

**EXPLORING WORKING CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS AT
MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

By

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A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Administration and Management in the Faculty of Management and Law at the University of Limpopo

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DECLARATION

I **Azwihangwisi Abel Makongoza**, hereby declare that this mini- dissertation title : exploring working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province, hereby submitted by me, has not been previously submitted in part or full to any degree at this or another university, and this is my own work in design and execution. All references material contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province by focusing on the provision of resources, supervision and caseload. The qualitative research approach was used face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were utilised as a data collecting method from participants. Purposive sampling was used as a sub-type of non-probability sampling. The study was conducted at Makhado Municipality in Vhembe District in Limpopo Province. Data was collected from social workers working under Makhado Municipality and analysed through thematic analysis.

It was found that social workers are not provided with adequate resources to render quality social work services, and that lack of availability of transport and office space is a serious challenge. It was further found that social workers are working without enabling trade tools such as computers, printers, photocopying machines, fax machines and cell-phones. It was further found that social workers are not getting quality supervision, and supervisors are not taking supervision as seriously as it shall be. Moreover, it was found that social workers have high caseloads, which is negatively affecting service delivery.

The study recommends that the Department of Social Development prioritise the provision of trade tools such as transport, computers, cell-phones, printers, photocopy machines and stationery. The study further recommends that the Department of Social Development employ more supervisors, social auxiliary workers and social workers to reduce high caseloads. Moreover, the study recommends that the Department of Social Development increase the infrastructure budget and ensure that it builds more offices for social workers.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this mini-dissertation to my two beloved children, **Omphazwothe Bono Makongoza** and **Thendo Rofhiwa Makongoza**.

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CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

South Africa is a country fraught with social ills and as a result welfare agencies are often overwhelmed, overburdened and financially under resourced. A number of authors draw attention to the fact that South African social workers are confronted with on-going lack of basic resources such as clean office space, office furniture, stationery, computers, technical assistance and reliable vehicles (Earle, 2008; Engelbrecht, 2006; Naidoo & Kasiram, 2006). Not only has this been mentioned in academic text, but also reference was made of inadequate resources by the thousands of social workers that marched to the Union Buildings to present a memorandum to government, in September 2016. The social workers made mention of lack of basic resources such as insufficient and unroadworthy vehicles, stationery shortages, inadequate office equipment and office space, (Madibogo, 2016). According to Ranking in Schebk (2004), social workers cannot do their work without the availability of resources and Ranking believes that resources are the basic concept of social work functioning. Working conditions for most social workers in welfare sector in South Africa regardless of whether they are based within the private or public sector remain poor.

This study explores the working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality by focusing on the availability of resources, caseloads and the provision of support to social workers. The chapter presents the background to the study and looks at the practice of social work in Europe, Africa and South Africa. Furthermore, the chapter contains the motivation, research approach, research design, sampling, significance, problem statement, aim and objectives of the study. It also examines the limitation of the study, definition of major concepts and the division of the study.

1.2. Background to the study

Organisations and resources are considered to be essential in the effective functioning of social workers. The National Department of Social Development undertook to improve service delivery by introducing general norms and standards, which state that practitioners require adequate, appropriate infrastructure and equipment to perform their identified tasks in respect of social welfare service delivery. The National Department of Social Development held a social work indaba in Durban led by Minister Bathabile Dlamini. Challenges experienced by social workers such as poor working conditions, low remuneration and the unavailability of resources and lack of access to developmental programmes were raised by social workers. Social workers spend most of their time in the office attending to clients, but they also travel to visit these clients. When they are rendering services to their clients, social workers experience many challenges like poor working conditions, high caseloads, understaffing, low salary, and unsupportive supervisors on a daily basis (Madibogo, 2016)

The workload of social workers appears to be in the extreme, social worker said that they are providing services to an ever increasing number of poor immigrants entering the country, catering for the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people while working under poor working conditions (Department of Social Development, 2015). Excessive workloads are believed to start a chain reaction that ultimately leads to feelings of depersonalisation and lack of accomplishment. Burdensome caseloads and extensive administrative duties inhibit the lengthy process of creating emotional bonds with clients, leading to feelings of lack of personal accomplishment on the part of the social worker. According to Joseph (2017), Social worker has between 110 and 400 cases. This occurs despite the fact that controlling bodies recommend that a social worker should not have a caseload in excess of 60 cases (Earle, 2008). Huge caseloads prevent the social worker from attending to urgent cases timeously. This ultimately puts the client at further risk of violence and abuse, and when intervention does occur, the social worker is not able to give the necessary time and focus to ensure a quality intervention. Thus, although the social worker has legal and ethical responsibilities to deal with cases of abuse timeously, it is physically impossible to give

sufficient time when the social worker is stretched over hundreds of cases (Kasiram, 2009). There is a distinct belief that high caseloads are merely setting the social worker up for failure. According to Mickel in Joseph (2017) social workers often have little or no clerical support, resulting in them being forced to stretch themselves even further: "Social workers have become typists. As well as doing, say, highly detailed work on children in care, they are booking taxis, typing up the notes for meetings and sending them out".

Social workers experience many challenges like unsupportive supervisors. Studies show that little or no supervision, or a poor relationship with a supervisor, was a significant antecedent factor to turnover. Redpath, Gill, Finlay, Brennan & Hakkennes (2015), states that although supervision is imperative, quality supervision is essential to ensure benefits are reaped. According to the authors, effective supervision includes offering praise, highlighting key strengths of the social worker, being a good listener, being sensitive to the unique emotional experiences of the worker, being understanding to the demands and responsibilities placed upon the worker (Westbrook, Ellis & Ellett, 2008). Similarly, the supervisor also needs a sound knowledge of the process and procedures of the organisation (Westbrook et al., 2008). The opportunities for learning from the supervision process are great but the effects of poor or no supervision are palpable. Engelbrecht (2010) stresses that low supervision creates a spiral; it begins with less time available for supervision, leading to higher attrition rates, ultimately higher caseloads for remaining social workers, then subsequently even less available time for supervision as the supervisor is overwhelmed with attending to practical needs within the organisation. Quality supervision creates professional development through learnt procedures, but it also allows the worker to identify their key strengths. The benefits of supervision are significant to the social worker, the client and the organisation at large. The question however remains, why supervision is not being implemented with the vigour that it should be. Supervision is not only complex, but also extremely important to the sound running of any welfare of the organisation. Excessive workload hinders the process of quality supervision in many areas within South Africa. This ultimately leads to a lower quality service being offered to those in need (Joseph,2017).

1.3. Research approach

There are four types of research theories, which are: realism, pragmatism, positivism and interpretivist. For the purposes of the study, the interpretivist theory was used for the study. This theory views reality as something subjective and based on meaning and understanding. The goal of interpretivist research is to understand, rather than to make predictions. According to Thompson (2015), the interpretivist approach in social science usually uses qualitative methods such as unstructured interviews or participant observation. Babbie and Mouton (2009) supports this view by stating that interpretivism approach is associated with qualitative approach.

