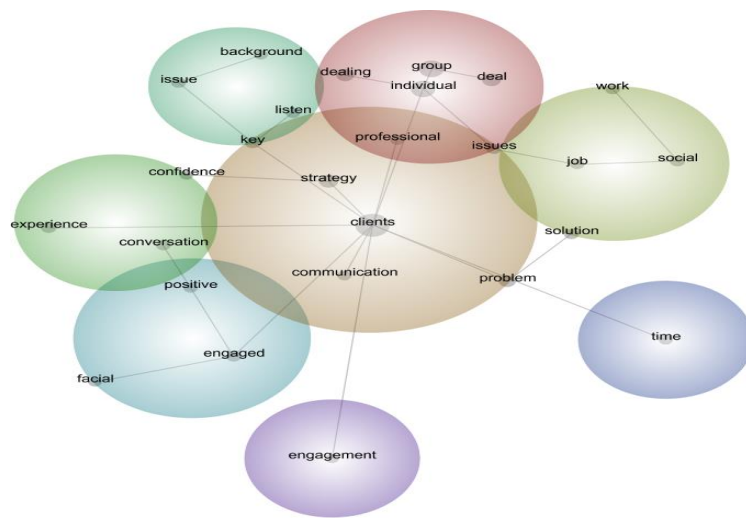| Clients	100%	Clients, group, individual, strategy, deal, dealing, key, issues, professional, listen, background.
Experiences	13%	Experience, conversation, positive, confidence
Problems	12%	Problem, solution, time
Social	11%	Social, work, job
Engaged	10%	Engaged, communication, engagement, facial

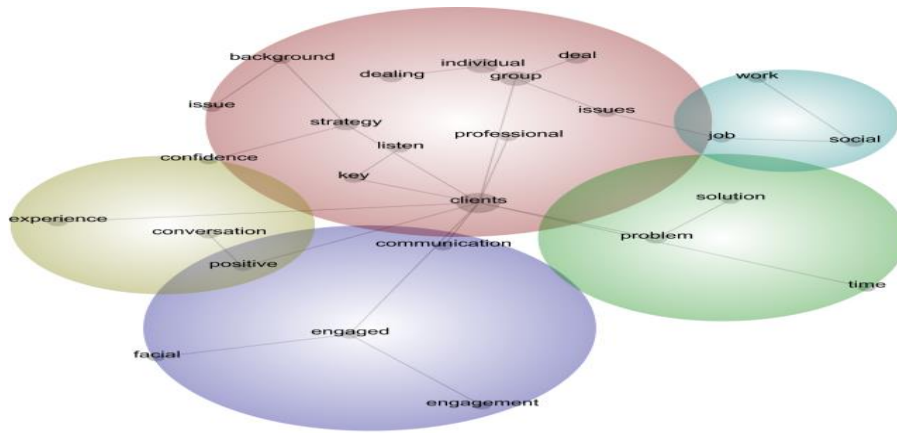**Figure 4.3: Iteration One: Thematic map combining eight themes**

Figure 4.4: Iteration Two: Thematic map combining eight themes

Word-Like	Count	Relevance	
clients	111	100%	
group	47	42%	
individual	46	41%	
strategy	29	26%	
deal	26	23%	
problem	24	22%	
dealing	22	20%	
experience	21	19%	
social	18	16%	
engaged	16	14%	
key	15	14%	
time	15	14%	
issue	13	12%	
solution	12	11%	
work	12	11%	
conversation	12	11%	
issues	11	10%	
positive	11	10%	
engagement	11	10%	
job	9	08%	
listen	9	08%	
communication	9	08%	
professional	8	07%	
facial	7	06%	
background	6	05%	
confidence	6	05%	

Figure 4.5: Ranked concept related to Map 2 (figure 4.4)

4.4.2.2 Theme One: Client focused strategy

Given that our study is concerned with the strategies that are used with handling clients, it is unsurprising that the researcher observed 'clients' was the foremost concept in the list. Figure 4.5 shows it is mentioned 111 times in the selected data set for the study. The three other concepts that co-occurred with clients are: 'group', 'individual' and 'strategy' (42 per cent, 41 per cent, and 26 per cent, respectively). As the first research question was about social workers' strategies, the researcher separately explored a concept map for the strategy concept, see figure 4.6, and showed the connection of the concept of strategy with other associated concepts. Figure 4.5 lists 26 concepts and their frequencies. The researcher visited and revisited the chunks of data under this strategy concept and the other 24 related concepts for a better understanding of strategy.

4.4.2.3 Individual and group intervention strategies

To make better sense of the data related to the clients' theme, the researcher performed text queries inside Leximancer using the following terms and concepts: "clients + groups", clients + individual", individuals + group", and "clients + strategy". The background texts of these pairs as well as 25 other related concepts under the theme of clients, shown in figure 4.4, have been visited to understand the social worker participants' different opinions of the individual and group strategies used. Of the 21 participants, 4 (Participants 1, 2, 10, 12) shared that '[they] deal in individual and group interventions'.

With one exception, participants also indicated that they applied separate protocols for individuals and groups, mentioning that there was no single method to deal with individual and group clients. One (Participant 12) noted: *"In my experience, there are a number of strategies you can follow. It's not just one fixed strategy"*. Another reported always sticking to the same strategy, irrespective of whether dealing with individuals or groups of clients: *"Well, in both the cases whether it is individual or group intervention, I follow the same strategy"* (Participant 4). Data also revealed that though there were commonalities in the mechanisms of treating individuals and groups of clients, typically, it was considered that some interventions and strategies suit individuals while other strategies suit groups. Participant 17 stated, *"I believe that when dealing with single clients, the strategy is different"*.

The following are some data extracts from Participants 21 and 16 regarding common

strategies for single clients and groups, while Table 4.5 lists some representative quotes reflecting the contrasting strategies:

1. "Be open to learning"
2. "Be a very good listener''
3. [Have a] "positive attitude"
4. [Sustain a] "helping mindset"
5. [Show a] "humanistic approach"

Table 4.5: Data structure showing contrasting service protocols

Individual Client Protocol	Group Protocol
"Showing that social work is a better approach than at a police station" (Part. 2)	"The approach may be a little different, you may be dealing with multiple problems at any point in time" (Part. 12)
"More attention to detail, to his or her background" "A brief background checks of the individual can explain the issue effectively" (Part. 11)	"Team management is the key" (Part. 12)
"You must follow a proper protocol to deal with an individual" (Part. 11)	"Give attention to the whole group and treat them as a team" (Part. 17)
"Knowing the individual helps you to comprehend the problem" (Part. 15)	"Listen to the issue first from each group member then develop a recommendation" (Part. 11)

According to data presented in relation to common strategies, we can say that social workers can demonstrate personal attributes, such as openness, a positive attitude, and a humanistic approach when they treat involuntary clients. The contrasting perspectives of strategies presented in Table 4.6 indicate that social workers may adopt a systematic method to get to know individuals through a background check, and they can be flexible in this process. To deal with group clients, social workers may focus on group discussions, treating the whole group as a team in order to provide a solution to a problem. However, another interesting opinion was that no protocol could ensure a better strategy than a better relationship, *"(whether) individual or group it doesn't matter, the key is the relationship"* (Participant 7). Another response (Participant 12) was that gender plays a defining role in providing a service, *"the gender variation also influences your strategy to deal with involuntary clients"*.

4.4.2.4   Theme Two: Experiential Strategy

The second theme generated by Leximancer is "experience". This theme mainly indicates that social workers have learned many things in their professional careers. Experience dominates other concepts in figure 4.2, as almost all of the participants shared their experiences, good or bad. To unveil this and to have a clear insight into the strategies used in this experience, the researcher visited three other related concepts: 'conversation', 'positive', and 'confidence'. The researcher also checked the background text under 20 related word-like concepts under this theme, listed in figure 4.6, to make sense of the data. The SW codes refer to the participant codes in the figure below.
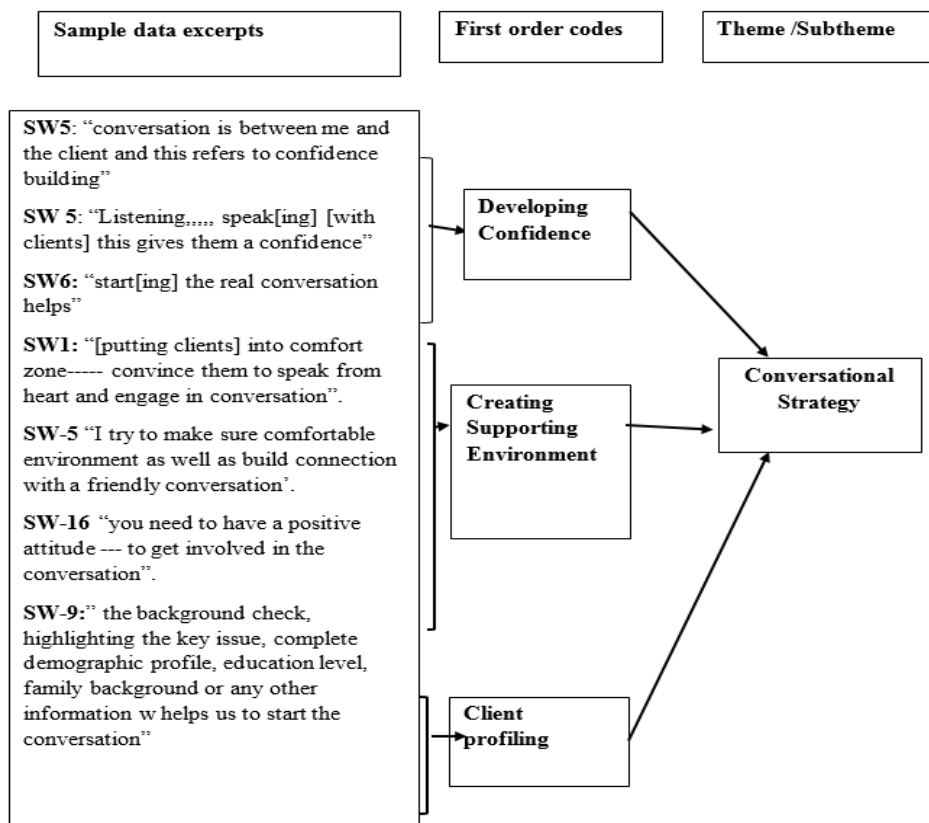
Sample data excerpts	First order codes	Theme /Subtheme

SW5: "conversation is between me and the client and this refers to confidence building"

SW 5: "Listening,,,,, speak[ing] [with clients] this gives them a confidence"

SW6: "start[ing] the real conversation helps"

Developing Confidence

SW1: "[putting clients] into comfort zone----- convince them to speak from heart and engage in conversation".

SW-5 "I try to make sure comfortable environment as well as build connection with a friendly conversation'.

SW-16 "you need to have a positive attitude --- to get involved in the conversation".

Creating Supporting Environment

Conversational Strategy

SW-9:" the background check, highlighting the key issue, complete demographic profile, education level, family background or any other information w helps us to start the conversation"

Client profiling

Figure 4.6: Data structure showing conversational strategies

The strong connection of the concepts – conversation, positive, and confidence –with the leading concept of experience implies how the participant social workers used conversation, positiveness, and confidence as strategies in dealing with involuntary clients. Text queries under the interconnected terms "experience + conversation", experience + positive" and "experience + confidence" indicate that the conversation between clients and social workers as well as the positive attitude developed confidence and trust that helped to serve the clients. Based on the data, the researcher categorised this strategy of experience into two sub-themes: conversational strategy and positivity.

By conversational strategy, the researcher means that social workers were mindful in developing a rapport with clients before delivering services to them. Data revealed three different strategies under the conversational strategies: confidence development, creating a supporting environment, and creating client profiles, as depicted in figure 4.6, which shows the supporting data structure for these three strategies.

Table 4.7: Sample data showing the positivity strategy

Sample data excerpts	First order codes	Theme/subtheme
SW-12: "let them feel that they are important, your positive facial expressions, positive attitude is the game changer"	Freedom to Sharing	Positivity
Let [the clients] speak with all the positive or any negative energy.		
SW-11: "giving them confident, telling them that we are here to help not to confront. These positive vibes create a good balance of communication".	Openness	
SW-21: "you need to be open to learn, you need to be a very good listener, your attitude has to be positive"		

Positivity in conversation is another strategy that the participants used to develop a successful conversation with involuntary clients. As per the underlying data under the terms "experience + positive" and "experience + confidence", the researcher found two different strategies: the freedom to share and openness to making the conversation positive. With regard to the freedom to share, participants explained that clients were given the idea that they are highly important, their opinion matters, and they can share whatever they liked. The openness strategy indicates that by being open in their attitude, social workers can learn more about clients, which eventually develops a good communication platform that might help them to better understand clients. Table 4.7 presents the supporting data structure for the positivity theme.

4.4.2.5   Theme Three: Problem navigation

The third theme, as per the Leximancer concept map, is "problem" which indicates that our participants showed their inclination to identify problems as one of the key strategies for dealing with clients. 'Solution' and 'time' are the two concepts relevant to the problem theme. The solution as a concept was strongly tied with the problem theme, emphasising the fact that problem identification is the root of the solution, *"after listening to her problem, the solution was really there''* (Participant 2). Another participant, 15), stressed a precise

understanding of the problem before attempting any strategy, *"comprehend the problem and then work on it''*. To make good sense of the data, the researcher also checked the background texts under the 23 concepts with associated this theme as presented in figure 4.10.

A closer look of the background texts of the compound concept "problem + solution" and other related word-like concepts under the problem theme as mentioned in figure 4.7 gave us some possible solutions to the problems being faced by clients. Participants also shared a range of possible solutions to explore the stories behind the problem recognition. These included listening to the participants' view to better gain insights into the problem, developing trust and communicating effectively to navigate the problems. Representative data to single out the problems have been given in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Data structure showing problem recognition

Problem recognition	1. "Listening and more listening [to clients]" (SW-4) 2. "Grasping the situation" (SW-21) 3. "Effective communication" (SW-15) 4. "Building a concrete relationship". (SW-21) 5. "Building engagement----- and trust" (SW-2)

The concept of time is another closely related word to the problem theme. The researcher also searched the background quotations to understand what exactly time means in the data and how it relates to the problem. To do so, the researcher used the search term: "problem + time". The data under this term tells us that the process of problem identification is time-consuming, as one respondent noted, *"[problem identification] is not an easy task, it needs a lot of struggle and time to get involved with someone"* (Participant 8). Developing trust with clients' needs a long term plan: *"trust and respect development [happens] over a long time which can help me to improve engagement"* (Participant 10), because time helped clients *"to converse about their issues in an effective manner"* (Participant 17). Participants also shared that they needed to give *"full attention all the time"* (Participant 18) and *"more time"* (Participant 2) in dealing with some clients who are *"kind of hostile"* (Participant 8). Data produced under the combined terms of problem and time exposed the fact that social workers found themselves in a difficult position in serving many clients with diverse cases at any single time. One noted, *"sometimes it is riskier because you are dealing with a number of people at one point in time"* (Participant 5).

4.4.2.6 Theme Four: Social strategy

This theme has become the fourth theme in the automated Leximancer analysis. The researcher ignored the theme, as it did not offer any meaningful information to the research issue addressed in this chapter.

4.4.2.7 Theme Five: Engaged strategy

The Leximancer analysis also indicated that the participant social workers tried to be engaged with involuntary clients. The theme has different meanings based on the other words associated with it and the context of these words. Figure 4.11 outlines the words related to the word "engaged". Of these 19 related words, the researcher selected three more significant ones based on their frequency and probability: "facial" (57 per cent), "positive" (36 per cent) and "conversation" (33 per cent). For further information, the researcher visited the quotations generated by the combined term "engaged + facial". From this, it became clear four participants explained that facial expression is one of the ways by which they understood that clients were convinced about their dealings. Their positive attitude is another sign of clients' engagement. When they show an appropriate facial expression and a positive attitude, according to the data, clients tap into deep conversation. Table 4.9 outlines the supporting data for this theme.

Table 4.9: Data structure for the engaged theme

Facial expression	"it's easy to gauge if the client is interested, their facial expressions and involvement in the conversation [implies that] that he is engaged and motivated"(SW-14)
	"It's very easy to gauge if they are really interested and engaged. For instance they will reply to your questions, positive facial expressions" (SW-15)
	"I know that the client is actually engaged, is just his facial expression and conversation"(SW-8)
	"their involvement and facial expressions guides us that they are now engaged" (SW-1)
Positive attitude	"their positive attitude ----- to the solution are few signs that they are engaged" (SW-19)
	"If he is showing the positive sign, listening carefully, it means that he is engaged and interested" (SW-8)
	"[their] positive facial expressions, they will even ask questions for more clarity" (SW-15)

Related Word-Like	Count	Likelihood
deal	26	100%
dealing	22	100%
experience	21	100%
issues	11	100%
issue	13	100%
job	9	100%
professional	8	100%
listen	9	100%
communication	9	100%
background	6	100%
confidence	6	100%
strategy	28	97%
group	45	96%
individual	44	96%
positive	10	91%
engaged	14	88%
key	13	87%
facial	6	86%
problem	20	83%
conversation	10	83%
solution	9	75%
work	9	75%
engagement	8	73%
social	13	72%
time	10	67%

Figure 4.7: Related word-like concepts under theme of clients
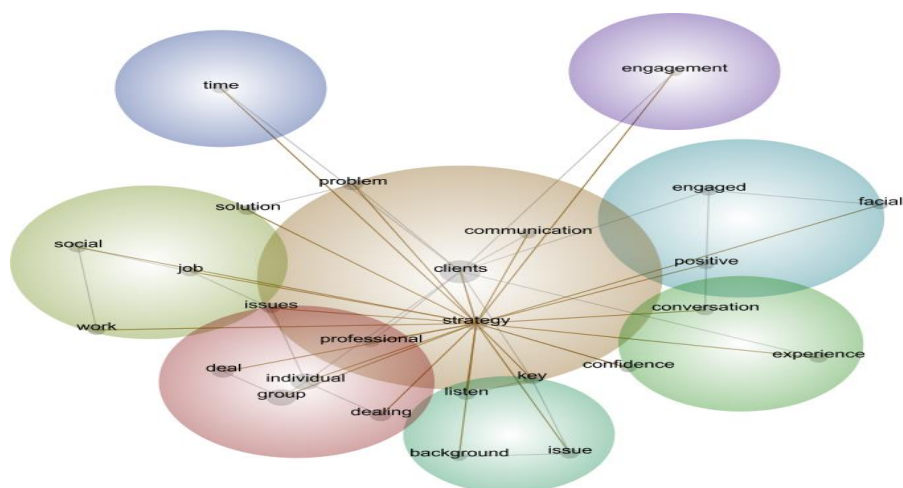
Figure 4.8: Thematic map showing the connections for the concept of strategy

Table 4.10: Related word-like concepts under the concept of strategy

Related Word-Like	Count	Likelihood	
confidence	4	67%	
communication	5	56%	
background	3	50%	
positive	4	36%	
experience	7	33%	
dealing	7	32%	
deal	8	31%	
individual	14	30%	
group	14	30%	
problem	7	29%	
issues	3	27%	
clients	28	25%	
work	3	25%	
listen	2	22%	
engagement	2	18%	
solution	2	17%	
conversation	2	17%	
issue	2	15%	
facial	1	14%	
key	2	13%	
time	2	13%	
professional	1	12%	
job	1	11%	
social	1	06%	

Count   Likelihood

Related Word-Like

issue	4	31%
dealing	6	27%
professional	2	25%
strategy	7	24%
clients	21	19%
engagement	2	18%
problem	4	17%
background	1	17%
confidence	1	17%
facial	1	14%
engaged	2	12%
listen	1	11%
communication	1	11%
issues	1	09%
conversation	1	08%
key	1	07%
time	1	07%
individual	3	07%
group	3	06%
social	1	06%

Figure 4.9: Related concepts under the experience theme

Related Name-Like Related Word-Like	Count	Likelihood	Count	Likelihood
solution			8	67%
professional			3	38%
engagement			4	36%
work			3	25%
strategy			7	24%
social			4	22%
job			2	22%
communication			2	22%
deal			5	19%
experience			4	19%
issues			2	18%
clients			20	18%
background			1	17%
confidence			1	17%
individual			7	15%
group			7	15%
key			2	13%
time			2	13%
listen			1	11%
conversation			1	08%
issue			1	08%
engaged			1	06%
dealing				

Figure 4.10: Related word-like concepts under the theme of problem

Related Word-Like	Count	Likelihood
facial	4	57%
positive	4	36%
conversation	4	33%
key	4	27%
engagement	2	18%
clients	14	13%
social	2	11%
job	1	11%
listen	1	11%
communication	1	11%
individual	5	11%
group	5	11%
experience	2	10%
issues	1	09%
solution	1	08%
work	1	08%
time	1	07%
dealing	1	05%
problem		

Figure 4.11: Related word-like concept under the theme of engaged

4.4.3   Findings from manual analysis of RQ2 data

'What are the experiences and challenges being faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients?'

The literature links effective social workers performance to a higher level of experiences and agreement while engaging with involuntary clients (Trotter, 2015). It is proposed that social workers experience huge challenges when dealing with such clients.

4.4.3.1   Challenges to deal with involuntary clients

Anger/Hostility	Frustration and embarrassment	Reluctance
Lack of confidence	Lack of decipline	Lack of motivation
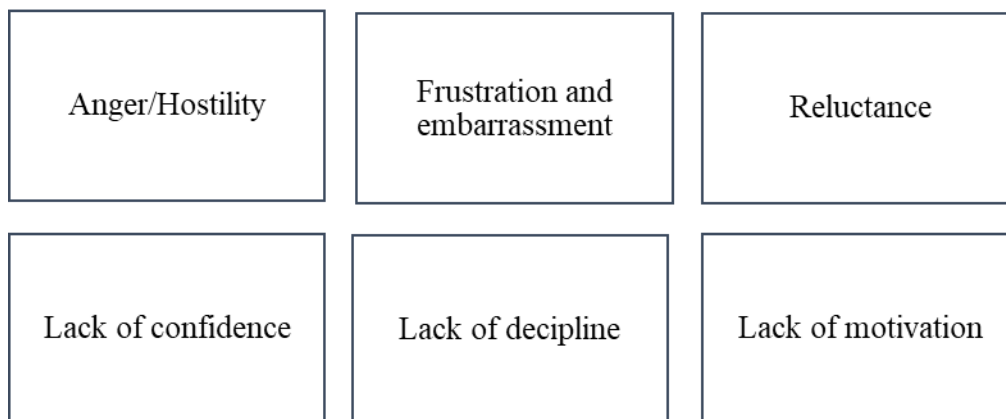
Figure 4.12: Themes related to challenges emerged from the qualitative focused interview

The researcher followed a particular data reporting technique, data structuring, to describe the extracted data, which is discussed in the next section. Please see Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Data structure and reporting process

1st order concept	2nd order themes or categories	Themes emerging
Well they are not open to speaking and they don't want to share their issues completely. They are sometimes very angry, because they are sent by force (P#11).	Displeasure, irritation, annoyance and violence	Anger/Hostility
Well they are always sad and angry. They blame others for their bad situations (P#06).		
They are talking excessively or quiet and withdrawn. They sometimes overwhelm themselves. They are always blaming others and never take the responsibility (P#16).	Dissatisfaction, resettlement, anger and grievance.	Frustration and embarrassment
Most of the time they lie because of their lack of confidence (P#09).		
They lack confidence, they are not interested in engaging in any sort of conversation because they feel that they are not normal and the society is making fun of them rather than helping them (P#18).	Hesitant, unwillingness and objection	Reluctance
They are sometimes very silent and speechless, they think that you would use their conversation against them (P#12).		
In general cases the involuntary clients lack self-confidence to share their problems (P#10).	Low spirits, pessimism, discouragement	Lack of confidence
Due to this low self-esteem, they are not willing to discuss freely (P#12).		
They are not disciplined at all and show a casual attitude (P#07). They often miss the appointments and show no interest in scheduled meetings (P#19).	Casual attitude, lack of time management, lesser interest	Lack of discipline
I don't see them as motivated, they are not enthusiastic due to ongoing personal issues (P#18).	Less willingness and low enthusiasm	Lack of motivation

The statements on the left illustrate the process of how data structuring was conducted. The second order themes represent an abstraction from these raw data, and these were then refined to the themes listed on the right.

The qualitative interviews revealed a number of challenges being faced by social workers, and during the interviews, the following themes of such challenges were discussed by the

interview participants. A detailed discussion of the themes illustrated in Table 4.3 is presented next.

The interview participants discussed the element of anger or hostility. Fourteen participants revealed that anger is one of the paramount challenges being faced by these social workers. Clients get angry, and they are unpredictable. Most of the time, they do not listen to the social workers and hostility from their side is one of the key indicators that they are not happy with the whole scenario. Participants also revealed that clients always blame others and are sad all the time, leading to angry and hostile behaviour. This attitude leads to an immense challenge for social workers as they cannot concentrate, and it ultimately interferes with their attention. Following are some participants' statements about anger/hostility as a challenge in dealing with involuntary clients:

> *"Well they are not open to speaking, and they don't want to share their issues completely. They are sometimes very angry because they are sent by force" (Participant # 11).*
>
> *"Well, they are always sad and angry. They blame others for their bad situations." (Participant #06).*
>
> *"They are unpredictable, they have mood swings, and you can predict their anger, and this creates obstacles during the meetings." (Participant #20).*

4.4.3.1.1　　Frustration and embarrassment

During the qualitative interviews, the element of frustration and embarrassment was discussed, with six participants reporting that their involuntary clients showed these two emotions. Frustration leads to their not revealing their real problems; they are not happy with their life and what is happening around them. At the same time, their embarrassment also hinders them from sharing their problems and this shy attitude creates hurdles. Some participants' statements follow about frustration and embarrassment as a challenge to dealing with involuntary clients:

> *"They are talking excessively or quiet and withdrawn. They sometimes overwhelm themselves." (Participant # 11).*
>
> *"They always blaming others and never take responsibility." (Participant # 16).*
>
> *"Most of the time, they lie because of their lack of confidence." (Participant # 09).*

4.4.3.1.2   Reluctance

The interviews also revealed an important challenge faced by social workers is clients' reluctant behaviour. Seventeen participants revealed that involuntary clients are reluctant to share their problems; they feel insecure that if they share their stories, then people will make fun of them. They do not speak the truth, and in many instances, they are not willing to share the true problem. This reluctant behaviour hampers the communication between social workers and involuntary clients and presents a great challenge for social workers to gain real insights from these clients. With this behaviour, the social workers are not able to come up with the right solution to the prevailing problem. Following are some participants' statements about reluctance as a challenge in dealing with involuntary clients.

> *"They lack confidence; they are not interested in engaging in any sort of conversation because they feel that they are not normal and the society is making fun of them rather than helping them". (Participant # 18).*
> *'They are sometimes very silent and speechless; they think that you would use their conversation against them'. (Participant # 12).*

4.4.3.1.3   Lack of confidence

Fifteen participants revealed that their involuntary clients lack self-confidence and are not confident in what they say and claim. They always look for someone to help them during a conversation, which disturbs the flow of communication. What follows are some participants' statements about a lack of confidence as a challenge in dealing with involuntary clients.

> *"In general cases, the involuntary clients lack the self-confidence to share their problems." (Participant # 10).*
> *"Due to this low self-esteem, they are not willing to discuss freely." (Participant # 12).*

4.4.3.1.4   Lack of discipline

Lack of discipline also emerged as a theme and challenge. Ten participants revealed that involuntary clients have a very casual attitude, not coming on time, t skipping appointments, not taking any interest in the conversation, not speaking the truth, and not sticking to their word. This behaviour disturbs the motivation and morale of social workers, hindering from becoming engaged with involuntary clients, and wasting their time, effort and energy. Some participants' statements about the lack of discipline as a challenge in dealing with involuntary clients follow.

'They are not disciplined at all and show a casual attitude." (Participant # 07).

"They often miss the appointments and show no interest in scheduled meetings." (Participant # 19).

"They take the meeting casually and show no interest in the conversation." (Participant # 11).

4.4.3.1.5 Lack of motivation

Ten participants reported that their clients show a lack of motivation and interest in the meetings set up with them. They are neither energetic nor enthusiastic, making it clear that they are being coerced to be there. They do not display any interest, even if the social workers try to approach them with empathy. Following are some participants' statements about lack of motivation as a challenge in dealing with involuntary clients.

"I don't see them as motivated. They are not enthusiastic due to ongoing personal issues." (Participant # 18).

"They lack motivation and have no interest in their core issues." (Participant # 11).

"I don't see any interest in their conversation and actions, and this is a sign of lack of motivation." (Participant # 09).

4.4.3.2 Experience with involuntary clients

Lack of willingness	Bad listeners	Flat face
Usage of wrong language	Dominance	Blame game
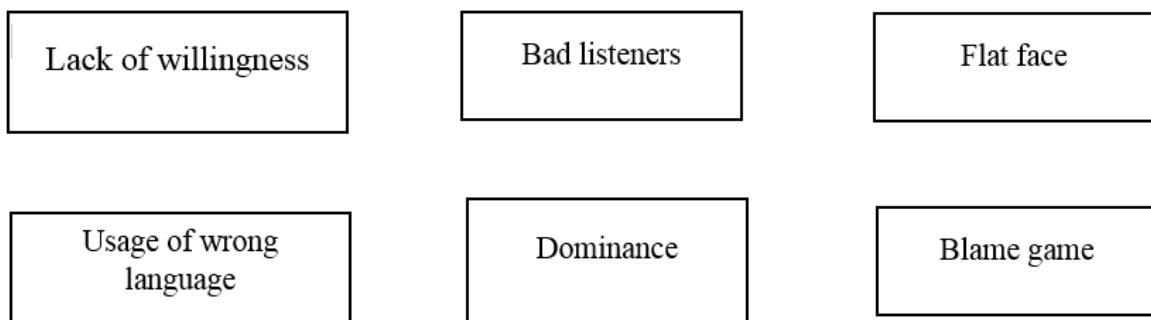
Figure 4.13: Themes related to experiences emerging from qualitative focused interviews

The researcher followed a particular data reporting technique, data structuring, to describe the extracted data, which is discussed in the next section. Please see Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Data structure and reporting process

1st order concept	2nd order themes or categories	Themes emerging
In most of the cases, clients are not willing to listen, they seem to be dissatisfied and reluctant and this leads to a bad experience in dealing with such clients. (P#12).	Dissatisfaction, displeasure, reluctance	Lack of willingness
They don't listen and in most of the instances, they disagree with what you say or advice. (P#1).	Rebel, revolt, disagree	Bad listeners
They look very serious, with no emotions on their face, their expressions are very serious, or I can say formal. (P#16).	Lack of emotions, serious expressions	Blank face
They are always sad and angry. They blame others for their bad situation. Also, they use abusive language during the conversation. (P#08).	Abusive, hostile and bad words	Usage of the wrong language
They are poor listeners and don't want to listen to any of your advice; they want to control you as a boss. (P#07)	Control, influence and power	Dominance
They blame their fate and curse their fate as well. (P#19). They also blame others like their family, friends and other associated people. (P#05).	Criticize, condemn and disapprove	Blame game

The statements on the left illustrate the process of how data structuring was conducted. The second order themes represent an abstraction from these raw data and these were then refined to the themes listed on the right.

The qualitative interviews revealed the experiences being faced by social workers, during which they raised the following themes. A detailed discussion of the themes illustrated in Table 4.11 above is presented next.

4.4.3.2.1   Summary of themes emerging with respect to experiences

The majority of the participants (15/21) stated they faced bad experiences with involuntary clients. The foremost bad experience was a lack of willingness. Involuntary clients were described as always dissatisfied, not listening and showing no eagerness to listen to advice, which would be beneficial for them. Hence, respondents were of the view that no matter how much time and effort they devote to them, the end result was a lack of interest from the involuntary clients. Such are bad listeners; they do not want to listen and do not agree with

suggestions. In short, they do not value the advice or the service. They were described as showing no emotion in most cases. The view was that they want to lead a formal discussion all the time and demonstrate passive aggression during the conversation, which leads to an uncomfortable situation for the social worker.

Another bad experience being faced by social workers is when clients use abusive language; they tend to shout and get out of control very easily. This creates a very tense environment and leads to a bad atmosphere. A further bad experience encountered was clients' dominance during the conversation. They want to dictate the entire conversation and put forward their own points to be considered without listening to the social worker; in this way, they sometimes act like a boss. They were reported as believing that they are right and following the right track. This attitude of dominance creates a one-sided conversation leading towards no result and resolution of the problem set.

Last but not least; the blame game aspect is often encountered. Blaming their own fate, weeping frequently, and cursing their own fate is highly evident. In most cases, they place the blame on others, considering others to be responsible for their current situation.

The above-mentioned is a summary of the key experiences being faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients. The kinds of negative experiences mentioned above create a bottleneck or a lack of resolution for social workers to come up with a powerful solution to the problems to be addressed. It can be seen that, while dealing with involuntary clients, these bad experiences lead to distress for social workers and, in some cases, the experiences distract them from their focus. The stated experiences are the most dominant ones, which lead toward ineffective communication between social workers and involuntary clients.

4.4.4   Findings from Leximancer generated an analysis of RQ2 data

The second research question of this study investigated the experiences and challenges the social workers face in delivering services to involuntary clients. To do the analysis in Leximancer, the researcher segregated the chunk of data related to experiences and challenges from the master transcript files. A folder containing 21 separate MS word files was opened outside of the Leximancer software. With these 21 files in a folder, the researcher then created a separate project inside Leximancer. After an initial run of the data in Leximancer, the researcher merged two pairs of words: challenges and challenge, clients and

client.

As the dataset for these two selected issues for RQ2, experiences and challenges, was relatively small, the researcher made two different iterations in Leximancer to obtain the leading themes relating to this question. The first was conducted to generate a concept map at 35% theme size, which gave eight different themes: experiences, clients, challenges, attitude, conversation, angry, control, and life. These eight themes were found to have 20 associated concepts. Table 4.12 lists these themes and their connectivity scores and associated concepts. For the connected concepts under each theme, also see figure 4.14. Not surprisingly, the experience was found to be the leading theme, with a 100% connectivity score, as in this analysis, participants were sharing their experiences. Clients were the second theme, with a 71% connectivity score as experiences were elicited from dealing with clients. The third leading theme in the 35% thematic map challenged. This is because the participants were asked about different challenges about the clients. This theme list, however, did not offer any insights into the challenges and experiences faced by social workers in dealing with involuntary clients. This is why the researcher then checked the words related to the leading themes and concepts to make sense of the data.

Table 4.12: Eight leading themes under 35% theme size in Leximancer

Themes	Connectivity	Related concepts
Experience	100%	Experience, bad, client, share, time, day, social
Clients	71%	Clients, listen, willing, issue, ready, speak, tell
Challenges	24%	Challenges, lack, key
Attitude	18%	Attitude, hostile, feel
Conversation	12%	Conversation, difficult, take
Angry	11%	Angry, problem
Control	06%	Control, anger
Life	03%	Life
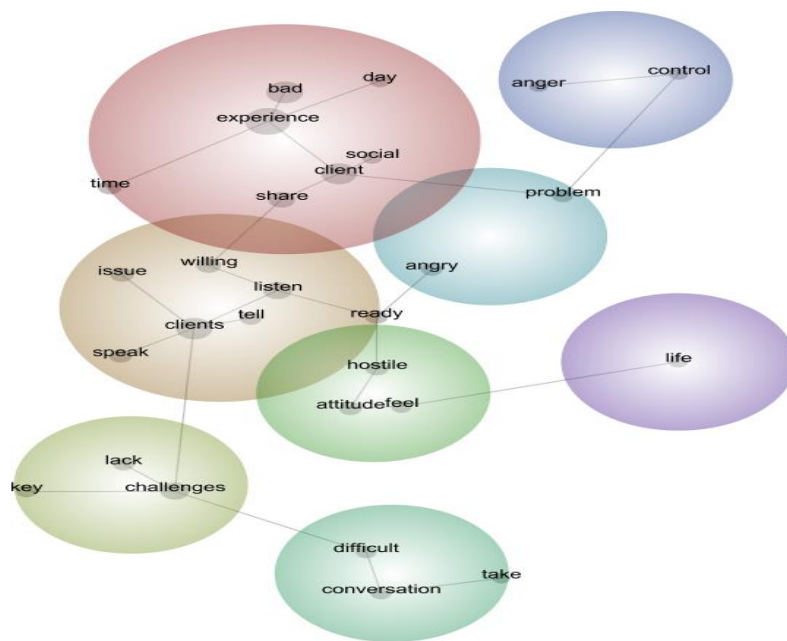
Figure 4.14: Thematic map combining eight themes

For the succinctness of our analysis in relation to the question set in this section, the researcher limited the concentration on two specific themes: experiences and challenges.

4.4.4.1 Bad experiences

For experience, Leximancer driven data analysis gave 24 related words, as depicted in figure 4.15 and listed in Table 4.12. Bad is the most strongly connected concept to the theme of experience. This means almost all the participants shared that the bad experiences in dealing with involuntary clients. On this account, one participant noted, *"I don't remember any good experience as such, but yes, there are a couple of bad experiences I can share"* (Participant # 11). On the other hand, a few of the participants had an opposing view. They enjoyed a mixture of both good and bad, *"I have had some good and bad experiences while dealing with these sorts of personalities"* (Participant # 5). Another related, *"It could be very pleasant and also it could be a very unpleasant and bad experience"* (Participant # 2).