According to Dey (1998) and Mouton and Marais (1996), qualitative and quantitative research reflects the interest of a researcher and what the researcher wants to make of it. Qualitative research strives to obtain and understand first-hand experiences of the participants on a particular topic. According to Babbie and Mouton (2009), qualitative research is a method that emphasise in-depth understanding and deeper meaning of human experience with the aim of generating theoretical richer and more tentative observations. The researcher found a qualitative approach more suitable for this study because it grants the researcher an opportunity to gain insight into the perceptions of social workers regarding their working conditions.

1.4. Research Design

Research design is defined as a strategic plan for a research project, setting out the broad structure and features of research (Gray, 2009). According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1999), a research design could be seen as the planning to guide the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed and collected data. Mouton and Marais (1996) describe the goal in exploratory studies as the exploration of an unknown research area. The limited literature available on the area indicated to the researcher that this is not a well-researched topic (Neuman, 2000). The researcher found that there is limited literature available, and that is why he has opted for an exploratory design. The researcher, therefore, had to explore the working conditions of social workers with the aim of identifying and describing these challenges

1.5. Sampling

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1999), sampling is the study of the relationship between a population and samples drawn from it. The sample taken from the population should be representative of the population from which it was drawn. A researcher, however, sometimes needs to draw a sample from a small population to deal with an exceptional phenomenon (Strydom & De Vos, 2005).

The researcher utilised non-probability sampling. According to Monette et al. (2008), non-probability sampling is a technique in which the probability of each population element being included in the sample is unknown. Mogorosi (2009) further alludes that in non-probability sampling, each element in the population being selected into a sample is not known, and the chances of being selected are not necessary and always equal to all population. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling as a sub-type of non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling is described as a sampling technique where investigators use their judgement and prior knowledge to choose people who best serve the purpose of the study (Monette et al, 2008). The researcher is familiar with the knowledge and experience of the members of the sample and knows that they will provide the required information from their experiences (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1999). Furthermore, the researcher used purposive sampling to select 15 out of 61 social workers from different offices that form part of the study.

1.6. Motivation to the study

As a social worker, the researcher at Makhado Municipality has observed that social workers are working without resources but are still expected to render appropriate and quality services to their clients. Some social workers regard their working environment as the poorest. What motivated the researcher to engage in this study was that it has not been conducted in the proposed area. The findings and recommendations of the study will assist the Department of Social Development at Makhado Municipality in dealing with challenges related to working conditions.

1.7. Problem statement

Studies conducted in South Africa reveal that the working conditions of social workers remain poor. A study conducted by the Department of Labour (2008) reveals that the working conditions of social workers are general poor, and that social workers are frustrated with their limited or lack of resources such as adequate supervision, stationery and office space. In another study conducted by Schenk (2004), it was found that bad working conditions prevent social workers from moving into communities to attend their clients and bring changes to their (clients') lives. Furthermore, on 19th September 2016, thousands of social workers were involved in a peaceful march to the Union Buildings to hand over their memorandum of demands to Presidency and Minister of Social Development. These demands included better working conditions, better salaries and lack of working equipment. Social workers stressed that they are working under horrible conditions and sharing offices, which compromises their client privacy (Madibogo, 2016).

Staff turnover of social workers is relatively high in South Africa. A study conducted by the Department of Labour (2008) reveals that approximately 1111 social workers migrate from South Africa to other countries. Better working conditions are generally considered to be a pull factor of the migration of social workers. According to Schenk (2004), Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, was quoted by Ngomane in the Citizen (2010) as stating that one of the reasons for the movement of social workers to other sectors and countries is better working conditions in those sectors or countries. Although much has been said about the working conditions of social workers, much still needs to be done as the situation remains unchanged.

Social workers from across the country including social workers from Makhado Municipality have raised number of challengers which they face at social work indaba held in Durban. Furthermore, over 20,000 social workers from Limpopo Province, Eastern Cape Province, Free state Province and other provinces march for better working conditions (Madibogo,2016). Social workers from Makhado Municipality was also part of the social work Indaba and a national social workers' strike which identified lack of resources and poor working conditions as a serious problem. It therefore

necessitated the researcher to explore the working conditions of social workers as it has an impact on the rendering of social work services.

1.8. Aim to the study

According to Gray (2009), the aim of a study is defined as a general statement and direction of the study. Bailey and Nunan (1996) describe the aim as a specific and operationalisation of the research that should be a brief content of what a researcher plans to investigate. The aim of this study is to investigate the working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province.

1.9. Objectives of the study

According to Grinnel (1993), the objective of a study is the directly measurement statement which indirectly fulfills the goal requirement. Gray (2009) defines an objective as a clear statement of intended outcome, which can be measured in the same way.

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To establish if social workers at Makhado Municipality have adequate resources to render quality services to their clients.
- To determine if social workers at Makhado Municipality are sufficiently supervised.
- To examine social worker's caseload at Makhado Municipality.

1.10. Research questions

The aim of the study was to investigate the working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province. In order to address the aim and the objectives of the study, the researcher considered the following three critical research questions:

- How is the provision of resources to social workers at Makhado Municipality?
- What are the challenges of social workers at Makhado Municipality related to supervision?
- How is the allocation of cases to social workers at Makhado Municipality?

1.11. Significance of the study

The study focused on the working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality and is significant for the following reasons:

- i) The study findings will assist the Limpopo Department of Social Development to gain insights into experiences of social workers related to working conditions. There has not been any study conducted at Makhado Municipality concerning working conditions.
- ii) It will contribute to the body of knowledge in Public Administration by bringing new insights into working conditions of social workers, which will assist in the improvement of these conditions.
- iii) It will contribute to the review and development of General Norms and Standards, service delivery model, recruitment and retention strategy of social workers by the Limpopo Department of Social Development.
- iv) The study will also provide valuable information to researchers and academics interested in working conditions of social workers.

1.12. Definition of concepts

1.12.1. Working conditions

According to Schenk (2004), working conditions are defined as an environment and all existing circumstances affecting labour in a workplace, including job hours, physical aspects, legal rights and reasonability.

1.12.2. Social work service

According to Payne (1997) and the Terminology Committee for Social Work (1995), social work service is a service that is rendered by a registered social worker to promote, enhance or restore the capacity and social functioning of individuals, groups and communities.

1.12.3. Caseload

This refers to the number of cases which a social worker is concerned with at one time (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006).

1.12.4. Social worker

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 defines a social worker as a person who is registered as social worker in terms of Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978. The South African Council for Social Services Professions defines a social work as a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and to enhance wellbeing.

1.13. Division of the study

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter provides a detailed and clear introduction and background to the study. The chapter also covers the problem statement, research approach, research design, samplings, research questions, motivation, aim and the objectives of the study. The chapter further provides the limitation of the study, definition of concepts and, lastly, the outline of the chapters.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains the review of literature that is relevant to the study and a theoretical framework which serves as a guideline of the study. This section provides a detailed and comprehensive review of previous research works in order to provide the background to the present study. It looks deeply into the history and background of social work in South Africa, policy and legislation in order to provide a better understanding of the practice of social work in South Africa and to ensure correlation with research questions and research instruments.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the nature and type and the choice of research methods. The chapter further provides a clear and detailed explanation of how the research instrument, population, location and ethical issues were selected.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

The research results are presented and discussed in this chapter. The chapter further presents the data and a detailed description of the empirical results. The outcomes of the observations and the individual interviews with the participants are presented and clarified. The study data is in relation to the research instrument of the study and the results are in correspondence with the research instrument.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides the interpretation of the findings of the study. The researcher gives his own interpretation of the findings in relation to the literature review. The researcher also presents his recommendations and shows the implications of the study findings. The chapter also highlights and discusses the limitations of the study and indicates possible topics for future researchers.

12. CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the background and motivation of the study. The chapter also highlighted the research questions, research approach, research design, sampling aim and objectives for the study. A statement on the significance of the study was also presented. In the next chapter, the literature review is presented.

CHAPTER: 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introductions

This chapter presents the literature review of the study. It reviews views of other authors in relation to the topic of the study. The researcher ensures that there is correlation between the major research questions and the research instrument.

2.2 An overview of social work practice in South Africa

According to Drower (2002) until the 1920s, social work as a distinct profession did not exist in South Africa. Social welfare needs were addressed at the family and community level. During this period there was growing concern about poverty among the white population which ended in an investigation into this problem (Drower,2002). The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa co-ordinated this investigation and was funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Carnegie Commission of Enquiry report was released in 1932, with two major recommendations. These recommendations were directly related to the development of social welfare in South Africa. The recommendation in the report was for the establishment of a social welfare department (Drower, 2002). In 1937 the formal institutional sanction of the Department of Welfare in South Africa took place. The second recommendation by the 1929 Carnegie Commission of Enquiry was the training of social workers. These social workers would be capable of making social diagnoses "through the scientific study of individual cases of destitution" (cited by McKendrick in Drower, 2002). From the aforesaid, it was clear that the development of social work as a profession and the nature of its professional activities in South Africa were motivated by concern for white poverty, addressed through the training of practitioners with an approach embedded with values and ideologies of the Western society.

In 1948, a period of legislated segregation occurred with the assumption of power by the National Party, leading in the apartheid era (Drower,2002). Their policy was to implement separation in every aspect of South Africa's population. During the apartheid

period, especially from 1948-1994, the National Party government promoted the practice of inequality and unfairness in the treatment of blacks in the social welfare system (Brown & Neku, 2005). In the welfare sector, segregation was reflected in welfare policy, the delivery of social services, and the training of social workers (Naido, 2004). In the early 1950s, the Department of Social Welfare had its responsibilities for blacks and coloured transferred to the Departments of Bantu Administration and Coloured Affairs, respectively (Brown & Neku, 2005). In terms of the policy of separation in 1960, the Department of Bantu Administration and Development took over the welfare function for Africans from the Department of Social Welfare. The Department of Coloured Affairs and Indian Affairs were then made responsible for Coloured and Indian welfare respectively (Naido, 2004). This were supported by Mamphisana and Noyo in Brown and Neku (2005), who states that separate Department of Indian Affairs was formed for the social welfare of people of Indian origin. This separation of services according to race ensured that blacks, who had the greatest needs, received the smallest portion of the welfare budget, and were least likely to have access to infrastructure such as housing, running water and electricity. Apartheid social welfare policies ensured that the country's black majority remained poor, undereducated and unable to earn an adequate living wage.

According to Naido (2004) the State was able to exert its separate development policies by legislating rules for the registration of welfare agencies and threatening the withdrawal of subsidies if these organisations did not adhere to these rules. In South Africa, however, within the apartheid time the dignity of the human being and the right to self-determination and fulfilment were focused merely on the minority group, the white sector. The needs of the majority of South Africans were totally disregarded. According to Lombard (2000), discrimination took the form not only of inequalities in the social welfare benefits paid, but also of various differences in the procedures and policies applied by the different State departments. Social workers and welfare personnel at every level of authority were involved in the daily implementation of all the racial aspects of the various welfare statutes. They were required on a daily basis to implement statutes which formed the foundations of the apartheid system

(Lombard,2000). All social services rendered by the apartheid government were linked to the ideological of Afrikaner Nationalism. According to this approach, the white person's need was regarded as a priority. Brown and Neku (2005) maintain that the decentralisation of welfare services also resulted in duplication and inefficiency as well as the development of conflicting and different standards among welfare departments

With the end of apartheid, new policies like the White Paper (1997) were developed. These policies show government's effort to address problems in the social welfare system that resulted in discrimination and poverty for the majority population (Brown & Neku, 2005). After the end of the apartheid, the new democratic South Africa began to transform its social welfare system. Many activists such as politicians, religious organisations, community leaders and social workers influenced the transformation of the social welfare system. There are many organisations that have contributed to the change of the welfare system, which promotes injustice. The Department then, set about the task of redressing past imbalances in facilities for the respective communities. Work groups were appointed to investigate a national welfare developmental strategy, comprehensive welfare legislation and the establishment of social welfare programmes. The new developmental paradigm was adopted in legislation and included in welfare programmes (Van Eeden, Ryke, & De Necker, 2000). The new democratic government has a goal to develop social welfare policies, programmes and delivery systems that ensured basic welfare rights to all citizens, with priority given to blacks who had historically experienced oppression and discrimination (Brown & Neku, 2005).

To meet the needs of the people, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was adopted by the government as a policy framework for socio-economic development and was envisaged as a response to addressing the inequalities caused by apartheid (Naido,2004). This was supported by Brown and Neku (2005) who states that the Reconstruction and Development Programme provided a framework for transforming the social welfare system. The initiative culminated in a national social policy for development that included, but was not limited to, the following goals:

- a) Redressing past imbalances through a deliberate process of affirmative action with respect to those who were historically disadvantaged, that is, women, children and people in rural communities and informal settlements.
- b) Establishing umbrella legislation that provided the underpinnings for a development-oriented social welfare system based on the principles of equality, equity, access and empowerment.
- c) Insuring the greatest coverage for the poorest through a restructured, integrated social welfare delivery system at the national, provincial and local levels of government.
- d) Developing professional standards to guide the training, education and employment of social service personnel.

The South African social welfare system had been both residual and selective, that is, it provided emergency assistance for specific sections of the population, and was designed to maintain the preferential treatment of white people. This was replaced with a social development model, which the White Paper (1997) characterises as a delivery approach that engages communities in finding solutions to their needs and problems. The social development model is defined as a method that relies on advocacy strategies, and builds on various structures that emanate from local initiatives. Social development is also viewed as a method for removing societal imbalances and meeting the needs of the country's poorest groups through the development of programmes such as universal literacy, preventive health initiatives, housing development and population planning (Brown & Neku, 2005)

Social work was described as overwhelming and sometimes frustrating because the needs of the community are many, but there are few professionals available to assist families in rural areas. The limited number of social workers employed by non-governmental organisations to work in rural areas where families are in urgent need of social welfare assistance meant that there were human resource limitations for the delivery of services. The reason for the limited number of social workers employed by non-governmental organisations is that employment in the government sector has more benefits financially than in NGOs (Brown & Neku, 2005)

Social workers must travel on roads that are in poor conditions to reach families in the interior regions of the country, and vehicles are not always available. It could become difficult to reach those with the greatest needs. Lack of vehicles has significant knock-on effects on both the stress levels of the social workers and their ability to finish their work timeously. Specific mention was made of the inability to attend to serious cases expeditiously as well as to arrange transportation to fetch documents for court (Joseph, 2017). A lack of resources such as equipment, qualified supervisors and in-service training were identified as barriers to competent practice (Brown & Neku, 2005).