4.4.4.2 Examples of bad experiences

Leximancer generated concept maps, and concept lists could not show all the other important concepts derived from the data. To overcome this limitation, the researcher checked the background contexts of the quotations that the researcher obtained via the query of two words: experiences + bad. By doing this, the researcher explored some examples of bad experiences. Table 4.13 outlines ten representative quotes that were shared by the

participants. In a nutshell, from the data, it can be said that the participants found the clients to have a dominating attitude, with "shouting" and without any "smile". Clients were also observed as blaming their fate and particularly others for their woes. The participants also narrated that the clients behave in a tough manner using "abusive language".
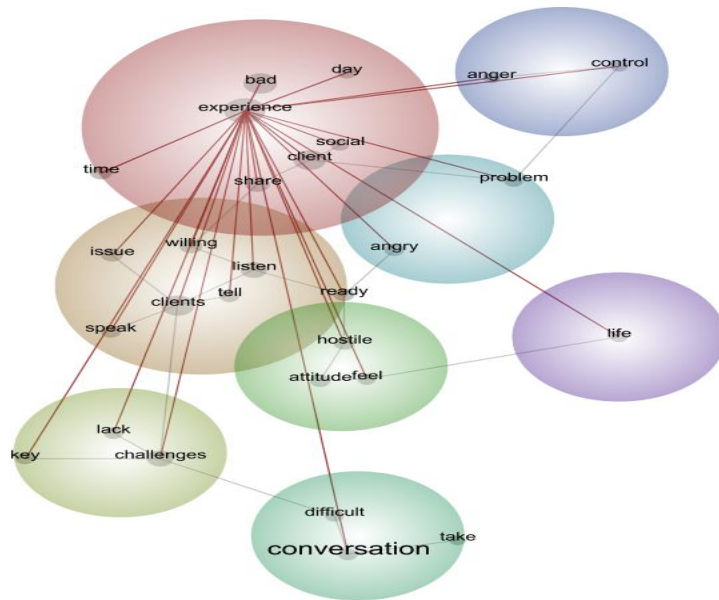
Figure 4.15: Conceptual map of the theme of experience

Table 4.13: Representative quotes of bad experiences

Participants	Examples of bad experiences	Interpretive codes
SW-10	No smile on their faces.	No smile
SW-9	He started yelling at us loudly.	Shouting
SW-14	The client was not speaking and was crying all the time and he was actually cursing his fate.	Blaming self
SW-2	They are always sad and angry. They blame others for their bad situation.	Blaming others
SW-5	The client was so disturbed and started using abusive language.	Use of abusive language
SW-15	The client was more than hostile, he was shouting like anything and using abusive language.	
SW-12	The guy was so abusive, he was shouting, yelling in my face, saying bad words.	
SW-20	The client was totally out of control, he was a drug addict and was using all sorts of abusive words.	
SW-17	The client had a lot of aggression and was not even willing to listen.	Dominance
SW-21	They are bad listeners, don't want to listen to any of your advice, they want to dominate you as a boss.	

Related Word-Like	Count	Likelihood	
bad	28	100%	
client	14	67%	
day	5	62%	
share	6	50%	
social	3	50%	
clients	12	46%	
listen	5	45%	
time	5	38%	
willing	3	38%	
angry	3	38%	
issue	3	33%	
speak	2	29%	
life	2	29%	
ready	2	25%	
problem	2	25%	
anger	1	20%	
tell	1	17%	
feel	1	17%	
control	1	17%	
hostile	1	14%	
lack	1	14%	
key	1	11%	
conversation	1	10%	
challenges	1	04%	
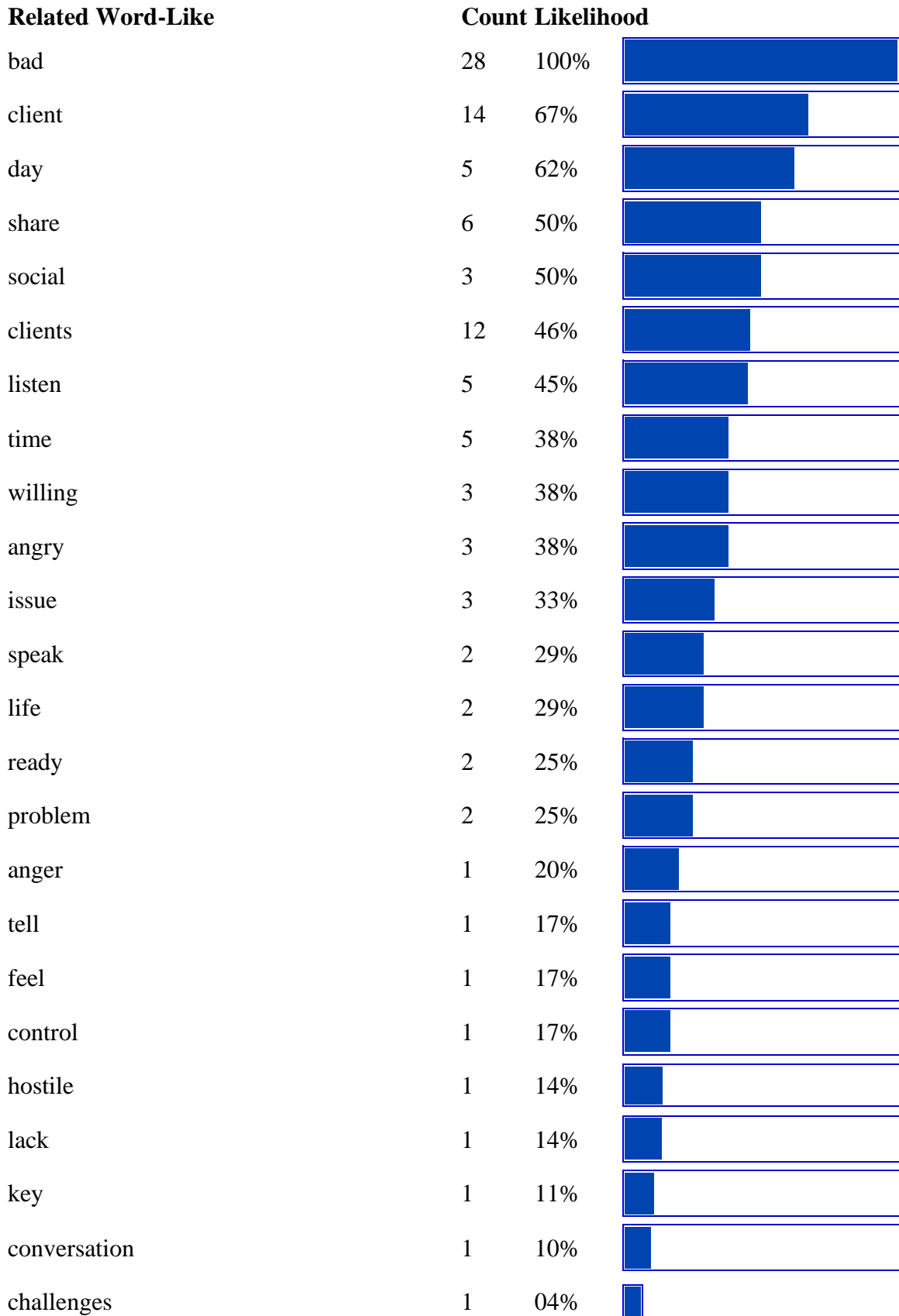
Figure 4.16: Related words under the theme of experience

4.4.4.3 Challenges

Another key theme the researcher explored was the challenges that the social workers faced in dealing with involuntary clients. Most of the participants experienced numerous challenges but their views regarding challenges were diverse. In exploring the associated concepts that contributed to the theme of the challenge, the researcher constructed a conceptual map, see figure 4.17 and figured out the associated lists of 21 concepts, see figure 4.18, in Leximancer.

To understand the true meaning of challenges, initially, the researcher made queries of text in the four most relevant concepts related to challenges. These four most related concepts are: "face" (70% of likelihood), "key" (56%), "speak" (43%), "lack" (43%), and "difficult" (33%). Checking these four key concepts associated challenges were not enough for us to understand the deeper insights of the natures of challenges participants faced. Thus, the researcher also checked the background texts of 17 other associated concepts listed in Table 4.13. Finally, based on the data, the researcher developed a list of five emergent challenges; see Table 4.14 that participants experienced in delivering their services to their clients. These challenges are (1) lies, (2) listening and understanding, (3) motivating to speak, (4) willingness to speak, and (5) behavioural rudeness.
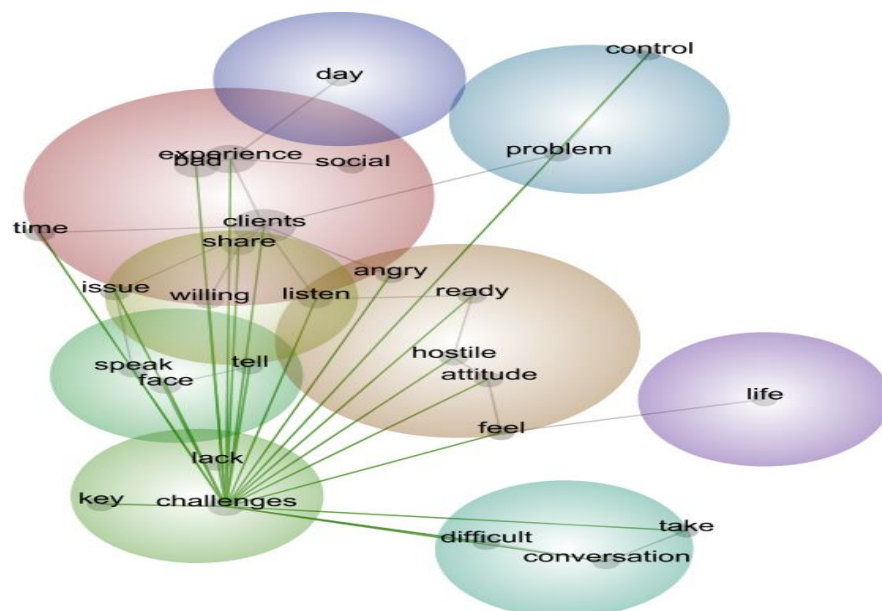
Figure 4.17: Conceptual map of the theme of challenges

Table 4.14: Emergent challenges and representative quotes

Emergent challenges	Representative quotes
Lies	SW-2: Talking lies is the biggest challenge that I face at work SW-17: Most of the time they lie because of their lack of confidence. SW-15: they don't speak the truth so it's hard to gauge the real issue from their perspective above all in most of the cases they tell a lie. SW-5: it's difficult to trust them because in most of the cases the lie
Listening and Understanding	SW-20: The key challenge is they are not willing to listen and understand
Motivating to Speak	SW-11: The biggest challenge is to make them speak about their issue SW-5: they are emotionally not stable---- they don't want to speak
Willingness	SW-6: they have zero will SW-17: they are shy, not willing to share any information what so ever.
Behavioural Rudeness	SW-16: their rude behaviour, they don't talk in a right manner or I can say they don't behave well, they are angry with hostile behaviour. SW-11: Sometimes client is very angry, shows a lot of aggression, rude attitude, not ready to listen to whatever we communicate. SW-21: The foremost challenge is anger from the client; they lose control very easily SW-14: they take you as an enemy, so this negative behaviour makes this conversation more complex and brings in challenges.

4.4.4.3.1   Challenge 1: Lies of the clients

One of the dominant challenges was observed in the data that clients were frequently lying. Table 4.14 presents some representative quotes in this support of this challenge. Data also informed us that the clients' lack of confidence in the service providers (or social workers) was one of the key reasons for lying. Participants also shared that due to this habit of lying, there was an issue of trust crisis between clients and social workers. Consequently, social workers could not identify the real problem of clients.

4.4.4.3.2   Challenge 2: Listening and understanding

Another challenge emerging from the data was that the clients did not have any intention to either list to or act upon the advice offered by the social worker. See Table 4.14 for sample quotes.

4.4.4.3.3 Challenge 3: Letting the clients speak

Another significant challenge that was occasionally faced was a situation that went beyond the refusal to engage; some clients went as far as refusing to speak. Participants mentioned that the emotional instability of the clients was one of the pivotal reasons for not speaking to social workers. See Table 4.14 for supporting quotes. Of the 21 participants, two presented this challenge.

4.4.4.3.4 Challenge 4: Clients' willingness to share

Clients' willingness to share any information was another challenge. In this regard, one of the participants (Participant #6) stated: "they (clients) have zero will". Other participants (Participant #17) added that the clients were "shy" and for this, they did not share "any information what so ever."

4.4.4.3.5 Challenge 5: Clients' behavioural aspects

Behavioural aspects of the clients were the most dominant challenge observed in the data. Around five participants out of 21 stated that clients' behaviour is one of the main challenges they faced. To our participants, the clients were very "angry" "rude", "aggressive" and "hostile" in their manner. Representative quotes have been shown in Table 4.14, indicating that clients lost control of themselves owing to this rough attitude. Data also confirmed that with this attitude among the clients, the social workers were treated as enemies of clients, which made the communication environment complex.

Related Word-Like	Count	Likelihood	
face	7	70%	
key	5	56%	
speak	3	43%	
lack	3	43%	
difficult	3	33%	
share	3	25%	
willing	2	25%	
angry	2	25%	
issue	2	22%	
listen	2	18%	
tell	1	17%	
feel	1	17%	
control	1	17%	
clients	9	16%	
attitude	1	14%	
hostile	1	14%	
ready	1	12%	
take	1	12%	
conversation	1	10%	
time	1	08%	
bad	1	04%	
experience	1	02%	
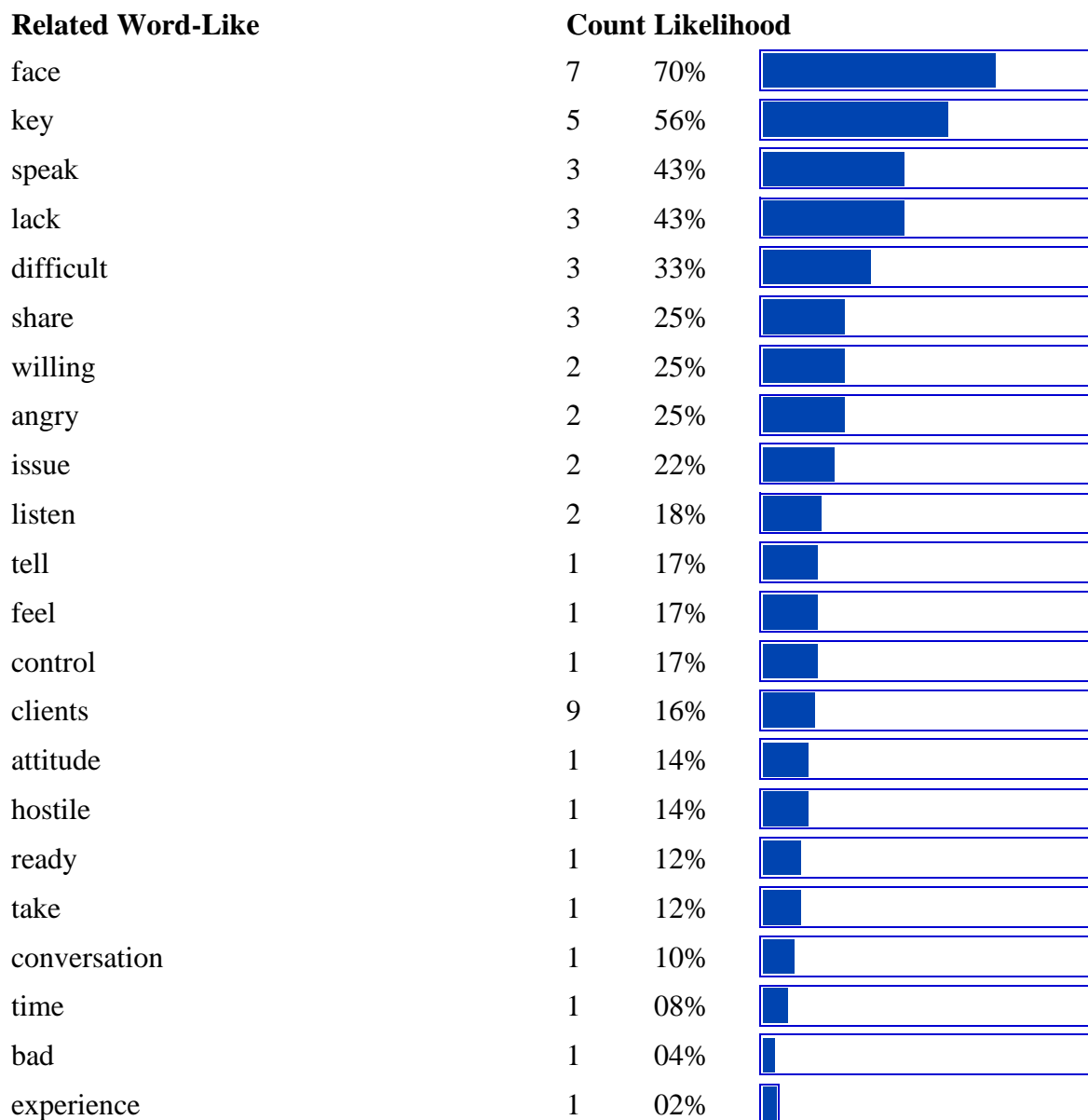
Figure 4.18: Related words under the theme of challenges

4.4.5   Findings from manual analysis of RQ3 data

'Are there any culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies used by social workers to deal with involuntary clients in the UAE?'

4.5.5.1   City-centric themes analysis

Research Question 3 was explored through in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore any difference of strategies among various social centres situated in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia in dealing with involuntary clients. Table 4.15 below illustrates the city-centric strategies to deal with involuntary clients. A detailed discussion follows.

Table 4.15: City wise themes emerging

Cities	Themes emerging
Abu Dhabi	Better communication
	Empathy
	Positive attitude
	Helping nature
Al Ain	Client profile
	Atmosphere
	Freedom of expression
	Confidence building
Al Gharbia	Better communication
	Atmosphere
	Rapport building
	Internal and external training

4.5.5.2 Analysis

The key objective of Research Question 3 was to explore the city-centric (the various centres) strategies being used by social workers to deal with involuntary clients. The research question was built on understanding if there is a difference in strategies and approaches between the centres when dealing with involuntary clients. Table 4.15 above demonstrates the city-centric breakdown of the themes or strategies regarding dealing with involuntary clients. It can be noted that there is some difference between strategies among the three social service centres. The common strategies among the three service centres are 'better communication' and 'atmosphere' to deal with involuntary clients. Following are the common responses from the social workers pertaining to better communication and atmosphere.

> *'I truly believe that better communication solves most of the issues, if we communicate clearly, listen to them and advise the best solution then there are brighter chances that these involuntary clients understand what we try to educate them and an opportunity to bring their life back. It's all about effective communication.' (Participant # 06).*
>
> *'The place where the conversation takes place needs to be client-friendly, must have a life or I may say must give them a comfort zone so that they can talk freely. So, the ambience is also one of the factors'. (Participant # 07)*

With regard to other emerging themes/strategies from three social centres, Table 4.16 illustrates these themes along with the corresponding quotes. From the thematic content analysis, the themes illustrated in Table 4.16 are the most dominant ones on which the interviewees focused during the interview process.

Table 4.16: Themes and corresponding quotes

Themes emerging	Corresponding quotes
Empathy	*'You need to understand their problem and listen to their issues with full devotion and understand their feelings'. (Participant # 05).*
Positive attitude	*'Attitude makes the difference and if you demonstrate a positive attitude towards their problem by giving them the best advice and showcasing the brighter side, then the problem is half solved'. (Participant # 02).*
Helping nature	*'One needs to have a helping mindset, you need to have an attitude that you have to help someone who is already in trouble and with this attitude you can win the battle'. (Participant # 03).*
Client profile	*'Understand the client profile first, his or her background, both personal and professional, so that you can root out the real issue and advise the solution'. (Participant # 07).*
Freedom of expression	*'Let them talk and vent. It's really important. If we allow them to speak then it gives them more confidence to share their problems'. (Participant # 11).*
Confidence building	*'Confidence is the key and if we talk to them and make them realize that they are important then it enhances their confidence level which is really important in dealing with such types of cliental'. (Participant # 15).*
Rapport building	*'At the earlier stage rapport building is very important and it develops a strong communication bridge'. (Participant # 18).*
Internal and external training	*'Training makes us learn new technique and thus facilitates us to deal better with involuntary clients'. (Participant # 21).*

It can be observed from Table 4.16 that there is a variation in the strategies in dealing with involuntary clients. The most dominant themes were 'better communication', 'atmosphere' 'empathy', 'positive attitude', 'client profile', 'helping nature', 'freedom of expression', 'confidence building', 'rapport building' and 'internal and external training'. These themes are actually directed towards better dealing with involuntary clients. Empathy needs to be there alongside an understanding of the problems faced by clients. Getting clients to engage and actually, vocalise was another challenge the social worker respondents faced while they dealt with clients. Attitude plays an important role. With a helping nature and a positive mindset, social workers are able to achieve better engagement with the objective to solve the clients' pertinent issues. The client profile is important; who the client is, his or her family background, professional outlook and problem history play an instrumental role in coming up with the right solution. While dealing with involuntary clients, one of the key strategies is to let them express themselves freely and develop a sound conversation. If you allow them to speak with full confidence, it gives you an opportunity to solve their issue and give them the right advice. At the same time rapport, the building is important, especially at the initial

stage. So, if good rapport is built, then it is much easier to strike a positive conversation. Lastly, to deal with these types of clients, proper training is required as it gives an opportunity to learn new techniques. Both in house and professional workshops play an important role, which ultimately helps the social workers to deal with involuntary clients in a better way.

4.4.6   Findings from leximancer generated an analysis of RQ3 data

The third research question is to understand the geographical variation of the strategies used by involuntary clients in UAE. To achieve this, the researcher interviewed social workers of three major states of UAE: 1) Abu Dhabi (AD), 2) Al Ghariba, (AG), and 3) Al-Ain (AA). The researcher began the analysis with the computer-assisted data analysis tool of Leximancer to avoid any researcher bias in the analysis. Initially, the researcher created a separate project in Leximancer for each of the states with their own separate single files. Once the researcher ran the project in Leximancer, some similar concepts were found that demanded to be merged for a better result. The following concepts have been merged:

a) Client and clients
b) Deal and dealing
c) Issue and issues
d) Problem and problems
e) Strategies and strategy

Nine iterations were completed (3 project data files x 3 times), using data from three different cities, and a concept map in Leximancer to fine tune our emerging concepts. These nine iterations gave 15 leading concepts for each of the cities. Table 4.17 lists the key concepts that emerged in the three different cities, along with their counts. Figures 4.18, 4.19, and 4.20 reflect the co-occurrences and the interconnections of the concepts found in the three different locations. Of these 15 leading concepts, most are similar, while some were unique in each city.

Table 4.17: Concept list for each state

Abu Dhabi Concepts	Concept counts (n)	Al Ghariba Concepts	Concept counts (n)	Al Ain Concepts	Concept counts (n)
Client (s)	38	Client(s)	30	Client (S)	43
Group	26	Individual	18	Involuntary	18
Experience	25	Group	11	Group	11
Involuntary	22	Deal	11	Strategy	09
Deal	12	Problem	10	Key	08
Problem	11	Social	07	Support	07
Issue(s)	10	Different	06	Issues	06
Strategy	08	Solution	06	Experience	06
Time	06	Issues	06	Job	05
Conversation	05	Effective	06	Problem	05
Engagement	05	Work	05	different	05
Social	04	Intervention	05	Feel	05
Taking	04	Engaged	05	Communication	05
Engaged	04	Attention	05	Develop	04
Confidence	03	Time	05	Time	04

4.4.6.1   Common and contrasting strategies

One of the objectives of this research was to understand the commonalities of the strategies used by involuntary clients in three different cities. To gain insights into these common practices, the researcher relied on an integrated concept map of these three cities. To do that, the researcher created a master project amalgamating all the data of three cities in a separate file. The researcher found 24 leading concepts from the combined project iteration of these three projects. Table 4.18 shows the combined concept lists of three different cities.

Given that, this study is concerned with social workers' dealing with the involuntary clients, both individually and in groups, it is unsurprising that five key concepts were observed in the combined concept lists. Table 4.19 shows these: clients, deal, individual, involuntary, group. These five concepts are also evident as leading concepts in the city-specific separate concept lists shown in Table 4.18.
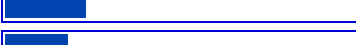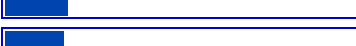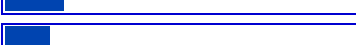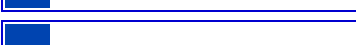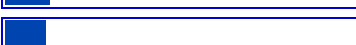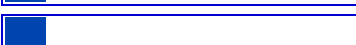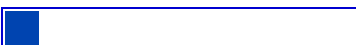
As our primary interest was to know about strategies used in three different cities, the researcher studied the background texts of the concept "strategy". Even though the concept was ranked in the seventh position in the combined concept lists (Table 4.19), the researcher visited the 27 instances (23%) of the whole corpus of data. To know the clear meaning,

contexts, and types of strategies in three different cities, the researcher also derived the 23 associated words with the concept of strategy, as shown in figure 4.18. Of all these 23 words associated with strategy, listed in figure 4.18, the researcher selected five of the more relevant words: confidence, communication, background, engagement, and conversation. These words are also included in the key combined concept lists outlined in Table 4.2For instance, for the concept "engaged" there were 13 instances, "conversation" had 12, "engagement" had 11, "communication" had 9, "confidence" had 7 and "background" had 6 instances. The researcher also subjectively considered three key concepts: "problem" "time" and "attention" from Table 4.19.

Thus, the above analysis of the words associated with the concept of "strategy" and the other key concepts mentioned above informed us that three different cities used the following strategies to handle the involuntary clients.

a) Engaged (engagement) strategy
b) Conversation strategy
c) Communication strategy
d) Confidence strategy
e) Problem-centric strategy
f) Time strategy, and
g) Attention strategy

Table 4.18: Combined concept list for the three cities

Word-Like	Count	Relevance	
clients	115	100%	
deal	81	70%	
individual	46	40%	
involuntary	46	40%	
group	45	39%	
problem	32	28%	
issue	28	24%	
strategy	27	23%	
experience	21	18%	
social	19	17%	
key	15	13%	
time	15	13%	
need	14	12%	
start	14	12%	
engaged	13	11%	
work	12	10%	
solution	12	10%	
conversation	12	10%	
engagement	11	10%	
positive	10	09%	
job	9	08%	
communication	9	08%	
support	7	06%	
confidence	7	06%	
background	6	05%	

Related Word-Like	Count	Likelihood
confidence	4	57%
communication	5	56%
background	3	50%
work	5	42%
experience	8	38%
need	5	36%
group	16	36%
individual	16	35%
positive	3	30%
problem	7	29%
deal	20	25%
clients	27	23%
involuntary	9	20%
engagement	2	18%
solution	2	17%
conversation	2	17%
issue	4	14%
support	1	14%
key	2	13%
job	1	11%
problems	1	11%
social	2	11%
start	1	07%

Figure 4.18: Associated words with the concept of strategy

4.4.6.2 Engaged (Engagement) strategy

One of the key strategies that were dominant across all three cities was to be engaged with involuntary clients. Even though the concept lists of Table 4.18 shows these two terms separately ("engaged" (13 counts) and "engagement" (11 counts)), the researcher considered them as the same strategy in the discussion due to their proximate meaning and perspective. In relation to the engagement strategy, data revealed that participants expressed ways of ascertaining that the clients are engaged. For example, participants in AD city noted that "involvement is the key factor… that tells us they [clients] are now engaged". Participants of three different cities differed in their opinions about how the clients become engaged. For instance, participants from AA argued checking for positives signs, eye contact, and the facial expressions of the clients to confirm the engagement. On the contrary, participants from AG city stressed team treatment and listening as strategies for making clients engaged while the

AD participants placed importance on their level of involvement. Table 4.19 presents the data structure for the engagement strategy.

Table 4.19: Data structure for engaged strategy

Engagement Aspects	Data corpus	Cities
Involvement level	"their level of involvement is the key factor which tells us that they are now engaged"	AD
Positive sign	"If he[client] is showing a positive sign, listening carefully, it means that he is engaged"	AA
Eye contact	"One more important thing, their eye contract, a very important sign of engagement"	AA
Facial expression	"Their [clients'] facial expressions and involvement in the conversation would may you able to understand that they are engaged"	AA
Team treatment	"I believe that groups are engaged when you treat them as a team"	AG
Listening	"Above all listening to the solution is one of a few signs that they are engaged"	AG

In relation to the engagement strategy, the researcher found 11 instances in Leximancer. Participants of all cities cited the ways to achieve the engagement strategy. Closer investigation of the data indicated different ways to have engagement in different cities. Notable means to achieve engagement included: showing "full attention" to clients (AD), developing "trust and respect" with clients (AA), and using "softer conversation tones" (AG) with clients. Relevant data is also shown in Table 4.20 which describes more strategies of engagement, including a right place for negotiation, valuing the person, checking clients' background, giving full freedom, and avoiding negative talk in discussion with clients.

Table 4.20: Data structure for engagement strategy

Aspects of Engagement	Data corpus	Cities
Right place for negotiation	"The first thing is to prepare the right and appropriate place to conduct the session"	AD
Valuing the person	"Showing respect and care show the value of the person which leads to more cooperation and engagement"	AD
Background check	"A brief background check of the individual so that we can address the issue effectively"	AG
Full freedom	Give[ing] them[clients] full space to talk and share the problems"	AG

| Avoiding negatives | "To encourage engagement, we need to consider the fact that… never talk about their problem first". | AA |

4.4.6.3 Conversation strategy

In the combined list of concepts (Table 4.19) generated in Leximancer, the researcher found "conversation" as another key strategy to deal with clients. The Leximancer Table 4.2 showed 12 instances of conversation as a strategy mentioned by the participants of the three cities. Data-informed us that good conversation strategy leads to effective "engagement" and "communication" with the clients. For instance, participants in AA city noted that in this respect "involvement in the conversation would enable understanding that clients are engaged and motivated". Participants of AD city, on the other hand, said that avoiding negative discussion upfront might start an effective conversation. In this regard, one participant of AD city opined that "when I meet them [clients], I don't talk about their problem, I just tell them what my problems are both personal and professional and ask them for help… now the real conversation starts". Data excerpts in Table 4.21 disclose fundamental issues in conversation, different ways of developing an effective conversation, and the outcome of effective conversation. As per this data, developing a "comfort zone" in the session and using a "humanistic approach" in dealing with clients may create the necessary foundation for an effective conversation with them. Building a strong "confidence" with clients can ease the path to the conversation. Finally, participants shared that they can reap the benefits of effective conversation through "motivating" the clients to be "open" to share their experiences with the service providers.

Table 4.21: Data structure for conversation strategy

Ways/ outcomes of Conversation	Data corpus	Cities
Pillar to effective conversation		
Comfort zone	"The first and foremost is to make them realize that they are in their comfort zone—to start an effective conversation"	AD
Humanistic approach	"You need to have a positive attitude and a humanistic approach—to get into the conversation"	AG
Ways to establish conversation		
Confidence building	"I make sure that the conversation is between me and the client and this refers to confidence building"	AD
Outcomes to effective conversation		
Openness	[The consequences of confidence building motivate the] "client to easily share their experience in a much more	AD

	open way”	
Signalling motivation	“Their involvement in the conversation signals if the client is motivated or not”	AG

4.4.6.4 Communication strategy

The researcher found nine instances of "communication" in the combined concept list (Table 4.19). The researcher visited the corpus of data under these nine instances to know the meaning and insights of communication in the context of involuntary social clients. Participants of the sample three cities were different in their views on the importance of communication as a strategy and the ways to implement it. For example, participants of AD city considered communication as one of the key requirements to "resolve" the problems of involuntary clients: "if you want to resolve someone's issue if you have good communication with someone who is lost in a paradise". Others, participants of AA city argued that without communication, social workers could not help the involuntary clients: "No communication means you can't help them". Data also gave us the meaning that was inferred by the social worker respondents to communication. According to AG city participants, communication meant: "listening to the clients carefully and paying attention to the client's feeling and opinion."

Data also informed us that collecting the right "information" about the clients can dictate the right communication skills required to deal with involuntary clients. In this regard, one participant of AA city shared: "once I have the required information, I am then all set for communication with these involuntary client". Other participants stressed the quality of communication to be set up with clients. One statement from AA city was that "clear and honest communication is vital".

The question is how effective communication can be established. Participants of AA city argued that social workers could follow a nonconforming and positive mindset to establish effective communication as the issues to discuss might be "sensitive".

One noted: "the key strategy is giving them confidence, telling them that we are here to help not to confront. These positive vibes create a good balance of communication since you are dealing with sensitive clients". Regarding the outcome of effective communication, participants viewed that "it helps social workers comprehend the problem in depth and to work on it" (AG city).

4.4.6.5 Confidence strategy

The other strategy that evidenced in the data was a confidence strategy. The Leximancer driven concept list (Table 4.18) gave us seven instances of confidence in the total data set of three different cities. Participants from AD shared that building clients' confidence in themselves and in the process of engagement is the "essence" of working with involuntary clients as they come to social workers "once they have already lost their confidence, self-belief and esteem". Data references with the concept of confidence demonstrated ways to develop confidence between involuntary clients and social workers. Participants from different cities held different views. Participants from AA argued for giving chances to clients to speak for themselves and letting them share their story first. In complete contrast, participants from AG were in favour of taking advice from senior clients in dealing with these groups of clients. Representative quotes showing ways to develop confidence are shown in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Data structure for confidence strategy

Ways of developing confidence: Data excerpts	Cities
"Letting them speak [for themselves]"	AA
"Letting them tell their story first"	AA
"Letting them feel they are important"	AA
"Letting them share their problems"	AG
"Letting the clients vent and speak first"	AD
"Taking advice from seniors"	AG
"Discussing personal and professional problems"	AD

4.4.6.6 Problem-centric strategy

The researcher's inductive lens inside the data indicated that a problem-centric strategy was one of the other key strategies in dealing with involuntary clients. Participants stated that the process of working with the clients mainly starts with problem identification. In this connection, one participant of AA argued for developing client profiling based on the nature of their problem: "I firstly do the detailed analysis of the client, who he or she is, where they are coming from, why they are being sent in here and what the key issue is. Then I decide on how many visits are required, depending upon the nature of the problem". Another participant from AD stressed the importance of addressing the problem first: "You have to start with the most important parts of the problem". This respondent added that an efficient solution is also easily derived if the problem is understood clearly: "After listening to her problem, the solution was really there".