2.3 LEGISLATURE

Legislation provides the mandate for the social welfare sector and is a precondition for service delivery.

2.3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

According to Section 195 (1) (a) of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa, a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained. Section 195 (1) (b) further states that efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.

2.3.2 Social Welfare White Paper of 1997

The Department of Social Development released a White Paper which provided guidelines on how to address challenges of welfare personnel. The White Paper set out the vision, goals, principles, guidelines and recommendations for the development of Social Welfare in our country. The Department of Welfare, which is currently known as the Department of Social Development, released its White Paper for social welfare in 1997. According to the White Paper (1997), there is a lack of human capacity in welfare field to address social development needs in the country. According to the White Paper (1997), some provinces are better resourced than others in terms of infrastructure and personnel. The white paper further highlights that there is an unequal distribution of resources among provinces specifically identified North West, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. The White Paper (1997) found that the working conditions for welfare personnel are poor. According to the White Paper, concern has been

expressed about inappropriate management style in the public and private sectors. The Department of Social Development is aware of the challenges faced by social workers or welfare personnel. There are general guidelines on how to address these challenges.

2.3.3 Department of Social Development General Norms and Standards 2013

The Department of Social Development (2013) introduced General Norms and Standards, which make provision for the development, implementation and review of a legislative and policy framework for rendering social welfare services. According to the Department of Social Development (2013), social welfare service providers should obtain and maintain adequate staff levels and acceptable working conditions. Social welfare service providers should ensure that working conditions are in line with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Department of Social Development,2013). They should have clear guidelines on working conditions.

2.3.3.1 Infrastructure

According to Department of Social Development (2013), practitioners require adequate, appropriate infrastructure and equipment to perform their identified tasks in respect of social welfare service delivery.

2.3.3.2 Supervision

The Department of Social Development (2013) makes provision that social welfare service providers should provide supervision for all social welfare service practitioners and students. The supervisor-supervisee ratio may range between 4 and 8 depending on factors such as distance from each other and other job responsibilities. Social welfare service providers should make the supervision of social welfare service practitioners and students an integral and on-going part of the professional development. The idea behind the supervision of social service practitioners is to ensure the delivery of quality services to beneficiaries, while supporting and building the capacity of practitioners. Social welfare service providers should make consultation and supervision available to social welfare service practitioners, and newly qualified practitioners should be supervised for a minimum of two years. The duration and

frequency of supervision should be determined by the supervisor in consultation with the supervisee, and should take into account the experience of the supervisee and the complexity of the work. The minimum level of individual supervision should be one uninterrupted hour. Span of control should be limited to the following ratios:

- One social work supervisor whose work consists of 65% of supervision of direct social welfare services must have 13 supervisees who get structured supervision on a fortnightly basis before they advance to a consultative level.
- One social work supervisor whose work consists of 65% of supervision of direct social welfare services and travelling must have 10 supervisees.
- One social work supervisor whose work consists of 50% casework/ management of social welfare services must have 03 supervisees.

2.3.3.3 Caseload Management

In accordance with the Department of Social Development (2013), social work services should be provided according to a manageable workload. The ratio of a single occupation service delivery unit to the population should be as follows:

- One social worker working in rural areas must be responsible for 2 500 people, while a social worker in urban areas must be responsible for 5 000 people. The ratio of a multiple occupation delivery unit to the population should increase proportionately based on the size and diversity of the team.
- One social worker must be allocated 60 cases per month and 224 cases annually.

According to Department of Social Development, one social worker must only be allocated 60 cases per month and be responsible for 2500 people in rural areas and 1500 in urban areas.

2.4 DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to a study conducted by the Department of Labour (2008), there is a shortage of social workers in South Africa. In terms of their findings, the distribution of social workers employed by provinces and departments in 2005 were as follows:

Table 2.1. Distribution of social workers in South Africa

Province	Department of Social Development	Department of Health	SAPS	Correctional Service	Others	Total
Western Cape	331	119	0	0	0	450
Eastern Cape	460	70	0	0	3	533
Northern Cape	49	7	0	0	0	56
Free State	187	8	0	0	1	196
North West	115	27	0	0	1	143
Kwazulu Natal	487	102	0	0	1	590
Gauteng	588	164	0	0	1	553
Mpumalanga	210	22	0	0	0	232
Limpopo	333	42	0	0	0	375
National	63	0	255	474	1	793
Total	2623	561	255	478	8	3921

Based on this table 2.1, the largest numbers of social workers are employed by the Department of Social Development.

According to Earler (2008), there is a shortage of social workers in government and the non-governmental organisation sector. South Africa has 16 740 social workers registered with the South African Council of Social Services professional. Out of the total number, 6655 of them were employed by government, 2634 were employed by non-profit organisations, and 7451 were either employed in the private sector or were

not practising but retained their registered status. Furthermore, the Democratic Alliance in Department of Social Development (2012) stated that there is a shortage of 77% of social workers in South Africa. It states that South Africa needs 69 498 social workers. According to the Minister of Social Development (2012), South Africa needs

- 66 329 social workers to implement Children`s Act No 38 of 2005,
- 743 social workers to implement Older Persons Act No 13 Of 2006,
- 1426 social workers to work with the prevention of and treatment of substance abuse (WWW.da.org.za).

2.5 WORKING CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Schenk (2004), working conditions are defined as an environment and all existing circumstances affecting labour in a workplace, including job hours, physical aspect legal right and reasonability. In this section, the research refers to provision of resources, supervision and caseload as working conditions for social workers.

2.5.1 Provision of resources to social workers

According to Schenck (2004), organisations where social workers are employed have the responsibility to create working conditions for social workers. It is the responsibility of the Department of Social Development to formulate guidelines and to provide basic resources to enable social workers to do their jobs properly. To ensure that social workers are provided with trade tools to carry out their duties the Department of Social Development introduced norms and standards, which indicate that social work practitioners require adequate equipment to perform their tasks in respect of social welfare service delivery (Department of Social Development, 2013). Despite this provision, according to Department of Labour (2008), social work is an undervalued and under-resourced profession. Social workers often fail to respond to most serious crisis cases due to lack of resources. They lack tools to carry out comprehensive assessment of children and families in crisis. Furthermore, Gutsche et al. (2015) maintain that lack of resources and scarcity of skilled workers could have an impact in the effective and practical implementation of life story work.

2.5.1.1. Availability of government or subsidised transportation to execute duties

According to Schenck (2004), official motor vehicles are considered as the most important resources for social workers to perform their duties. Social workers need cars to have access to people in remote areas and to visit their clients. People in remote areas lack money to travel to social workers' offices due to distance. According to Joseph (2017) lack of reliable vehicles significantly hampers the ability of social workers to do their job efficiently. A study conducted by Schenck (2004) argues that social workers confirm that people would travel to social worker once to report problems, and if the social worker did not follow this up with a home visit, the client would not return. The government (Department of Social Development) makes provision for subsidised cars to social workers so that they can buy cars for work purposes. This was found to be working effectively. However, the problem was that cars were not suitable for gravel road, and because the cars are their properties, they avoided driving on bad roads which could damage their cars. As such this made the system ineffective (Schenck, 2004).

Challenges of limited or unavailability of resources such as transport and phones have resulted in some social workers doing field work, while others use their own transport to deal with emergencies, and in some cases, they hike and use public transport (www.google.com). Social workers are generally frustrated with the overwhelming needs of their communities in relation to the lack of resources such as vehicles (Department of Labour, 2008). This was further supported by Schenck (2004), who found that cars were a huge problem, and, in some cases, 12 social workers shared one car, while in other offices, the social worker did not have a car at all, not even his/her own vehicle. This is supported by a study conducted by Joseph (2017) which found that not only was there a shortage of vehicles in each organisation, but also existing vehicles were often poorly maintained. It was found that in one area, two social workers shared a car, although their offices were 70km away from each other. The social workers had to make arrangement with each other that one would have the car for the first two weeks of the month and the other in the last two weeks. If anything happened in between, the social worker who did not have a car could not attend a problem if the client could not come to her/his office. The challenge of transport is

serious problem. This was supported by Scheck (2004), who found that social workers complained that cars created intense conflict amongst themselves and others. Furthermore, a study conducted by Joseph (2017) found that there are generally insufficient vehicles for the organisation to function optimally.

According to Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) shortage of resources created division, tension, fighting and unpleasant circumstances among social workers. Some social workers steal cars on the days when they had no cars allocated to them because of the pressure from the management to meet targets. A study conducted by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) in Kwazulu-Natal found that in some offices there were seven cars to be shared by 37 social workers, and all social workers needed to meet their targets. This demoralised and demotivated them.

The problem of unavailability of cars meant that social workers are inaccessible to their community, and in some offices, they did not have access to cars for nearly six months. The situation of cars is one of the most important matters that need to be taken seriously because the unavailability of cars affects the visibility of social workers in their community (Schenck, 2004).

There is a gap between the non-government organisation and government with regard to the availability of cars. This is a cause for serious concern. According to a study conducted by Schenck (2004) focusing on working conditions of social workers in rural areas in South Africa, social workers working in non-governmental organisations have access to cars provided by their organisations. Although social workers in these organisations do share cars, they do not have complaints about these cars. Only a few number of them share cars, unlike in government where close to 12 social workers share one car (Schenck, 2004).

2.5.1.2. Infrastructure or social worker's offices

According to the White paper (1997), some provinces are better resourced than others in terms of infrastructure. The social welfare White Paper (1997) identified lack of infrastructure as a major concern in the welfare sector and proposes that it be addressed. To address the problem of lack of resources or infrastructure, the

Department of Social Development introduced General Norms and Standards (2013) which states that practitioners require adequate, appropriate infrastructure and equipment to perform their duties. Although the Department of Social Development introduced norms and standards, the situation remains unchanged. This is highlighted by a study conducted by the Department Labour (2008), which states that social workers are generally frustrated with the needs of their communities in relation to their own relative low numbers and lack of resources such as office space.

Furthermore, according to Schenck (2004), the state of social workers' offices is poor. They (offices) are dirty and others in park homes which are cold, with no waiting rooms for clients. Clients have to wait outside in the cold, rain or sun. Offices of social workers are limited and social workers have to share them. This situation is unable to create a professional and dignified atmosphere. This is further supported by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), who argue that lack of offices and office space is a serious challenge amongst social workers. In a study conducted by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), social workers express themselves in this way with regard to the state of their offices:

Our office are not up to standard. They are small with six to eight people in each office. I think it is destructive because it is difficult to concentrate in the office because we are many. There are too many distractions, people walking through.

Social workers employed by the Department of Social Development are faced with offices that are inaccessible, and with limited office space. Furthermore, social workers have to share offices, some of which do not have toilets and electricity (Alpaslan & Scheck, 2012). According to Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015), social workers are frustrated by lack of resources and deplorable offices. A study conducted by Dlamini and Sewpaul in Ethekewini Municipality in Kwazulu Natal found that social workers are working in offices that leak during rain, offices that have no windows and carpets, with torn chairs, and with ceiling boards that are failing. According to Schenck (2004), social workers do not expect luxurious offices, but offices with, at least, basic facilities. Their working conditions have impact on the capacity to validate their clients, but their office conditions do not instill feelings of hope to their clients (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015).

Unfavourable working conditions are attributed to lack of office space which is found to be a serious challenge for social workers working with women living with HIV; who need to be shown respect and provided with privacy. Some women living with HIV are fearful of disclosing their status, and this requires social workers to create non-threatening environment for them and to uphold confidentiality. The lack of space confidentiality due to lack of office space poses a serious challenge. This contributes negatively towards the provision of services to women living with HIV. Due to this many clients choose to stay with their problems and avoid consulting social workers (Taylor & Makofane, 2015).

When one compares the situation of office space and office conditions between non-governmental organisations and government, one finds a vast difference between what the two provide. This is confirmed by Schenck (2004), who found that offices of social workers in NGOs are sufficient and social workers in NGOs do not complain about their office.

2.5.1.3 Availability of equipment (Computer, photocopying machine, fax machine, telephone, stationery and printer)

A study conducted by the Department of Labour (2008) found that social workers are generally frustrated with lack of resources such as stationery and furniture. According to Joseph (2017) social workers were required to make personal sacrifices in order to conduct their work efficiently. Limited access to resources such as telephones has resulted in some social workers doing little field work, while others use their own telephones to deal with emergencies. This finding is further supported by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012) and Schenck (2004), who found that social workers are working without telephones, computers and fax machines. According to Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), large numbers of social workers have no telephones, computers and fax machines. Some research participants in a study conducted by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012) express themselves as follows:

“We do not have photocopying machine, not even a phone, even if you want to phone the client, there is no phone”.

“My computer has been broken for the last five days and it is the second time in three months, and this is frustrating”.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) found that out of 37 social workers who participate in the study, only 15 had computers. It was found that social workers have to share printers and photocopy machines, which cause much delay as they often had to queue for printing and photocopying. Lack of basic resources has a negative impact on social work services delivery. This is supported by Joseph (2017) who states that basic resources such as stationery, computers, internet access and phone lines are necessities for the smooth running of any organization.

Getting access to a computer is a serious problem to social workers in government than those working in NGOs. This is supported by the study findings by Schenck (2004), which found that all social workers who were working for NGOs had access to computers, and, in some cases, some had e-mail facilities. Every social worker working for NGOs had a telephone and those working in remote areas are provided with cellphones for use during emergency. The main aim of providing social workers with cellphones is to ensure that they are available and accessible to their clients. Furthermore, they are more useful when they had to travel long distances (Schenck, 2004).

Many studies in general have found that there is a serious lack of resources for social workers. However, a study conducted by Calitz, Roux and Srydom (2014) focusing on factors that affect social workers' job satisfaction, stress and burnout find a contradictory finding which found that 70% of social workers have resources that they need for their work.