Data also indicated that the problems of different clients "were complicated" and were different based on the clients' needs: "A small problem for one person can seem like a mountain of stress for another". This diversity in problems required diverse solution techniques. Participants shared that the clients blamed "social and environmental aspects" as the root cause of the problems. However, our data have not supported the singling out of the problem-solving strategy because of the social and environmental diversity of each city considered, and, by inference, of each state.
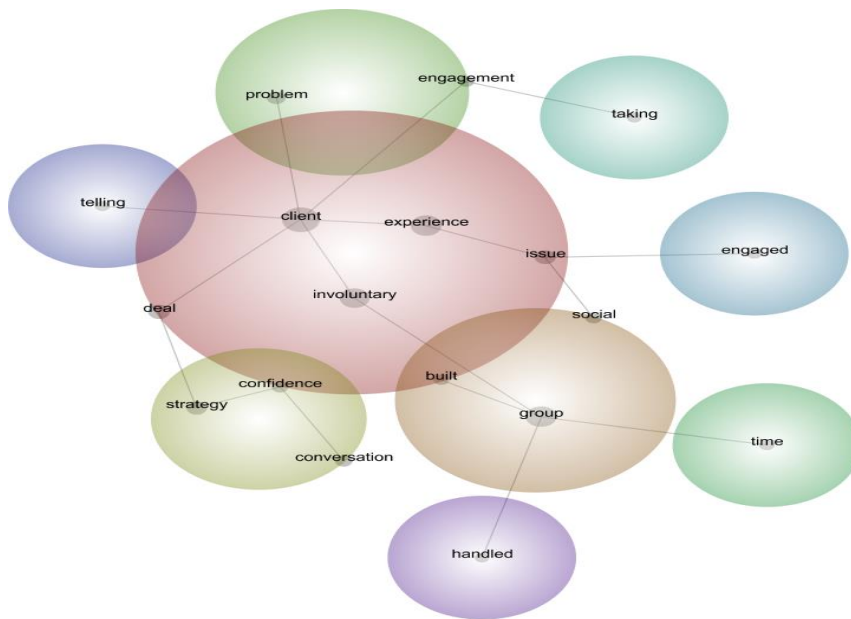
Figure 4.19: Concept map for Abu Dhabi at 50 % theme size
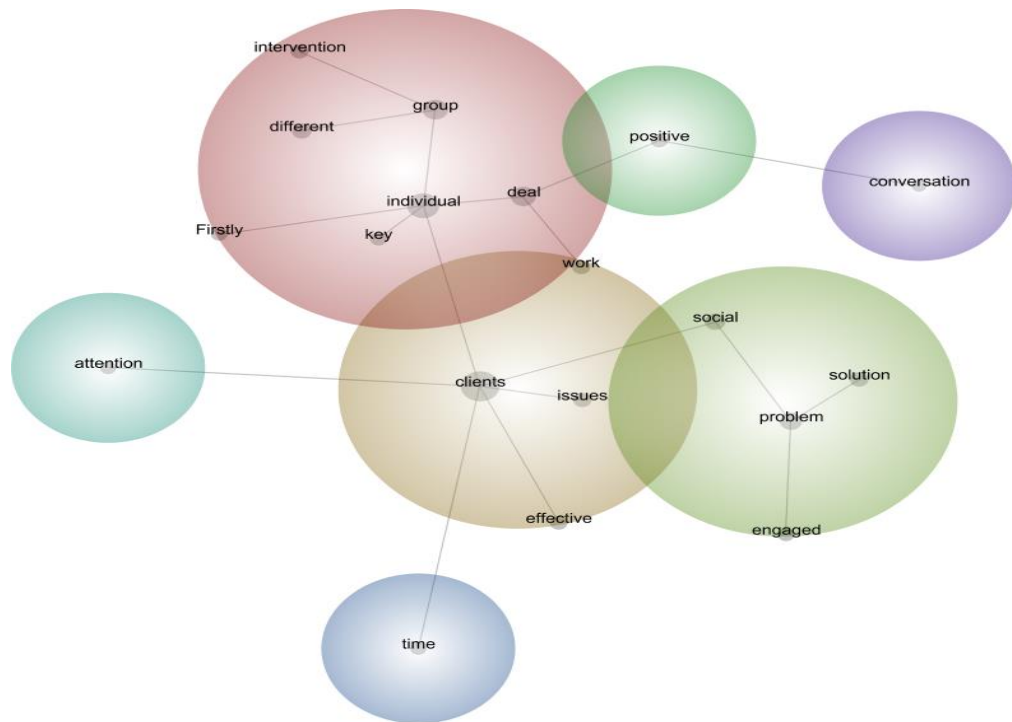
Figure 4.20: Concept map for Al Ghariba at 50 % theme size
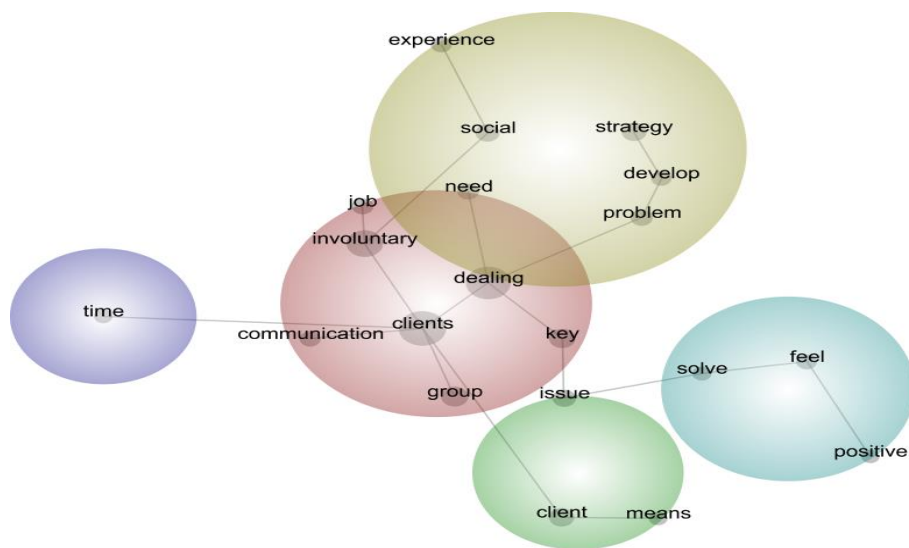
Figure 4.21: Concept of Al -Ain at 50% theme size

Three iterations of concept maps in Leximancer were made to fine-tune the emerging concepts so that they would become more relevant. Our three concept map iterations were: 1) at 35% 2) at 40% and, 3) at 50%.

Iteration 1: 35% Theme size	**Themes Include:** Individual, clients, social, solution, emerged, conversation, experience, engagement, and confidence.

| Iteration 2: 40% Theme size | **Themes Include:** Individual, clients, social, positive, time, and engagement, |
| Iteration 3: 50% Theme size | **Themes include:** Clients, experience, solution, positive, support, and engagement. |

4.5 Chapter summary

During the in-depth semi-structured interviews, the social worker participants were asked to expand on specific aspects of their interactions with their involuntary clients. These questions dealt primarily with the types of strategies they used with both individual clients and groups of clients, whether they were the same or different strategies, what strategies were used to encourage participation or engagement, and what indicators were used by the social worker to gauge the level of participation from the involuntary clients. Second, the social workers were asked to detail the challenges and experiences they faced in dealing with involuntary clients. Finally, the geographical variation of the strategies was measured to understand any differences in strategies being used by social workers within the three selected UAE cities: Abu Dhabi, Alain and Al Gharbia. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the thematic analysis performed on the compiled transcripts of 21 interviews paint a picture of the thoughts of these workers on their daily work in relation to clients placed in their care involuntarily. To validate these findings and to ensure the data reliability and authentication, a Leximancer generated analysis was conducted. In the next chapter, the findings of this analysis will be discussed, with the aim of finding certain specific aspects that can help form a best practice model for social workers to deal with involuntary clients in the United Arab Emirates.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, a detailed qualitative analysis was performed by using a manual thematic content analysis performed by the researcher and an automated one by Leximancer software. The objective for using two methods for data analysis was to validate the findings and to avoid any sort of bias in the data findings. When comparing the outcomes from Leximancer and the thematic content analysis, it was found that both approaches gave similar results regarding the strategies when dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE. Hence, this comparison proves the reliability of the qualitative interview findings used in this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Chapter overview

A summary of the findings from the qualitative stage of the study is presented in this chapter. The managerial implications of these inquiries, along with their theoretical support, are also discussed at length, followed by the study's limitations and suggested areas of future research. The chapter concludes with final remarks from the study findings.

5.2   Discussion

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed apparent gaps in the area of dealing with involuntary clients. Thus, the following research objectives were developed:

- *To identify social workers' current strategies to engage with involuntary clients.*
- *To ascertain the experience and challenges being faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients.*
- *To determine culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies for dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE.*

The following discussion is based on the research objectives set for this study. The discussion is organised in the following sequence:

1. A summary of the qualitative focused interviews
2. Theoretical contributions of the study
3. Managerial implications
4. Study limitations
5. Future research directions
6. Conclusion

Focused interviews were used to explore the current and future strategies, along with the challenges in dealing with involuntary clients. The findings were extracted from 21 participants from three metropolitan cities of the UAE: Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. An interview protocol was prepared, based on the results of the literature review, to explore the probable factors influencing the area of interest and to have a detailed comprehension of the study area. Over the course of this discussion, three different types of aspects that need to be taken into consideration when creating a best practices model for the efficient management of resistant and involuntary clients in the United Arab Emirates were

considered.

Firstly, helpful strategies social workers identified in dealing with involuntary clients are discussed, and the type of aspects that would need to be replicated when creating the best practices model. These are presented under the heading of 'Important factors to consider when creating a best practice model'. Secondly, aspects are detailed which have proven to be a challenge, together with and that which a best practices model should strive to avoid. These are provided under the heading of 'Challenges in dealing with involuntary clients'. Lastly, a detailed discussion is given on the culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies for dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE. Taken together, these interviews resulted in some interesting findings.

5.2.1 Summary of the qualitative interviews

This section is linked with the findings of the first research objective:

> *To identify social workers' current strategies to engage with involuntary clients.*

5.2.1.1 Research Objective 1

In this section, the aim is to use the insights gained from the thematic content analysis to generate a set of factors that should be included, or are necessary, for the social worker in order to generate the aforementioned best practice model, designed specifically to address the issue of dealing with involuntary clients in the United Arab Emirates.

Many of the social workers interviewed made it a point to mention the importance of establishing a rapport with their clients as a central strategy in helping them. Especially as the clients were there due to orders and not of their own volition, the social workers deemed this step an important one. One means of establishing this rapport was listening carefully to the clients and treating them as important. The rapport was also perceived as a stepping stone towards confidentiality and trust building between the social worker and the involuntary client. Clearly, there were a few different ways that the social workers liked to establish a rapport or build trust with their clients. These may differ based on the social worker's habits, preferences or even personality. Similarly, the attitude or response of the client may also affect the method used to build the rapport. However, it was clear that many workers believed it rapport establishment was an important aspect to working with involuntary clients.

This is aligned with the past literature. A study by Mcgarvey and Bonnie (2013), affirms that involuntary clients have a high level of distrust when it comes to seeking social services. Bureaucracies and discriminatory experiences worsen this perception and therefore, the ability of the clients to open up to the practitioners. The occurrence of such barriers in a program creates difficulties associated with engagement and the development of lasting relationships. On the other hand, a study by Turney (2012), reported that, in order to build trust and relationships, spending time through regular planned contacts portrays one's commitment to the program, thereby allowing the clients to participate and be determined in achieving their goals and plans. There is also strong evidence supporting the contention that practitioners should strive to build self-determination to at least partially address these problems with resistance. A focus on strengths and weaknesses serves to empower the client and establishes a sense of control. The promotion of self-determination relies upon an honest and forthright approach from the practitioner who should discuss with the client the practical and theoretical underpinning of the choice of interventions, acknowledging that the problems faced by the client are typically a complex mix of deficits and/or excesses relating to biological, social and structural factors (Ivanoff et al., 1994).

Another element reported was that the ambience and positive environment assist social workers in creating a positive rapport with the involuntary clients who are not willing to share their personal issues. Factors mentioned were an environment, which is welcoming, a colour scheme that promotes engagement, and appropriate lighting. A positive, conducive environment is one of the key strategies in building an initial contact with involuntary clients. These ties in with the findings of a Danish research team that suggested a positive correlation between the physical work environment and productivity (Buhai, Cottini, & Nielseny, 2008). Hence, most engagements work well when practitioners create positive and conducive spaces for the clients to participate in. This outcome is consistent with the previous literature. A study by Watson (2014) investigated the impact of creating friendly spaces or a conducive environment for engagement in a campus recovery house for youths. The research found that a welcoming environment led to quicker recovery or the attainment of results as opposed to hostile spaces. Importantly, a program does not have to be established in all respects according to the desires of clients but must be carefully tuned in order for them to experience it as friendly. Another study by Dimoulias (2009) recognizes the importance of the built environment on the development of youth and children placed in social programs. She provided an example of a well-designed youth centre in facilitating and supporting service

delivery. Friendly, welcoming spaces go further in the acceptance of the diversity of different individuals in a program.

While gaining a rapport and facilitating this with a conducive ambience is critical, it is also crucial for the practitioner to balance the client's engagement with authority. Social workers play a crucial role as agents of social control, using statutory powers to protect the community as well as individuals (Plath, 2013). This might involve the devolution of a certain degree of control to the client or, in other situations, removing control altogether. This does not signify disregarding the client's wishes for guidance and direction but using a professional assessment of a situation, a legal mandate, and a research and/or agency policy to determine what is best for him/her (Plath, 2013).

The social worker is involved in balancing their role as agents of social control by inviting the client to participate in a program of change. Client engagement means client involvement. Research suggests that clients are likely to be more positive, engage more readily, and contribute to the program if they are allowed to prepare themselves and be informed and supported throughout the program (Rooney, 2009). Children are capable of participating in various meetings or conferences if they are prepared in advance by practitioners who view their potential contribution positively. Scholars have also suggested that social workers should be more actively engaged with clients, offering (where appropriate) advocacy services and targeted aid in achieving independence and accessing medication. Pope and Kang (2011) go further to clarify that support through engagement is crucial in situations where the client has a negative issue that is difficult to express.

This ties in with another theme in the interviews, that of social workers' access to information about the client's past. Preparing and studying a detailed client history or background check was an important strategy in dealing with involuntary clients, according to several social workers. Understanding the demographic profile of the client provides an idea about the client's life and issues. The background check, highlighting the key issue, the complete demographic profile of the client, education level, family background or any other information, helps social workers to start the conversation. A detailed background check or client history can also help in formulating a plan for the interview and program in advance, thereby saving some time for the worker as well as the client. A detailed history can reduce the risk of violent interaction, aid the social worker in effectively understanding not only the client's issue but also details about their lives help the social worker build a rapport more

easily with the client and assist the social worker in preparing a solution for the client. This particular outcome of the qualitative focused interviews is in line with the previous literature. For example, a study by Turner (2010) defines assessment as the process of gaining an understanding of the circumstances of a client to inform the necessary actions a worker should take. Typically, this point-in-time activity takes place at the outset of the process and, although it is usually formal, it can be informal. It is important to be cautious about over-generalizing from one specific behaviour or related incident to encompass the entire living space of the client. The focus should be on taking into account a broader constellation of risk, protective and contextual factors (Trotter & Ward, 2013).

Effective communication skills are highly important for social workers to do their job effectively and aid their involuntary clients. One of the social workers (Participant 10) stated it succinctly in the interview by saying, *"In our job, clear and honest communication is vital."* Several outlined the ways in which communicating was important to their work. These included listening, building a good connection, being positive, understanding the client's perspective, and paying attention.

Such open and honest communication facilitates the capacity for clients to more clearly see for themselves the roots of their problems. Studies conducted in this area show those involuntary clients' resistance stems from their difficulty or struggle in understanding the underlying problem that is affecting them. It is evident that their miscommunication regarding the problem affects the engagement process. For instance, a survey by Cohn and Niaura (2016) in the US shows that involuntary clients need clarification on each and every contact point during the intervention. Contrary to involuntary clients, voluntary ones require minimal coercion in order to participate in the program. Minimal communication concerning the clarifications of various aspects is needed. Through communication, each party's duties, obligations, areas of control and the expected results or consequences (Cheung 2013 p510) are revealed. This was further endorsed by Ames (2016) who argued for the same point by focusing on the opposite, reporting that miscommunication is a crucial source of resistance in involuntary clients. Various forms of miscommunication can arise that affect an individual's perception of a program. A common form is the use of professional acronyms and jargon in explaining the condition to the client. Too much complex information, such as that in official reports, affects an individual willing to join a program. Most of the information given may be unhelpful or of little direct importance to the clients. In general, these scholars have shown

the significance of sticking to the point as a strategy or an approach that minimizes resistance and increases cooperation.

During the in-depth interviews, the element of empathy was discussed by participants. Empathy is crucial for maintaining engagement, most particularly when challenging issues are under discussion. Empathy is essential to an effective client-practitioner relationship, and it is therefore very important that empathetic approaches tied to the needs of clients are adopted, in particular populations such as at-risk parents, partners, and sex offenders (Busby & Gardner, 2008; Curtner-Smith et al., 2006; Hunter, Figueredo, Becker & Malamuth, 2007; Waldinger, Schultz, Hauser, Allen & Crowell, 2004). This outcome is also in line with research conducted by Hilario and Maniago (2014) who reported on clinical factors that lead to effectiveness. They showed that it is essential for the social worker to make confirmations or check with the client to ensure he/she understands and agrees upon the program. In delivering the message, these scholars claimed that empathy is crucial at breaking or eliminating the difficulties experienced when dealing with involuntary clients; a social worker can begin by saying, *"I'm here because am worried about your safety."*

In a highly related point, the strategy of the social worker's attitude towards involuntary clients was raised by participants. Comments confirmed that a positive attitude calms down the situation, keeping the clients in peace and fostering a friendly environment. In this regard, when social workers see a positive outcome in complex situations, it becomes easier to reach a positive conclusion. A positive attitude helps social workers to cope more easily with such complex situations; it brings optimism and makes it easier to avoid negative thinking. On the other hand, remaining calm is key to managing most situations, especially when a client is angry. By maintaining calm behaviour, an atmosphere of safety and comfort is provided to help the client relax. Despite the different challenges detailed by the social workers, as discussed earlier, many stated that maintaining a positive and friendly attitude was of paramount importance. Some even went as far as stating that even in the face of rude or abusive behaviour, it was imperative that the social worker be patient and understanding. Some stressed that many people they deal with are going through a tough time and that therefore, the worker's own attitude must remain friendly and helpful in return. This information is in line with the previous literature, for instance, a study by Berghaus and Cartagena (2014) reported that positivity and calmness in the attitude and actions of the practitioner affect the behaviour of the client throughout the program. In contrast, if a social

worker has a harsh and resentful attitude, this is likely to affect the targeted result of the program as the client may respond by being defensive or even absconding from the program altogether.

Participants valued the prospect of professional sharing and support. Workshops or group discussions among social workers hold great promise to deliver better outcomes through more effective handling of the clients. When contemplating workshops or team and group discussions, most stated that the exchange of views among peers was highly beneficial and the team aspect would encourage the sharing of experiences and ideas on how to deal with clients. Attending workshops may be more suited to fostering knowledge about a variety of suitable strategies to deal with involuntary clients. A majority of the social workers considered training important as it keeps them prepared for dealing with the challenges of such clients. The value and necessity of training was another major theme. Therefore, training must have an important place in the formation of any future best practices. This aspect of adequate and timely training was endorsed in past literature. Although the social workers readily acknowledged that resistance in clients is commonplace in the profession, they also reported that training programs on handling resistance were few and far between and, where available, usually less than adequate (Chui & Ho, 2006).

As well as a positive and calm attitude, the aspect of a helping attitude was a prominent theme during the qualitative interviews. Assisting involuntary clients when dealing with them is vital because these kinds of clients are not stable and face difficulties in planning and navigating themselves in an appropriate direction. Comments included the view that assisting them makes social workers feel good about themselves and, at the end of the day, it others will have a better perspective about social workers. Social workers also stressed that volunteering time and energy to help others does not merely make the world better, it also makes one better as an individual so that the ultimate goal of handling involuntary clients well is achieved. This outcome of the interview findings is in line with past literature, wherein the importance of facilitating the involuntary clients was highlighted. It was reported that facilitating these clients give them confidence and an opportunity to speak clearly in front of social workers (Sotero et al., 2016).

A safety measure was another theme extracted from the interviews. Participants reported the importance of taking necessary precautions before meeting involuntary clients and that safety should always be the first priority. This involves reviewing agency policies with the

supervisor and creating a plan ahead of time. The study also found that it is vital to adhere to a structured communication style, focusing on a calm approach, respect, open and honest dialogue and clear explanations of roles, expectations and outcomes.

The social workers who participated in the survey adopted a highly secular approach to dealing with involuntary clients. Furthermore, the techniques and strategies utilised for managing involuntary clients were highly influenced by Western social work approaches, particularly from North America. This was not unexpected as many scholars have pointed to (and critiqued) the prevalence of Western theories, methods and approaches in the Middle East (e.g. Albahar, 2011; Al-Darmaki Thomas & Yaaqeib, 2016; Al-Krenawi & Graham 2003; Barise, 2005; Graham, Bradshaw & Trew 2009; Hall 2007; Ragab 2016; Veeran 2013; Weatherhead & Daiches, 2015). In a more practical sense, the absence of previous research and therefore an authentic localised UAE framework (Al-Krenawi et al. 2004; Crabtree 2008; Holtzhausen, Veeran & Villa 2013; Sloan et al., 2017; Veeran, 2013). For managing involuntary clients provides social workers with an additional incentive to rely on models developed in Western cultures. As will be discussed in the next section, the approaches in use are not working well. However, a deeper analysis of the responses reveals that social workers are aware of the need to use a more authentic localised approach but appear to be reticent to state this fact explicitly.

The interviewees stressed the critical importance of the background (demographic variables) of each client, making particular mention of the family. Religious belief and practice were clearly other critical background factors. It is perhaps not surprising that the greatest single problem area that arose from the analysis of current approaches was the absolute importance of communication and the difficulties practitioners are experiencing in communicating with involuntary clients. Many involuntary clients are unable to identify the key issue, let alone address the issue. This is because the cultural and religious context of the intervention is framed almost entirely in Western terms. Furthermore, although the interviewees identified background variables as critically important, they provided little indication of how these variables could profitably be used to facilitate interventions. Nevertheless, the involvement of the family in the process was explicitly mentioned on multiple occasions. This ties in strongly with localised approaches proposed by a significant number of scholars (Bowen et al., 2014; Graham at el., 2009). Another key factor here was the extent to which social workers relied on Western models in order to address resistance. There was a little acknowledgement of the

fact that a referral to social work service in an Islamic country carries an altogether different meaning to a similar referral in the West. For example, the stigma attached to such a referral is far greater in a Muslim country, and there are important considerations about perceptions of invasion of privacy and interference in private family matters (Barise. 2005).

A significant number of interviewees stressed the importance of a concept that is relatively oblique and diffuse: words such as atmosphere, environment, and climate were used. This variable goes to the heart of a localised approach in the Muslim world. Whereas social work interventions in the West are primarily transactional in nature, the process itself is critical in the Muslim world (Albahar, 2011; Barise, 2005). The 'environment' to which UAE social workers attach so much importance goes much further than the physical location or the interactional climate of the intervention. It also covers the framework of the intervention, the approaches used, the people involved in the intervention and a variety of factors that would be viewed as extraneous in a Western context. A critical element of 'climate' or 'environment' is that it is customised to the client i.e. a bespoke environment is created to meet the needs of a particular client based on an analysis of needs and background. Thus, in a multicultural country such as the UAE, a deeply religious UAE citizen might require a very different intervention environment than a highly secular temporary worker from abroad. A bespoke approach would resonate with the arguments of scholars who call for a middle ground between a secular approach and an approach rooted in Islamic values (Crabtree and Baba, 2001).

The following section is linked with the findings of the second research objective:

> *To ascertain the experience and challenges being faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients.*

5.2.1.2   Research Objective 2

The previous section dealt with the strategies used by social workers in the United Arab Emirates in dealing with involuntary clients and how the insights produced by their interviews could generate a set of factors to keep in mind to deal effectively with resistant and involuntary clients.

In this section, the aim is to use the insights gained from the thematic analysis to generate a set of factors that should be included or are necessary for the social worker to possess in order to generate the aforementioned strategies, designed specifically to deal with involuntary

clients in the United Arab Emirates.

Several difficulties and challenges have been set out by the social workers as hindrances to their ability to perform to their optimum capacity and help their clients to the maximum level possible. These challenges have to be addressed in order to create any best practices set of strategies for the efficient management of resistant and involuntary clients in the UAE.

One aspect is recreating the best strategies or the most efficient examples. Another equally vital aspect is ensuring that the negative factors are eliminated as far as possible – or if not eliminated, mitigated to the best possible extent. In some cases, it may not be possible to dispense with a negative factor or challenge completely. Realistically, especially in this case, when dealing with human beings, it may not be possible to remove something like the shame or embarrassment faced by the clients. This is particularly true in a conservative society like the United Arab Emirates, where societal factors also play a role in these clients' mindset. However, it should be possible to take steps to reduce the impacts of these factors in order to produce a model that provides optimum results and strategies in dealing with involuntary clients – whether in a group or on an individual basis. Simply taking steps to recreate the best strategies will not be enough if the negative factors are allowed to continue regardless. Therefore, it is critical to examine these difficulties and challenges and conceptualize the means through which they can be either prevented wholesale in a new best practice model or through which they can be somewhat lessened in the new model.

The following issues were mentioned by several of the social workers as impediments or challenges to their performance on the job: clients' aggression at many levels, their depression, their lack of confidence in the situation and their general recalcitrance, each of which necessitate de-escalation techniques. Each is discussed further below, with mitigating measures proposed.

One significant area of difficulty, as expressed by the social workers during their interview was the issue of aggression, violence, and abuse. Since all of the involuntary clients are visiting the social worker against their will, the chances of such behaviour can be high. Interestingly, among the 21 social workers interviewed, with involuntary clients far more had negative than positive experiences, at least in terms of the experiences they spoke about over the course of their interview.

The study found that most involuntary clients displayed outright hostility or aggression. In

the mildest cases, the social workers reported simple anger and a refusal to listen. Comments included *"the client was really angry, was arguing and was not agreeing to any of my point or explanation"*. In another instance depicting relatively low aggression, a remark was, *"I had some bad experience in handling the involuntary client, well the client was silent and not willing to talk about his problem, I tried everything with him to start talking but I couldn't."* Another example was of a client who was emotional and angry, as a result of which the discussion could not proceed towards a solution, *"he was denying having that alcoholism issue at all. He was very emotional and using that as a defence. He even got angrier, and after some time we both got tired."* However, several also reported episodes where they were abused verbally, threatened and sometimes physically assaulted. In some cases, the clients were also so distraught they were unable to communicate, and hence, the social workers felt that the entire exercise was a failure.

Thus, from this data, these negative experiences can be classified into various types: anger and a refusal to participate, frustration and embarrassment, a reluctance to share, a lack of confidence, a lack of discipline and a lack of motivation. In all cases, the clients either posed a danger to the social worker or centre; they were blocked off or distraught to the point of not receiving any help. In all cases also, the involuntary client's problem could not be solved. Where the physical safety of the worker was threatened, this caused the social worker to feel afraid in their own workplace.

In many cases, the participants also reported feeling devastated because of the negative experience. This can be detrimental to the morale of these workers as well as to their long-term prospects for a career in social work. There is also the very serious fact that the job-related physical danger could cause a serious injury or perhaps even worse in some cases unless such risks are addressed. It would also be important to address the issue of the physical safety of the clients.

Therefore, several steps will have to be taken to ensure that social workers are safe in the workplace. First, it may be prudent to study the practicality of placing a security guard in the room or just outside the room when a social worker is meeting with an involuntary client. On the one hand, this may assure the safety of the worker. However, on the other hand, it may make the client even less likely to open up. Alternatively, before the client arrives, social worker teams could perform an assessment of the threat or risk posed. However, this is not a fool-proof method.

Another possibility is for social workers to be trained specifically in speaking with clients on the verge of losing control, learning de-escalation techniques, and practising these in simulated scenarios. Again, this is not a failsafe method but could prove helpful. It may be beneficial to study the work conducted in other parts of the world regarding this specific issue. The best practices and techniques there may be worth recreating or tailoring to the context of the United Arab Emirates before implementation. However, it is vital that the safety and security of the social worker not be compromised. Therefore, this is a high priority exercise.

As stated in the previous section, one issue with involuntary clients was that many were unhappy about being present at the social support centre, to begin with. As a result, while many do not indulge in violence or aggression, they do find ways to express their displeasure or hostility by refusing to engage with the social worker.

This refusal can range from refusing to speak, lacking confidence, behaving rudely, having mood swings, refusing to listen to the social worker's advice, blaming others for their problems, having a negative mindset or outlook, missing appointments and breaking trust by lying. One remark summed up several of these problems by saying, *"Firstly, they are emotionally not stable, they lack confidence, they don't want to speak, they don't trust and above all in most of the cases they tell a lie."* Another overall summation was, *"Well they are not open to speaking and they don't want to share their issue completely. They are sometimes very angry, because they are sent by force."* Because the clients are not, there of their own volition, even if they are not inspired to act out in a physically aggressive manner, many refuse to engage in myriad other ways, as listed above.

Involuntariness results in a lack of engagement or participation due to depression or a lack of confidence on the part of clients. Firstly, they think that they are not respected and they lack a sense of their own self-worth, an attitude that is rather difficult to overcome. Involuntary clients are not interested in engaging in any sort of conversation because they feel that they are not normal and that society is making fun of rather helping them. Moreover, they are shy and unwilling to share information. Another way in which the clients were reported to be unable to engage was due to an imbalance or instability in their moods, with mood swings or myriad emotions at the same time.

In some cases, the involuntary client refused to take the advice or solution offered by the

social worker, rendering the interview exercise futile in many ways. According to one participant, *"Sometimes the client is very angry, shows a lot of aggression, has a rude attitude, and is not ready to listen to whatever we communicate"*. Another stated, *"They are bad listeners, don't want to listen to any of your advice, and are not interested at all in your suggestions"*. Yet another common issue was clients' refusal to take responsibility, blaming others, such as family, society or even the social worker, for their problems and often treating the social worker as an enemy.

One social worker stated the position very frankly, *"Well they are always sad and angry. They blame others for their bad situations. They are always looking for someone else to blame for what is happening and that could be you. They might be clueless and have a hard time understanding what is happing to them. Most of them feel negatively towards social workers, so be ready."* Many involuntary clients acted out by missing appointments or refusing to set up appointments, leading the social workers to. In many cases, chase after them in order to get them to engage. According to one participant, *"They don't come on time and sometimes miss the appointment. They always want to leave early. They are sometimes not interested in attending the sessions, and then we have to follow them up, this is really annoying sometimes."*

All of these various action, combined or individually, point to a refusal to participate or engage in the process of social work. However, as these are issues on the part of the client rather than the social worker, it may be more difficult to address them. It may aid social workers if the clients are made to understand, in a context-specific and culturally sensitive way, that the social workers' role is not punitive in any way. Rather, the social worker has resources and aid to help get the client's life back on track. Making this clear can be done at the level of the courts and this can be subsequently reinforced by the social workers. By reminding the clients that the social support centre exists to help them and counsel them through some tough times in their lives, the former may be helped to perceive the social worker as a supportive and friendly presence.

Social workers can also undergo more training in dealing with recalcitrant or unwilling clients by learning techniques to engage those that are especially unable to control their reactions, as described above. This may also pertain to those undergoing mood swings, depression, a lack of confidence and extreme shyness. In these cases, social workers may have to adjust their approach. Here again, prior research into the client's circumstances, team

meetings and a pre-planned approach may help the social worker have a more successful engagement with the client.

The next section is linked with the findings of the third research objective:

> *To determine culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies for dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE.*

5.2.1.3   Research Objective 3

This objective was explored through in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore any difference of strategies in dealing with involuntary clients among three social service centres situated in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. From the holistic perspective, themes emerging were better communication, an appropriate atmosphere, empathy, a positive attitude, a helping nature, and access to a client profile, freedom of expression, confidence building, rapport building, and internal and external forms of training. In all centres, the common themes were better communication and an appropriate atmosphere. It was noted that different strategies indeed did exist in different centres as participants tended to vary from centre to centre in reporting on the other strategies mentioned above. However, the key focus for all centres was to facilitate the involuntary clients to develop a positive engagement with them.

As mentioned above, a variety of strategies with involuntary clients was found among the three cities, with the most dominant themes aside from better communication and an appropriate atmosphere being empathy, a positive attitude, a client profile, a helping nature, freedom of expression, confidence building, rapport building, and internal and external training. However, this study was not an attempt to reveal statistically sound evidence for each centre as the pool of participants is insufficient. Thus, these themes are taken to indicate the basis of culturally and organisationally contextualised strategies and reinforce the findings of the earlier research objectives. These points are taken up in the next section, which deals with the managerial implications of the research findings.

It is easy to see how these themes are interconnected and play into each other. Through the social worker showing empathy, a positive attitude, and helping nature, the client is likely to feel more freedom of expression, and this builds their confidence in themselves and rapport with the social worker. Knowing more about the client through the client profile prepares the social worker for dealing more appropriately with the client, as does appropriate training.

While dealing with involuntary clients, one of the key strategies is to let them speak and develop a sound conversation. If you allow them to speak with confidence, it gives you an opportunity to solve their issue and give them the right advice. As explained in Chapter 2, Arab clients will often expect social workers to provide direction and even solutions (Al-Krenawi & Graham 2000). Proper training gives an opportunity to learn new techniques while dealing with such clients. Both in house and professional workshops play an important role, which ultimately helps the social workers to deal with involuntary clients in a better way.

It is clear that social workers in the UAE are experiencing many challenges when working with involuntary clients. While it is true that involuntary clients are typically resistant and challenging across the world (Rooney, 2009; Trotter, 2015), the degree of resistance, often accompanied by aggressive behaviour, appears to be more pronounced in the UAE than is the case in countries such as Australia and the USA (Rooney, 2009; Trotter, 2015). In the UAE, involuntary clients are characterised by very high levels of resistance, refusal to co-operate, latent or actual aggression and refusal to acknowledge the problem. Thus, for many clients, engagement does not occur at all. This has a dramatic effect on the morale of social workers, which, in turn, makes them less prepared to deal with involuntary clients in the future. This creates a cycle of failure where the social worker expects the client to be hostile, resentful, disengaged, and even potentially violent. The outcome is an environment where fear is the dominant characteristic of the prevailing atmosphere or climate.

The findings of this research project suggest that the referral process itself may contribute to the cycle of fear and engagement failure that characterises the management of involuntary clients in the UAE. Involuntary clients are typically referred by law enforcement agencies or courts for a short-term intervention by the social work agency. However, it appears that social workers view the referral process as too open-ended, without sufficient structure, delineation of formal procedures, clarity of expected outcomes and explicit sanctions for non-compliance. It must be conceded that research in Western countries suggests that a highly structured referral framework does not assure success (e.g. Cingolani, 1984; De Jong & Dolinsky, 2014; Plath, 2013; Rooney, 2009; Trotter & Sheehan, 2012). Indeed, research in Western countries suggests that too much structure and formality of process can of itself be an impediment to progress (Rooney, 2015) although there is no research, which focuses on this core issue in Muslim countries.

It would appear that social workers in the UAE are adopting relatively a*d hoc* approaches to managing involuntary clients. These approaches are highly client-centred, focusing on communication, empathy, freedom of expression, positivity, and open exchange of ideas and lack of restrictive structure. These approaches are similar to approaches that might be adopted in Western countries (Rooney, 2009). The research in Western countries supports a highly personalised approach with a limited degree of bureaucracy (Crain & Kaighin, 2011; Sotero & Relvas, 2014). Western research emphasises reciprocity, trust, empathy and respect (Trotter, 2015; Smith et al., 2015), very much in line with the approach that has been reported extensively in this research. The question arises whether a relatively a*d hoc* approach that relies so heavily on Western research is suited to practice with involuntary clients in the UAE. A strong argument can be made that it is not only the way in which involuntary clients are managed in a practical sense that is the problem but also the broader conceptual framework upon which practice is based. In other words, as so many scholars working in the Middle East have argued (e.g. Al-Dabbagh, 1993; Albahar, 2011; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Graham et al., 2009; Holtzhausen, 2013; Ibrahim, 2018), the conceptual framework dominant in the West must be adapted for social work in countries such as the UAE.

The findings of this research suggest that there is no formal framework in place in the UAE specifically designed for managing involuntary clients i.e. a focused case management approach. Research in the West does support the efficacy of a high-quality, focused case management approach (e.g. Gursansky et al., 2003; Manktelow, 2016; Turner, 2010). However, Trotter (2015) argued that a case management process that is overly bureaucratic and formalised is not compatible with a client-centred approach. He argued for a strongly client-centred framework for managing involuntary clients but conceded that a degree of formal case management remains an important component in the mix. Clearly, Trotter would not favour a more formalised referral process (as discussed above). However, it must be conceded that research in the West is by no means equivocal on this point. Some scholars maintain that strong, focused case management (e.g. Gursansky et al., 2003) is not only amenable with a broadly client-centred approach but also essential for work with involuntary clients. If a degree of formality and structure remains important even in the least formal of Western countries, it is likely to be significantly more important in more formal societies such as the UAE.

A strong argument can be made that the reality of practice with involuntary clients in the

UAE requires more structure and formality than is the case in Western countries. While it is true that the UAE is undergoing rapid transition and is a multicultural society, the influence of Islam remains pervasive and the society is high context (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Given the importance of the collective, tradition, social stability and established norms in high context societies, highly individualistic approaches to social work are risky. The findings of this research suggest that social workers in the UAE are indeed dealing with a spontaneous and expressive cultural interaction style (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997; Barakat 1993; Bowen et al., 2014) without having recourse to the checks and balances that are typical of high context societies. Furthermore, the current practice seems to virtually ignore the complex and subtle patterns of familial and group relations so typical of high context societies (Bowen et al., 2014). For example, there seems to be little impetus towards involvement from family and other agents of social influence even though these mechanisms are clearly identified as potentially relevant even in Western countries (Rooney, 2009). Given the nature of UAE society, it could be expected that, for example, more use could be made of the potentially transformational power of the family.

Barise (2003) and Abdullah (2015), proposed frameworks for social work in Muslim countries in general and the UAE in particular. Barise's framework is deeply rooted in Islamic practice while Abdullah's approach takes a broader societal perspective. The findings of this research suggest that social workers in the UAE are not yet making concerted attempts to incorporate these 'localised' frameworks into their practice. However, some progress has been made towards incorporating some of Abdullah's ideas into practice, albeit with a relatively Westernised flavour. At this juncture, it is important to examine a number of frameworks proposed for 'localised' practice and consider the extent to which these are being applied in practice, with due regard to their potential for improving current practice:

Abdullah (2015) proposed a strengths-based approach that draws upon the precepts of Islamic society as a cohesive whole rather than primarily on religious practice only. The point of departure is the strengths the client brings into the intervention and the focus is on the broader life-space of the client rather than on the problem at hand alone. In this approach, the broader context is a critical antecedent and part of the solution. The findings of this research suggest that social workers are focusing on some of the key areas Abdullah identified, for example, relationship building, empathy and active listening. However, the findings here strongly suggest that the focus of the intervention remains very highly focused on problem-solving.