2.5.2 Provision of supervision to social workers

The idea behind the supervision of social service practitioners is to ensure the delivery of quality services to beneficiaries while supporting and building the capacity of these practitioners. Social welfare service providers should make consultation and supervision available to social welfare service practitioners, and newly-qualified practitioners should be supervised for a minimum of two years (Department of Social Development, 2013).

According to Naido (2004) supervision in social work is considered an essential source of professional development and growth for the social worker. On the other hand, Hallowitz (1962) defines supervision as an important means of helping social workers to attain a better understanding of themselves and to resolve personal as well as emotional problems that interfere with their ability to learn and to provide effective service. Supervision is an essential instrument in ensuring strategies towards skills retention, which lies in insightful and competent management and supervisory skills. Supervision is a management function which is evaluative, extends over time and has the simultaneous purpose of enhancing the professional functioning of a social worker through skills transfer, mentoring and professional support; monitoring the quality of professional services offered to service recipients and motivating social workers to achieve their full potential in line with client and organisational goals (Department of Social Development, 2006).

There is a perceived unresponsiveness and decline in the productivity and quality of services rendered by social workers. This is explained by the high caseloads, emotional and other trauma experienced by social workers in service delivery, high stress levels due to management and societal demands as well as lack of resources to deliver on their mandate. Social work professionals are being utilised in non-professional tasks, which in itself deprive them of professional growth and increase in their workload, thus their stress levels. This has been attributed largely to lack of structured supervision and poor quality supervisors, who themselves also lack capacity to conduct professional supervision. This problem was exacerbated by historical practices, which assigned supervisory functions to new white social workers, thus defeating the purpose of this critical function, resulting in the development of negative perceptions about supervision (Department of Social Development, 2006).

Furthermore, black social workers were subjected to perpetual supervision, as against a time-linked developmental process within a contractual relationship, which would enable a social worker to graduate to consultation. Once the social worker is able to integrate theory and practice, the desired level of professional autonomy is achieved. The dearth of supervisors in practice is worsened by the perception that trained supervisors are not

necessary, given the demand for service delivery. There is limited understanding of the need for such supervision amongst non-social work managers. In some cases, supervisors are non-existent, with new social workers not able to receive guidance/mentorship that will enable them to become better workers (Department of Social Development, 2006).

According to the Department of Social Development (2006), the recruitment of students or new social workers into an organisational culture that is characterised by despondency, low morale and ever-increasing demands without the necessary supervisory framework would not assist the retention of social workers in the profession. Supervisors would be able to manage the administrative, educational and supportive functions of social workers so that an enabling and conducive environment is created for effective work performance. To give effect to the foregoing, an evaluation of the current practices of supervision must be conducted, gaps identified and an appropriate framework for supervision developed jointly with stakeholders (Department of Social Development, 2006).

According to Naido (2004) In South Africa, with less and less financial aid available, limited facilities and reduction in manpower, it has become imperative for social workers to receive continuous supervision for the attainment of personal and professional needs and goals. This situation requires an emphasis on supervision and better education for supervisors. Social workers are given little professional supervision and on-going training. They often have to make serious decisions about their clients on their own without additional professional input. Lack of supportive supervisors and lack of confidentiality are some of the challenges faced by social workers on a daily basis. In some instances, social workers have to function without structured supervision and poor quality supervisors who themselves lack capacity to conduct professional supervision. In many cases, supervisors are non-existent with social workers not able to receive guidance/mentorship that will enable them to become better workers (Department of Labour, 2008). This is further supported Schenck (2004), who states that 58% of social workers experience none or little support from the organisation. Furthermore, a study

conducted by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012) found that social workers feel neglected due to lack of proper supervision.

According to Meyer in Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), lack of supervision is a serious challenge for social workers. According to Taylor and Makofane (2015), shortage of supervisors and social workers lead to lack of professional guidance, resulting in inadequate and ineffective social work services. In terms of Department of Social Development (2013), one supervisor should have a maximum of 10 supervisees. However, according to Taylor and Makofane (2015), some social workers function without supervisors in their offices, and some offices have one supervisor who has to supervise 12 social workers. In some instances, a social worker cannot get assistance from his/her supervisor because she/he is not around and the social worker has to depend on a colleague who is also on the same level with him/her (Taylor & Makofane, 2015). This shows that supervision is not taken seriously. Botha (2000) argues that supervision in South Africa does not receive the rightful and dedicated attention and study it deserves. Supervisors are not formally trained to perform this specialist task, or are appointed without receiving any formal training or in-service training to execute this highly specialised function. This was supported by, Kadushin's (1992) study which found that South African supervisors often lack or have limited knowledge in supervision. According to Naidoo & Kasiram (2002), social workers do not believe that supervision fulfils its care-taking function. According to Naidoo (2004) supervisees in South Africa were dissatisfied with supervisors who were predominantly casework-orientated and who were supervising community workers whose training was more up to date and relevant.

There is a gap between the provisions of supervision to social workers in government compared to social workers in NGOs. Social workers in NGOs experience supportive supervision from their supervisors and colleagues. As result of good supervision, there is a good relationship between social workers and their supervisors, unlike in government where they do not have any form of supervision, and where they perceive supervision as controlling than supportive (Schenck, 2004). Furthermore, Simpson

(2002) describes how supervisors "yelled" at social workers when their records were not up to date. Further, it was revealed that supportive supervision appeared to be lacking in practice. For most of the social workers in the study cited in Simpson (2002), supervision was not a source of support and encouragement

2.5.3 Caseload of social workers

Social work services should be provided according to a manageable workload. The ratio should be one social worker to a population of 2500 in rural areas, and 1500 in urban areas. One social worker has to be allocated 60 cases per month (Department of Social Development, 2013). Although the Department of Social Development's norms and standards indicated that one social worker should be allocated 60 cases per month, government and society still expect social workers and welfare organisations to take on more statutory work and register as many as 300-500 cases at a time (Cock, 2008). According to Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015), social workers have to deal with high workload, which they are enabled to manage but whose target they are unable to meet. In some instances, a caseload reaches as high as 450 per social worker. A social worker who participated in a study conducted by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) stated that there was just too much on their plate. They were doing foster care placement, monitoring and supervision of those placements, and the social relief of distress was issued. They also did the guardianship report, where they were also part of an elderly programme; did late registration of birth requested by a client who did not have identity document or birth certificate and family preservation in family conflict. Furthermore they (social workers) have to do removal of children who are in abusive circumstances or homes, counseling for bereaved, doing awareness campaign at schools and at communities. They also have to do administrative work whereby they open file, take minutes of the meeting, attend court inquiries, submit monthly reports, compile and consolidate statistics of non-financial data of the office.

One of the respondents who participated in a study conducted by Taylor and Makofane (2015) reported that he had a huge foster care caseload and also did early childhood development programme. Furthermore, there is additional function of the community

care givers who have been absorbed by the department and he had to monitor their work, and give them support that they need. However, in terms of the Department of Social Development (2006) high caseload for social workers, is due to lack of specialisation and low numbers of social workers. Social workers are forced to do all forms of social work, which results in high caseload, stressful workplace environment, anxiety and malpractice. The high caseload and the trauma experienced by social workers, stress, societal demands and lack of resources for social workers to deliver their mandate has led to a decline in the productivity and quality of services that they render.(Department of Social Development, 2006).