This is not surprising, given that referrals (and therefore, the mandate) tend to call for short-term interventions / assessments that are focused on the specific issue at hand.

The core impulse of the strengths-based approach in Muslim societies is *fitra* (Abdullah, 2015), which stresses an inherent capacity for spiritual, emotional, and personal growth. The intervention revolves around this concept of growth. Again, the findings suggest that interventions with involuntary clients do not focus on growth.

Another key dimension of the strengths-based approach is that is made use of a variety of sources: inner, environmental and social (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2005). Many scholars argue that outside resources should be an important component of the intervention, for example, family members, relevant community members and clergy (e.g. Abdullah, 2014; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2005; Barise, 2004; Chaudry & Li, 2011). The strengths-based approach minimises pathologizing clients in that it does not focus on what they might have done wrong but on how they might get back on the 'true' path to growth – not only religious growth but also family, social and societal growth (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2005).

This research suggests that social workers in the UAE dealing with involuntary clients have some awareness about the strengths-based approach and attempt to use elements of it when they can but are not in a position to use the approach extensively. The research suggests that referrals mandate a short-term intervention focused on assessment. In these cases, the problem is the focus, and there is significant pathologizing of the client. The highly emotive and aggressive reactions of many clients not only support research which characterises the UAE as a highly expressive culture but also reveals the extent to which an individualistic, problem-focused, rapid intervention will, in many cases, be doomed to failure.

Arabs place far greater value on relationships than problem-solving (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). Relationships are built on trust, and there can be no trust before a reasonable degree of intimacy is established. Ideally, the social worker in the UAE should first focus on building a relationship and then on the problem. However, the findings of this research suggest that there is simply not sufficient time available to do this. Social workers in the UAE do attempt to build a relationship, but they do so in the service of engagement rather than in an attempt to foster a meaningful relationship with the client. There is no other alternative open to social workers because the terms of the mandate typically do not make provision for the time and resources required for building intimate relationships. This research does suggest that there is

some sensitivity as to cultural norms regarding interaction across genders. It would be very difficult to build a meaningful relationship unless the social worker and client are of the same gender (Durst, 1994; Kizilhan, 2014; Mass & Al-Krenawi, 1994). This raises a logistical problem because the majority of involuntary clients are male. Therefore, there is potentially limited opportunity for female social workers to become involved in managing involuntary clients if cultural and societal norms are followed. However, female social workers could play a very important role if the intervention approach was broadened to include family members where appropriate and a team-based strategy on the part of the agency. Female social workers could then focus on meeting with female members of the family, building appropriate relationships and making a valuable contribution to a holistic approach.

The findings of this study suggest that social workers in the UAE do take into account (to a limited degree) local societal norms and research relating to localised practice. However, the framework for managing involuntary clients, particularly when difficulties are experienced, remains deeply embedded in Western research and intervention strategies. Therefore, the approach remains highly individualised and rooted in the doctrine of individualism (Crabtree, 2008; Gray et al., 2008; Ragab, 2016). As was discussed above in the broader coverage of the strengths-based approach, an individualistic approach is generally unsuitable as a framework for intervention in a Muslim country. It is true that in a multicultural society in transition, such as the UAE, there may be pockets of clients who would benefit from an individualistic approach. These would include clients who were raised in individualistic societies and even a very small proportion of UAE citizens. However, this research suggests that a majority of involuntary clients are UAE citizens and does not suggest that any significant proportion of these clients have adopted a highly Westernized lifestyle. Therefore, it is important that social workers design interventions with due consideration to the collectivist nature of society in the UAE (Barakat, 1993; Bowen et al., 2014; Hofstede 1984) with its focus on the extended family, group relations and responsibility to the collective.

A significant amount of work needs to be done in terms of de-individualising the approach to involuntary clients and re-focusing on a collective approach. However, it must be conceded that this is a particularly challenging proposition. As mentioned above, the mandate for referrals does not make provision for an extensive, large-scale intervention. Furthermore, Western models and approaches continue to dominate in the training regimens of social workers in the UAE, and therefore in practice (Albahar, 2011; Sloan et al., 2017), a

proposition that this research strongly supports. Therefore, not only is building the collective into involuntary client interventions a potentially resource-intensive, complex and costly exercise, but it also does not conform to the approaches currently dominant in social work practice.

Strong communication is critical to successful social work interventions. The findings of this research suggest that social workers in the UAE are relying significantly on Western research (for example the influential work of Rooney (2009) and Trotter (2015) in terms of the communication patterns used with involuntary clients, particularly with highly resistant clients. The research suggests that these communication patterns often exacerbate resistance rather than fostering engagement. Much revolves around the concept of intimacy that was discussed above. Until intimacy is achieved, communication in the UAE tends to be formal, restrained and impersonal (Al-Kranawi & Graham, 2000; Al-Issa, 1990; Bowen et al., 2014). Indeed, it usually takes some time before the barrier of formality is breached. It is clear that Western approaches, with their focus on achieving a rapid degree of superficial, problem-focused intimacy, are likely to promote resistance. Intimacy is also essential before a client is likely to be willing to discuss highly sensitive and personal issues. Once again, scholars emphasize the need for a slow, non-confrontational, gently probing approach where intimacy and trust are built gradually (e.g. Al-Issa, 1990), which is not well suited to the current paradigm for interventions.

This research suggests that social workers in the UAE use Western models when considering the expectations of clients. While social workers in the UAE make admirable efforts to provide involuntary clients with an empathic, supportive, and safe environment, the focus on a Western framework usually means that client expectations are never met. Indeed, resistance may be stimulated from the outset because the client is exposed to a situation that is wholly unexpected and even, in terms of the client's worldview, culturally inappropriate. Arab clients expect much more from social workers than Western clients. The social worker is viewed as something of a teacher, and there is an expectation that the social worker will offer guidance and advice – once an intimate relationship has been built (countries (Al-Kranawi & Graham, 2000; Bowen et al., 2014; Ragab, 2016). Often, the social worker will be expected to provide solutions to the problem and serve as something akin to a close confidante. The expectations are wholly at odds with some of the fundamental precepts of social work in Western countries and adopting them, even to a limited extent, is another challenging

proposition.

This research has revealed a sense of frustration and even despair amongst social workers when it comes to dealing with involuntary clients. There is a strong emotive element that both reflect the society in the UAE and perhaps the fundamental expectation tensions faced by social workers in Arab countries. In many cases, these social workers know that their training prevents them from fulfilling the expectations of a large cross-section of their clients. As mentioned above, the approaches used may work with a small pocket of clients, but no more. It is likely that a significant proportion of the feelings of demoralisation that emerge from the research emanates from an acknowledgement, sometimes repressed, that the framework of the intervention is wholly incompatible with the needs and expectations of the client.

Religion was barely mentioned directly by any of the participants in this study. Nevertheless, it loomed large in the frequent (and often oblique) references to background factors. Given that virtually all scholars who have argued so vehemently for the localisation of social work practice in the UAE (e.g. Albahar, 2011; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2005; Veeran, 2013) have focused strongly on religion, it was surprising that religion was barely mentioned in an explicit sense. On deeper analysis, it is not surprising at all. It would appear that the overwhelming majority of the social workers who participated in the research have been trained in highly secular Western social work approaches. As discussed previously in the literature review (e.g. Crabtree, 2008), a significant number of Western scholars call for the localisation of practice while still insisting there universal (Western-dominated) precepts that must be followed. One of these is that social work must be secular. This is a source of significant internal conflict for social workers in the UAE, many of whom are likely to be religious themselves. Nevertheless, by openly conceding that religion should play an important role in interventions, particularly to a researcher with whom no intimate bond exists, many social workers might feel that they could be putting their career at risk. Therefore, it would be naïve to expect anything but oblique references to religion.

Many participants in the study stressed the need for a more holistic approach, taking into account a large variety of 'background factors'. There is no doubt that some of these factors relate to an approach more deeply rooted in family and social groups, but it would be naïve to argue that religion is not part of the mix. Scholars based in the Middle East (e.g. (Al-Krenawu & Graham, 1997; Barise, 2005; El-Islam, 1994) many (if not most) interventions will involve a religious element. Scholars do acknowledge that some clients will not benefit

from an approach that includes a religious element, including some who are UAE citizens. Therefore, the professional judgement of the social worker is critical, including the extent to which religion becomes part of the intervention (Holtzhauzen, 2011; Sloan et al., 2017; Veeran, 2013). For example, it may sometimes be appropriate to frame the intervention around a religious concept such as *fitra* or involve clergy in the intervention. This ties in well with the insistence on the part of the participants that broader cultural factors should be taken into account when designing interventions.

5.3   Theoretical contribution of the study

This research project aimed to position strategies for dealing with involuntary clients within the cultural context of the UAE, in which Islam is a fundamental component of everyday life. While the themes identified by the participants did not have a specific religious framing, the strategies they proposed resonate within a Muslim context.

This study suggests that social workers in the UAE face many of the same high-level problems as social workers in the West when dealing with involuntary clients. Indeed, resistance appears to be even more pervasive in the UAE than it is in the West, and the use of Western approaches may be contributing to the problem. Best-practice models (e.g. Trotter, 2015) in the West acknowledge the importance of relationship building, but the core focus is on collaborative problem solving, role clarification and modelling pro-social values. However, this research suggests that in Muslim countries, relationship building is the core element in the process. Nothing can be achieved outside of a relationship built on trust and a degree of intimacy that would not be acceptable in Western social work practice.

Scholars working in the Middle East have long argued that relationship building is central to social work in Arab countries, and therefore critical for working with involuntary clients (e.g. Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Albahar, 2011; Sloan et al., 2017). Al-Krenawi and Graham (2000) pointed out that Arabs value relationship far more than they value problem-solving. However, only a limited volume of empirical work has been done previously. Very little work has been done in the UAE, none focusing on involuntary clients. This study confirmed the argument that relationship building is the most critical element in working with involuntary clients.

This study supports previous theoretical work in suggesting that relationship building does not work in the same way in Arab countries as it does in the West. Although the social

workers who participated in the study largely adopted approaches based on Western theories and were severely constrained by the demands of the referral process, they recognised that the framework currently in use is not optimal for work with involuntary clients in the UAE. Where possible, social workers consistently (but informally) adapt their work with involuntary clients, especially relationship building, to align with the realities of practice in an Islamic country.

This study provides strong empirical support to previous work, which argues that relationships which focus purely on problem-solving are not ideal for work with involuntary clients in the UAE. Indeed, this study suggests that this approach is more likely to promote resistance than engagement. Intimacy and trust are important in building the relationship, and communications patterns tend to be formal, restrained, and impersonal in the early part of the social work intervention (Al-Kranawi & Graham, 2000). Thus, the social worker needs to adopt a patient, probing and supportive approach rather than a direct one. By contrast, social workers in the West are able to build relatively informal relationships focus on problem-solving relatively quickly.

This study confirms previous theoretical work, which proposes that social work in the UAE must align with the needs of a high context, collectivist society. Approaches developed in low context and individualist societies at sometimes inapplicable. At best, require significant adaptation for use in the UAE. Arab clients often expect social workers to have a role similar to that of a teacher or guide, providing direction and solutions. Thus, the social worker has to build a relationship and find ways of addressing the problem. Working with a passive client who expects the social worker to solve the problem can be very demanding and challenges one of the core precepts of social work in the West.

The study also makes a valuable contribution to the 'localisation' debate that has been such a feature of the contribution of Middle Eastern scholars in the last decade. The study suggests that social workers recognise localised practice is essential in order to manage involuntary clients effectively. The study also confirms the concerns of many Middle Eastern scholars that social workers in the UAE have largely been trained in a Western paradigm and use Western approaches as a point of departure when dealing with clients. The implicit recognition on the part of social workers that a more localised approach is necessary notwithstanding, this study offers only limited support to the arguments put forward by some theorists (e.g. Holtzhauzen, 2011) that the training of social workers is becoming

significantly more localised in a formal sense.

This study reveals a new dimension in the 'localization' debate. While a significant number of Middle Eastern scholars argue for a powerful localised approach deeply embedded in traditional Muslim culture, the UAE is a multicultural society undergoing rapid transition. As it the case across the globe, the younger generation is heavily exposed to and influenced by Western culture, in particular, the 'pop' culture of the USA. Although the overwhelming majority of clients are UAE citizens from generations not as heavily exposed to Western culture as the current generation, an approach that is too deeply embedded in traditional culture may not work in the future. While it is highly unlikely that the influence of Islam will not remain high in these societies, continued adaptation is likely to be necessary as Middle Eastern societies remain in a state of flux as regards the impact of 'local' versus 'global' culture.

5.4   Managerial implications

The following section discusses the implications for best practice, policy, education, and research. A discussion of managerial implications would make little sense outside of a discussion of the referral process. The overwhelming majority of involuntary clients in the UAE are referred by either the police or the courts. This study suggests that the referral process could be contributing to the problems encountered by social workers when managing involuntary clients.

The typical police referral involves family issues, neighbourhood disputes, marital breakdown, and issues relating to non-serious antisocial behaviour / delinquency. The agency has very little authority, but there is a high level of expectation that the social workers will not only identify the key issues but also come up with solutions. The process is relatively informal, and there is little formal clarification of roles. There is strong pressure on social workers to find solutions rapidly, often within a week or two. Given that the process is largely informal with little formal pressure towards compliance, involuntary clients are often disinterested, do not attend meetings, and are hostile. In the absence of a relationship and trust, clients often view social workers as an enemy that cannot be trusted not to reveal deep secrets to the police.

The typical court referral involves marital breakdown, child support and access, family conflict and delinquency. The process is more formal than police referrals, but, as before, the

social workers have little authority. Typically, the referral does not enforce anything more than nominal compliance. Social workers are expected to evaluate the situation and find potential solutions in a more collaborative, friendly environment than the courtroom. Court-referred clients are more likely to participate, at least at the surface level, and less likely to be overtly hostile. However, many do not wish to participate and would rather let the process play out in the courts.

The referral process provides the framework for the intervention, and the discussion of implications below takes this into account.

5.4.1 Implications for best practice

Key implications for best practice derived from this study are:

- adopt a more localised practice, with due regard to the fundamental precepts of global social work and the reality of UAE society in transition;
- focus on building relationships;
- adapt the intervention to client background;
- clarify roles and expectations;
- use pro-social modelling in a localised context;
- adopt a more holistic approach, including the referral process, embedded in the realities of a high context, collectivist culture, and
- adopt a more formal, structured approach to managing involuntary clients based upon theory and evidence-based practice.

The solution-focused approach that currently dominates practice with involuntary clients is not ideal for the UAE. This approach focuses on client-driven collaborative problem-solving (Trotter, 2015), focusing on problem-identification, goals and strategies. In the UAE, such a direct approach involving a relatively high level of interpersonal intimacy and candour almost from the outset is unlikely to work. Therefore, it is recommended that a more localised approach is adopted. However, this approach should attempt to achieve as much balance as possible between the demands of localised practice and the precepts of global social work. It is also important to foster a dynamic approach to practice, particularly given that UAE society is in a state of considerable flux.

The management of involuntary clients must revolve around relationship building. Best

practice approaches in the West tend to view relationship building as important, but in an ancillary fashion, essentially supporting the focus on collaborative problem-solving (Trotter, 2015). The problem-focused relationship typical of Western social work is not well suited to practice with involuntary clients in the UAE, where relationship building is the central component of any intervention. More time must be allowed for the social worker to build intimacy and trust with the client.

Although the vast majority of clients are observant and practising Muslims, a one-size-fits-all approach is not recommended. Many clients would no doubt benefit from a relationship-building approach embedded in Islamic concepts such as *fitra* but, for others, a more secular approach might be warranted. A multi-dimensional approach based on *fitra* could be designed so that some clients are managed using principles that are firmly based in religious practice a more secular path is taken with others. It should also be noted that research in the West suggests that a focus purely on the relationship rarely delivers positive outcomes (e.g. Rooney, 2009). Even in a culture where relationship building is more central to the intervention process, collaborative problem solving cannot be ignored. The problem could be addressed peripherally initially and gradually brought to the forefront as the relationship develops.

It is important to establish formal frameworks, policies, and procedures for managing involuntary clients. These should be tightly integrated into the referral process. Ideally, there should be an end-to-end framework for dealing with involuntary clients, beginning at the point of referral and extending even beyond the point of sign-off, incorporating post-intervention support. One of the most significant challenges faced by social workers at present is that the referral process places great pressure on them to find solutions while providing them with limited structure, little authority and short timeframes. Best practice approaches to managing involuntary clients in the West focus highly on role clarification (Trotter, 2015). If used correctly in the UAE context, role clarification could be an exceptionally valuable tool in the management of involuntary clients. In the West, role clarification serves to promote the collaborative problem-solving process. In the UAE, it could serve multiple purposes. Roles and expectations should be formally defined early in the referral process, before the first visit to the social work agency. Further refinement and elaboration can occur once the intervention occurs. Role clarification can be particularly powerful in high context; relatively hierarchical societies provided that it defines roles and

expectations in their broader cultural context.

A greater emphasis on more formality in the management of involuntary effectively creates a more formalised and potentially less flexible case management framework. There is some debate about the use of case management in the management of involuntary clients. While some scholars (e.g. Westhuizen, 2015) argue that a relatively formalised approach is best for the management of involuntary clients, others (e.g. Trotter, 2015) argue that a collaborative, flexible and dynamic approach is best (Trotter, 2015), pointing out that rigid, formulaic and bureaucratic processes are likely to ensure failure rather than build the groundwork for success. Virtually all of the previous research has been conducted in low context, individualistic societies. A strong argument can be made that a relatively formal case management approach will be better suited to the high context, collectivist societies such as the UAE. However, excessive rigidity should be avoided, and the case management approach should be deeply embedded in a cultural context.

Pro-social modelling is another core-component of social work practice with involuntary clients in the West (Trotter, 2015). In the Western context, this primarily involves modelling and re-enforcing behaviour that is legal or socially responsible. There is considerable scope for using pro-social modelling as a high-impact intervention strategy in the UAE. The pro-social modelling could be significantly broader than is the case in the West. For example, with an appropriate client, the *fitra* concept could be used as representing the ideal basis for behaviour. The social worker and client could then explore what would be ideal behaviour in terms of *fitra,* how the client's behaviour deviates from the ideal, and possible remediation measures.

A fundamental premise of modern social work is that clients must make decisions and find solutions for themselves. The social worker acts as a facilitator and even collaborator but cannot come up with solutions. However, the underlying premise of the referral process is that the social work agency needs to identify the problem and find solutions. This research suggests that many clients feel the same way i.e. they want the social worker to provide direct guidance. This ties in strongly with cultural practices in Muslim countries, as discussed above, and is not surprising. However, a very active approach of this type does not conform to the fundamental tenets of social work as practised in the West and some scholars (e.g. Crabtree, 2008) are likely to argue that this degree of localization of practice goes too far.

The referral process is far from ideal in terms of facilitating optimal social work interventions with involuntary clients. Although management in the social work agency is not in a position to directly impact the referral process, it is in a strong position to liaise whit government agencies and lobby for change. An integrated, holistic referral process would greatly facilitate the management of involuntary clients. The referral process should ideally clarify roles, expectations, and procedures at a relatively high level, to be followed up with more detail during the early appointments. The referral process should ideally also incorporate incentives and, inappropriately serious situations, sanctions for non-compliance. The referral process should also make provision for exit points in situations where clients wish the matter to proceed through the courts and are not interested in social work interventions.

5.4.2   Implications for policy and education

It would be highly beneficial for the management of involuntary clients if there was a review of the referral process. The current policy places great responsibility on social workers to find solutions but provides a limited frame of reference and virtually no authority. As discussed above, a more defined framework for the management of involuntary clients would also add value.

There is clearly a need for more focused training as regards the management of involuntary clients. A stronger framework with better-defined policies and procedures would make for a standardised approach across individual social workers and agencies, therefore facilitating training efforts. In terms of education, this research has revealed that 'localisation' efforts are not yet as common as some scholar has argued. Some scholars might argue that a more localised approach to involuntary clients is only possible within a more localised approach to social work in general in the UAE. However, policies promoting a more localised approach to involuntary clients, in particular, could easily be applied to social work in general i.e. it is possible to work from the particular to the general. It may be that those who participated in this research felt constrained to present a largely Western approach to the management of involuntary clients while localised approaches are being used, based on a localised approach in the education system. However, if taken at face value, the responses of the participants suggest that they were educated in a system where Western approaches are still dominant.

5.4.3 Implications for research

There has been virtually no research on the management of involuntary clients in the UAE. This research project suggests that much more research is required. Future research directions will be discussed below, but this study does suggest that purely Western research is not always applicable in countries such as the UAE. Indeed, interventions that appear to work in the West may be counterproductive in the Middle East. The key problem is that there is now a significant body of theoretical research calling for the localisation of practice in the UAE but very few empirical studies examining what is being done in terms of localisation and what needs to be done. Sustained and focused research is now required to critically assess the drive for localisation of practice and determine how an authentic localised practice can be achieved.

5.5 Study limitations

The first limitation stems from the fact that the research was conducted using a single data collection method, i.e., in-depth semi-structured interviews. With the research of this nature lies the possibility of not being able to attain objective outcomes to warrant the correctness of results. In this study, this method was vital to gain social workers' insights one-to-one with regard to their experience, strategies, and challenges in dealing with involuntary clients. However, it is also probable that other approaches such as focus groups and observation are viable in investigating this research topic. This may add further collective insights from these social workers. Focus groups may be an efficient technique because the researcher can collect the data from several people in a single session; for example, social workers in a single social worker centre. Its limitation is that some may defer to others in this process. On the other hand, observation can be used, which mainly comprises spending a long time in the natural setting in order to record and report what is noticed.

The second limitation is linked with the issue of generalization from qualitative research. A de facto limitation of an in-depth semi-structured interview technique is the inability to generalize to the wider population. This is traded off against the need for an in-depth understanding of participants' voices. Thus, the low number of usually means the results are not adequate for generalization. Using transferability, other researchers could evaluate the applicability of the methods, processes, and results of this research into their own environment. On the other hand, given the fact the in-depth interviews covered all three social service centres in the UAE where social workers functioned, with 21 participating

social workers, it can be contended that the outcomes describe a general trend, especially in terms of the two themes common to all three participating social service centres. The limitation of sample size is quite evident; more participants would provide wider applicability. Also, in conducting face-to-face interviews, there was a potential for interview bias from either party that could impact the process or the results.

The third limitation is associated with the restrictions on time and finances. This study was only able to manage and collect limited qualitative data. However, three different UAE cities were involved: Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. This cross-cultural data collection allowed insights into the understanding of social workers' perspective in dealing with involuntary clients in the UAE. Thus, the qualitative findings through in-depth semi-structured interviews confirm that social workers associated with such centres residing in these three cities do not constitute a homogeneous market. This suggests diversity inducing dimensions and approaches towards dealing with different involuntary clients in UAE, as mentioned in the discussion of Research Objective 3 above.

A fourth limitation of this study is common in research in the Middle East and in most Muslim countries. It relates to implicit and explicit cultural / social norms that may have influenced responses. As noted previously, particularly in the discussion of research question 3, Muslim societies are characterised by a complex and often-subtle network of social conventions, authority patterns, norms, and folkways. There are a strong in-group focus and an even stronger focus on personal privacy. Furthermore, there are significant constraints on the level of frank and open interpersonal exchange that can be achieved until a significant degree of intimacy has been achieved in a relationship. Cross-gender interpersonal exchanges are subject to particularly complex and restrictive social conventions which make it extremely difficult to achieve a high degree of open discussion. These factors, combined with a strong cultural reticence as regards being openly critical and negative about societal institutions typical of high context societies, have clearly impacted the responses. The participants in this study were much less forthcoming than would be the case in a Western study and the depth of information obtained was comparatively limited. Therefore, the analysis was highly comparative and deeply embedded in previous research, looking beyond what was explicitly discussed. For example, many references were made to cultural and contextual factors, and a comparative analysis with previous research strongly suggests that these factors often involve religion, social norms / conventions and the structure of society.

A fifth limitation relates to the fact that most of the social workers who participated would have been trained in a curriculum dominated by Western theories, models, and approaches. The researcher, who has studied in the West and is doing doctoral work there, would have been perceived as strongly representative of Western approaches. Although there were strong implicit suggestions that the overwhelming majority of participants were incorporating limited elements of localised practice into their dealings with involuntary clients, they discussed the management of involuntary clients almost entirely in a Western context. There was a very little explicit acknowledgement of a strong vein of recent research calling for large-scale change and a much more localised approach. It is possible that the participants were struggling to reconcile fundamental tensions between their training and the realities of practice in a Muslim country. In addition, it is possible that participants were not always totally open about localised practices that are being used in order to 'save face', based on an impression that the Western-trained researcher and colleagues might view this in a negative way.

Overall, these limitations do not affect the quality of this study; however, future research directions addressing further enhancement in this research area are now discussed.

5.6   Future research directions

Focused and sustained empirical research is required in order to explore localisation of practice for social work in general. More specifically, focused research on the management of involuntary clients is required. There is a strong theoretical foundation for localised practice based on the cultural, religious and societal values of the UAE, but empirical work has been limited. The next phase of research must focus more on the empirical validation of theory than on further theory-building. Given that an authentic localised practice may not conform to all the fundamental precepts of social work as practised in the West and most social workers in the UAE are trained in a Western paradigm, research efforts could meet with some resistance. Social workers may experience cognitive dissonance as they reflect on what they have been taught in comparison to what is required to achieve an authentic localised practice paradigm. In the societal context of the UAE, there is also likely to be resistance as regards critiquing existing structures, methods and approaches. Therefore, it is likely that research initiatives will need to be painstaking and long-term. As is the case with the management of involuntary clients, research efforts in the UAE are built on relationships and trust.

This research used a single method to collect the data, qualitative in-depth, focused interviews. Other future research directions may comprise a combination of various methods. For instance, the prospective researcher can deploy the mixed methods approach wherein an exploratory and then a confirmatory analysis can be combined by using interviews and surveys. This may provide more in-depth findings for the researcher which validate the findings explored through qualitative analysis. Since this researcher has explored various themes, these themes can be tested via a survey method, which is at the core of quantitative data analysis. Hence, this research has provided the option for prospective researchers to verify the relationships among various factors identified in this study. To validate their findings, researchers can use advanced statistical techniques like Smart PLS (partial least squared path modelling) and comparative analysis can be conducted between the results of Smart PLS and structural equation modelling by using AMOS software.

This study dealt with three cities in the UAE to gauge social workers' experience while dealing with involuntary clients and the strategies they use. In future studies, researchers can make a comparison between these and/or cities by utilizing the factors addressed in this study. A cross-country comparison would be a new area of investigation for researchers and an opportunity for social workers to alter their strategies accordingly.

A comparative study can be conducted wherein both in-depth, focused interviews along with focus groups, can be utilized on a single platform, i.e., within a particular location. Moreover, focus groups or observational studies with different social work centres can also be conducted to generate effective results.

Future researchers can conduct a meta-analysis by combining the results of independent studies in the same area into dealing with involuntary clients and then developing summaries and conclusions to inform this field of investigation. A holistic approach would add value to the literature of social workers' practices with involuntary clients while this variety of studies could give a broader outlook to both academics and practitioners.

This study used a cross-sectional approach. Strategies in dealing with involuntary clients are not constant. They keep changing with time. In this regard, a longitudinal study can be conducted to capture changing strategies over time.

It is important to continue a dialogue with social workers such as those who participated during the interview process, as their insights are valuable. The kinds of research mentioned

above should be conducted to keep educators and practitioners informed about current and changing strategy patterns in dealing with involuntary clients.

5.7   Conclusion

This study had three research objectives. The first was to explore the current and potential strategies to deal with involuntary clients. The second was to investigate the challenges faced by social workers while dealing with involuntary clients, and the last was to determine the difference among strategies while dealing with involuntary clients within different social services centres situated in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. To address the stated research objectives, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 participants working as social workers in social service centres. These in-depth interviews revealed a number of factors related to the research objectives set for this study.

In terms of the first research objective, the most important and most ubiquitously used strategies are better communication and having a conducive atmosphere. Other major themes comprise a positive attitude, establishing a client profile, and freedom of expression. Further factors worth mentioning are a comfort, training and workshop, rapport building, confidence building, a helping nature, empathy, a calm attitude, safety measures and maintenance of boundaries. During the qualitative focused interviews, these factors emerged as quite prominent, and the participants stressed these as important for effective engagement with involuntary clients. However, the most critical element that emerged was the importance of background. The participants appeared to be somewhat reluctant to discuss cultural and religious factors explicitly, but it was clear that these were covered in the term 'background'.

Dealing with involuntary clients is to be done sensitively when the clients are not ready to discuss their problems at length, an aspect identified as part of the second objective proposed in this study. The qualitative focused interviews revealed some important challenges which these social workers faced at the time of communication: clients' anger, frustration, embarrassment, reluctance and a lack of confidence, discipline and motivation. All these pose huge challenges for social workers because they lead involuntary clients to a situation of poor communication with social workers. Such challenges serve as a bottleneck for social workers in terms of their workloads. This research suggests that the collaborative problem-solving approach which drives social work in the West could be an inhibitor rather than a facilitator for the successful management of involuntary clients. The participants in the study seemed to

focus on using Western methods rather than a relationship-building approach which theory suggests would be more appropriate for the UAE although it must be said that the referral process is not conducive to relatively lengthy and intense interventions.

With regard to the third study objective, the interview outcome revealed a combination of strategies followed at the three social worker centres situated in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia. Findings revealed that social workers use relatively ad hoc approaches that are strongly influenced by Western theory and practice. Apart from the two strategies mentioned in all centres, communication and a conducive atmosphere, prominent themes emerging from these three social service centres were a positive attitude, background, and freedom of expression. Focusing on such strategies informs and assists social workers' practice. It is clear that a problem-solving approach based on Western practice dominates the management of involuntary clients. This is likely to be one of the reasons why so many difficulties are experienced. A more localised approach is required, deeply embedded in relationship-building, trust and culture.

A detailed literature review was conducted of various studies around the world wherein the strategies and challenges of dealing with involuntary clients were addressed. This thorough literature review set the foundation of the research questions and objectives and guided the researcher towards the research methodology and methods for this study. The philosophy adopted was constructivism. The study measured the participants' experiences, strategies, and challenges while dealing with involuntary clients. Thus, the stated research philosophy was the most suitable for this study.

This study used a single method by using qualitative in-depth, focused interviews. To answer the research questions, a manual thematic content analysis followed by a comparative analysis with Leximancer software was used to develop the research findings as themes emerging from the qualitative focused interviews. These two techniques were employed to make this study more robust and comprehensive. Details are provided in Chapters 3 and 4.

The study has opened an opportunity for social science researchers and industry practitioners, managers and educators as the strategies in dealing with involuntary clients in the context of the UAE were addressed in detail. It has created new knowledge for social workers not only in the Middle East but also in other parts of the world wherein these strategies can be used to develop effective communication with involuntary clients. Hence, new learning for social

workers across the globe has been offered. From the academic standpoint, this study gives in-depth insights into strategies and challenges, which itself is an effective contribution to the literature. Finally, this study has also opened various future research avenues, as discussed in the previous section.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview questions

EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN DEALING WITH INVOLUNTARY CLIENTS. A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

Interview Questions

Question 1 | Screening question
Do you currently work or ever worked with involuntary social service client(s)?

Question 2
Where and since when you are associated in dealing with involuntary clients?

Probing questions
- Name of the organization/social service centres
- If in the UAE then which cities?
- Months and years

Prompting questions
- Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Gharbia
- Since 3 months or 3, 5, 6 years

Question 3
What is the nature of your work with involuntary clients?

Promoting question
- Individual intervention
- Group's interaction

Question 4
What are the challenges you face in dealing with the involuntary clients?

Prompting questions
- Expressing anger
- Not willing to share the personal information, being shy
- Lack of self confidence
- Lack of client interest
- Client hostile behaviour, when client become violent and aggressive
- Missing appointments
- Avoid seeing the worker
- Telling lies
- Keeping the status quo

Question 5
Can you please share your experience in dealing with an involuntary client(s)?

Probing question
- Share a good experience
- Share a bad experience

Question 6
In your opinion and with your experience, how you can deal better with involuntary resistance clients?

Prompting questions
- Good use of team work
- Seeking help from colleagues
- Attending training sessions

Appendix B: Ethics approval

OFFICE OF RESEARCH
Human Research Ethics Committee
PHONE +61 7 4687 5703| FAX +61 7 4631 5555
EMAIL human.ethics@usq.edu.au

22 August 2017

Mr Rashed Alketbi

Dear Rashed

The USQ Human Research Ethics Committee has recently reviewed your responses to the conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the project outlined below. Your proposal is now deemed to meet the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethical approval has been granted.

Approval No.	**H17REA106**
Project Title	A model for working with resistant involuntary social services clients in the context of United Arab Emirates
Approval date	18 August 2017
Expiry date	18 August 2020
HREC Decision	**Approved**

The standard conditions of this approval are:

(a) Conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
(b) Advise (email: human.ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
(c) Make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
(d) Provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
(e) Provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
(f) Advise in writing if the project has been discontinued, using a 'final report'

For (c) to (f) forms are available on the USQ ethics website:
http://www.usq.edu.au/research/support-development/research-services/research-integrity-ethics/human/forms

Samantha Davis
Ethics Officer

University of Southern Queensland
usq.edu.au
CRICOS QLD 00244B NSW 02225M TEQSA PRV12081

Participant Information for USQ Research Project
Interview

Project Details	
Title of Project:	**EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN DEALING WITH INVOLUNTARY CLIENTS. A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.**
Human Research Ethics Approval Number:	17001304

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details
Mr. Rashed Alketbi
Email: u1071272@usq.edu.au
Telephone: 07 463 12861
Mobile: 042 664 8250

Supervisor Details
Professor Jeffrey Soar
Email: Jeffery.soar@usq.edu.au
Telephone: +61 7 4631 1255
Mobile: 040 074 6657

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of PhD thesis.

The purpose of this project is to explore the best practice model for working with resistant involuntary social services clients.

The research team requests your assistance because the information will help to answer the research questions and to achieve objectives developed in this study. Moreover, the results of this study will facilitate the social service centers to better understanding and the importance of indigenous value and belief system in developing social work interventions. Moreover, this study will contribute to knowledge on how social workers can manage involuntarily clients by developing a best practice model in context to UAE (United Arab Emirates).

Participation

Your participation will involve participation in an interview that will take approximately 25-30 minutes of your time. The interview will take place at a time and at three designated branches of social service centers in UAE. Participation in this project will involve you answering open ended questions relating to your experience while handling the involuntarily clients at the social service center. For example, can you please share your experience while handling the involuntarily clients? In your opinion what should be done to manage these involuntarily clients?

Furthermore, the interview will be audio recorded.

Appendix C: Participant information sheet

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may also request that any data collected about you be destroyed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will directly benefit you. Moreover, it will also benefit the research team to answer the research questions raised in this research and to achieve the research objectives.

Risks

There is a minimal risk associated with your participation in this project. This include time imposition risk.
Time imposition – Since interviews normally take a longer time to gather detailed answers from the participants, in order to minimize this risk, the researcher will limit the number of questions so that they will be answered within 20 minutes. Hence, there will be a deep focus and probing on a limited number of questions.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law.
- The information provided by the participants will be kept with strict confidentiality and privacy.
- Interview will be audio recorded.
- A copy of interview transcript will be provided to participant to review and endorsed the information ensure the validity of the data. Participants will be given one week time to review and request any changes to the transcript before the data is included in the project.
- There is no possibility to participate in the project without audio recording.
- The data obtained from this research will be used for future research publications.
- Participants can contact the research team via email to obtain a 2 page summary of results. Since participants are not required to mention their names and any personal information, thus in this way researcher will maintain confidentiality of results.
- Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to a member of the Research Team prior to participating in your interview.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 2214 or

email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix D: Consent form

U n i v e r s i t y   o f   S o u t h e r n   Q u e e n s l a n d

Consent Form for USQ Research Project Interview

Project Details	
Title of Project:	EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN DEALING WITH INVOLUNTARY CLIENTS. A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.
Human Research Ethics Approval Number:	17001304

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details
Mr. Rashed Alketbi
Email: u1071272@usq.edu.au
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Mobile: 042 664 8250

Supervisor Details
Professor Jeffrey Soar
Email: Jeffery.soar@usq.edu.au
Telephone: +61 7 4631 1255
Mobile: 040 074 6657

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

2. I have read and understood the information document (Participation information sheet) regarding this project.

3. I understand that most interviewees find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

4. Participation involves being interviewed by researcher from **University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba Australia**. The interview will last approximately 25-30 minutes. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be make. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.

5. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team on the details mentioned in this form.

6. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded.

7. I understand that I will be provided with a copy of the transcript of the interview for my perusal and endorsement prior to inclusion of this data in the project. I will have one week time to review the transcript and request any changes before the data is included in the project.

8. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.

9. I understand that I can contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 2214 or email <u>researchintegrity@usq.edu.au</u>, if I have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project.

10. I am over 18 years of age.

11. I understand that any data collected may be used in future research activities.

12. I agree to participate in the project.

Participant Name	
Participant Signature	
Date	

☐ Please tick this box and provide your email address below if you wish to receive a summary of the research results.

Email:_____

Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the interview.