According to Lombard in Cock (2008), there has been an increase in caseloads of social workers since 1994 due to the decreasing number of social workers at a time when there was an increase in services to the masses in South Africa. This is also highlighted by Calitz et al. (2014), who states that the social work profession in South Africa has experienced decrease in social workers. Gutshe et al. (2015) state that there is a shortage of approximately 60% of social workers in South Africa and it is the main problem that has led to big caseloads of social workers. The Department of Social Development in Calitz et al. (2014) further states that South Africa has experienced a shortage of social workers, which has affected many social welfare organisations, leading to high caseloads. Transformation ensured the empowerment of clients who are now demanding services that they are entitled to. The increase in client expectations can directly be linked to increased workloads of social workers (Calitz et al., 2014).

As result of increased caseload and decrease in numbers social workers, they were forced to attend to all cases. This is supported by Jacobs in Cock (2008), who states that social workers in the Department of Social Development have to attend to all cases allocated to them, while NGOs can refuse to take a case if they have a vacancy and would not be able to attend to the case. According to Lombard in Cock (2008), this places social workers in the department at risk of being charged with misconduct. There is evidence of social workers who are formally being charged with unprofessional conduct when they cannot cope with the demands arising from unmanageable workloads.

2.6. Impact of working conditions on social workers

Working conditions whether, good or bad, have an impact on the provision of services to clients. According to Schenck (2004), the availability of cars for social workers meant that they (social workers) are not accessible to their community. This was supported by Masemola et al. in Schenck (2004), who states that community members regard lack of accessibility of social workers which is caused by lack of transport as a serious concern to them. The lack of transport in general has degraded the profession of social work (Schenck, 2004).

Bad working conditions may prevent good social worker from moving into the community to change the life of the people and the image of the profession. On the other hand, bad working conditions allow the lazy social worker to use it as an excuse to stay in the office and not move into the community, which at the end of the day, affects service delivery (Schenck, 2004). Furthermore, Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), concluded that working conditions related challenges have hamper social work service delivery. The high caseload and shortage of social workers has led social workers to practise one method of social work and to engage in rendering one type of service. Shortage of social workers has not only contributed to high caseload, but also lowered the visible means of support that social workers provide in the community, especially to families and foster care (Calitz et al., 2014).

After social work was declared as a scarce skill in 2004, the Department of Social Development introduced the recruitment and retention strategy for social workers as a way of trying to retain social workers within the department and profession. Thirteen (13) years later, social workers are still leaving the profession and the department. Staff turnover of social workers is relatively high in South Africa. A study conducted by the Department of Labour (2008) reveals that approximately 1111 social workers migrate from South Africa to other countries, and better working conditions are generally considered to be a pull factor of the migration of social workers. According to Apaslan and Schebk (2012), the Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, was quoted by Ngomane as stating that one of the reasons for the movement of social workers to other sectors and countries is better working conditions. The social work profession in

South Africa has experienced a critical decrease of social workers, and the retention of social workers has become a serious challenge. This has affected many welfare organisations (Calitz et al., 2014). A study conducted by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) found that social workers felt powerless and hopeless about their conditions. As such seven out of ten social workers are seeking employment elsewhere, and others are resigning although they do not have other employment due to their working conditions.

The high turnover of social workers is associated with many factors. However, poor working conditions, lack of resources and increased demand of services have contributed to the high turnover of social workers (Calitz et al., 2014). The high turnover rate in social work is a serious obstacle to timely investigation as it compromises the ability of agencies and the department to protect children. It also contributes to negative consequences of lower number of social workers. Supervision is essential in social work practice and can lead to staff turnover if it is not properly offered. Insufficient supervisory support and competencies has contributed to the turnover of social workers (Calitz et al., 2014). As way of trying to address the problem of staff turnover, Calitz et al. (2014) recommended that salaries and working conditions are needed to keep social workers in the profession.

In most cases, the challenge of working conditions results in protest by workers and conflict between employees and employer, and even for social workers the situation is the same (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015). Although, in most cases, social workers opt to use silent tactics, their dissatisfaction about their working conditions has led to tension amongst workers and management. In some instances, social workers refuse to take instructions from supervisors. Lack of resources and top-down hierarchical management has contributed to the conflict amongst colleagues and the desire to move out of the profession (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015).

Furthermore, on the 19 September 2016 thousands of social workers were involved in a peaceful march to the Union Building to hand over their memorandum of demand to Presidency and the Minister of Social Development. Their demands included better working conditions and better salaries. The social workers highlighted that they are

working under horrible conditions, and are sharing offices, which compromises their clients' privacy (Madibogo, 2016).

Poor working conditions lead to staff burnout and work stress. Burnout includes the withdrawal from social contact outside of work, having a quick temper, alcoholism, stubbornness and paranoia. Persons suffering from burnout may also experience headache, boredom and role conflict, negative attitude towards clients, fatigue and loss of commitment towards work. Social workers are experiencing work stress and burnout as a result of their working conditions (Calitz et al. 2014). According to Calitz et al. (2014), burnout is affecting approximately 41% of social workers. There is a link between the turnover of social workers, work stress and burnout. This was supported by Strolin in Calitz et al. (2014), who states that turnover in child welfare and other human services may be attributed to burnout. Burnout can be prevented through the provision of resources and support. Furthermore, Calitz et al. (2014) recommended that more support needs to be provided to social workers in the form of supervision and group support.

The heavy workload, difficult clients, lack of resources and long working hours has contributed to work stress of social workers. Despite lack of resources and the high caseload, social workers are pushed to the limit when trying to meet their job requirements and overtime. This can result in poor mental health, impair cognitive functioning and work stress. It is considered to be obvious that social workers experience stress as a consequence of their workload and time management. As a result, they tend to feel emotionally drained and unproductive (Calitz et al. (2014).

2.7 CONCLUSION

Studies conducted by many scholars have concluded that social workers are working under poor working conditions and their situation remains unchanged. Social workers are experiencing working conditions related challenges such as lack of resources, infrastructure, high caseload and lack of supervision, which has a negative impact on service delivery. Social workers are dealing with high caseload despite the provision by the Department of Social Development General Norms and Standards. Social workers have to cope with high caseload under poor working conditions and are frustrated by their conditions. The working conditions of social workers have a negative impact on their productivity. As such, many social workers are forced to leave their profession or migrate to other countries.

The challenges of poor working conditions by social workers have led to protests by social workers. Despite the poor working conditions, social workers are still expected to render quality service to their clients. They experience work related stress and burnout due to their working conditions. Although the Department of Social Development has made provision of resources, infrastructure, ongoing supervision and manageable workload, a lot still needs to be done with regards to the adherence to norms and standards by the Department of Social Development. This chapter has given a detailed picture of the experiences of social workers within the Department of Social Development in the country and the negative impact of their working conditions on their lives and productivity.

CHAPTER: 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the methods employed in this study. It provides the research design, area of the study, population, sampling and data collection. Furthermore, quality criteria, pilot testing and ethical considerations are discussed. These methodological procedures facilitated the achievement of the aim and objectives of the study, and inform the findings of the study. Barrass (2013) defines research methodology as the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study or the theoretical analysis of the body methods and principles associated with the branch of knowledge. It typically encompasses concepts such as paradigm, theoretical model phases and quantitative or qualitative techniques. According to Bailey and Nunan (1996), research methodology is the science of finding out the logical arrangements of steps in research, sampling, data collection, procedures and the measurement approach used. Furthermore, research methodology includes such factors as how the researcher formulates the hypothesis and asks whether the outcome was achieved.

3.2. Research method

There are four types of research theories, which are: realism, pragmatism, positivism and interpretivist. For the purposes of the study, the interpretivist theory was used for the study. This theory views reality as something subjective and based on meaning and understanding. The goal of interpretivist research is to understand, rather than to make predictions. According to Thompson (2015), the interpretivist approach in social science usually uses qualitative methods such as unstructured interviews or participant observation. Babbie and Mouton (2009) supports this view by stating that interpretivism approach is associated with qualitative approach.

According to Dey (1998) and Mouton and Marais (1996), qualitative and quantitative research reflects the interest of a researcher and what the researcher wants to make of it. Qualitative research strives to obtain and understand first-hand experiences of the

participants on a particular topic. According to Babbie and Mouton (2009), qualitative research is a method that emphasise in-depth understanding and deeper meaning of human experience with the aim of generating theoretical richer and more tentative observations. The researcher found a qualitative approach more suitable for this study because it grants the researcher an opportunity to gain insight into the perceptions of social workers regarding their working conditions.

3.3. Research Design

Research design is defined as a strategic plan for a research project, setting out the broad structure and features of research (Gray, 2009). According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1999), a research design could be seen as the planning to guide the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed and collected data. Mouton and Marais (1996) describe the goal in exploratory studies as the exploration of an unknown research area. The limited literature available on the area indicated to the researcher that this is not a well-researched topic (Neuman, 2000). The researcher found that there is limited literature available, and that is why he has opted for an exploratory design. The researcher, therefore, had to explore the working conditions of social workers with the aim of identifying and describing these challenges.

3.4. Location of the study

Geographically, the study was conducted at Makhado Municipality which falls under Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Vhembe is one of the five districts of Limpopo Province. Makhado Municipality is 95km from Polokwane city and one of the four municipalities in Vhembe District, consisting of 30 offices.

3.5 Population of the study

According to Babbie and Mouton (2009), a population is defined as the aggregation from which the sample is selected. One is seldom in a position to guarantee that every element is meeting the theoretical definition laid down, or has a chance of being selected. Neuman (2011) defines population as an abstract idea of a large group of many cases from which a research draws a sample and from which the results from the

sample are generalised. The population of the study was 15 registered social workers from Makhado west region practising in the Department of Social Development at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province. Adding Makhado west region has 61 social workers. Makhado west region constitutes of nine offices which are situated in rural areas of Makhado Municipality.

3.6. Sampling Procedure

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1999), sampling is the study of the relationship between a population and samples drawn from it. The sample taken from the population should be representative of the population from which it was drawn. A researcher, however, sometimes needs to draw a sample from a small population to deal with an exceptional phenomenon (Strydom & De Vos, 2005).

The researcher utilised non-probability sampling. According to Monette et al. (2008), non-probability sampling is a technique in which the probability of each population element being included in the sample is unknown. Mogorosi (2009) further alludes that in non-probability sampling, each element in the population being selected into a sample is not known, and the chances of being selected are not necessary and always equal to all population. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling as a sub-type of non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling is described as a sampling technique where investigators use their judgement and prior knowledge to choose people who best serve the purpose of the study (Monette et al, 2008). The researcher is familiar with the knowledge and experience of the members of the sample and knows that they will provide the required information from their experiences (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1999). Furthermore, the researcher used purposive sampling to select 15 out of 61 social workers from different offices that form part of the study.

3.7. Data collection method

Bless and Higson-Smith (1999) state that there are different ways of getting data from participants. Qualitative study focuses on getting in-depth and a detailed, deeper understanding of people's feelings, attitudes, experiences and behaviours. Qualitative research can be conducted through focus groups, an interviews and direct

observations. The researcher used interviewing as a method of data gathering. Unstructured and semi-structured interview schedules were used. An interview is described as a strategy used in an attempt to understand the world from the participants' point of view in order to unfold the meaning of people's experiences (Neuman, 2000). The study opted for descriptive study design, which informs the selection of the methods of data collection. The design allows for the use of a variety of data collection procedures, preferably face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, the researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interviews to collect data from the participants. According to Margaret and Melissa (2009), interviews are discussions, usually one-on-one, between an interviewer and an individual, meant to gather information on a specific set of topics. Interviews can be conducted in person or over the phone. Interviews differ from surveys by the level of structure placed on the interaction.

Opdenakker (2006) states that there are various advantages of semi-structured interviews. Face-to-face interviews can take their advantages from social cues, including voice, intonation and body language. An interviewee can give the interviewer a lot of information through the social cues. Social cues are very important depending on what the interviewer wants to know from the respondents. In face-to-face interviews, the interviewer and interviewee can react directly on what the other says or does and there is no important time delay between question and answer. The interviewee's response is more spontaneous without extended reflection.

According to Opdenkker (2006), another advantage of face-to-face interview is that they can be recorded, with the respondent's permission. The use of a voice recorder has the advantage that the interview is more accurate than writing notes. Furthermore, another advantage outlined by Opdenkker (2006) is that in interviews the interviewer has a lot of possibilities to create a good interview environment. Face-to-face interview is easy to conduct compared to other methods. Furthermore, Genise (2002) and Shneiderman and Plaisant (2005) state that the main advantage of the interview method of data collection includes the fact that direct contact with users often leads to specific,

constructive suggestions; it is good at finding detailed information; and that limited participants are needed to gather rich and detailed data.

The researcher ensured that all the participants understood the research questions and the purpose of the research. Face-to-face interviews were used to understand the participants' point of view about their working conditions at Makhado Municipality. Interviews were conducted with each of the 15 respondents (social workers). The interview questions were written down and the respondents answered those that they felt comfortable to answer. The interviews were manually recorded and transcribed.

3.8. Data Management and interpretation

Data analysis is defined by Neuman (2000) as a search for patterns in recurrent behaviour, objects or a body of knowledge. Once patterns are established according to the experiences of the participants, the researcher is able to interpret the information. The process of data collection and data analysis can be seen as inseparable (De Vos et al., 1998). For the purposes of this study, the researcher used thematic method of data analysis, which can be defined as a useful qualitative tool for encoding data that is used to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes that can be found within and across the whole set of data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes data set in detail. Therefore, the researcher employed thematic data analysis to organise and describe raw data in detail. This characteristic of thematic data analysis permitted the researcher to derive meaning from the data collected, which brought forth the desired outcomes in responding to the aim and objectives of the study.

There are six steps as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) that the researcher followed when analysing data through thematic analysis. The first step involves familiarising oneself as a researcher with the data. This step requires the researcher to be fully engaged in the data by, firstly, transcribing the interactions and then listening to the recordings. It is important that the researcher has a complete understanding of the content of the interaction and has familiarised themselves with all aspects of the data.

The second step includes generating initial codes. Once the researcher is familiar with the data, the researcher must then start identifying preliminary codes, which are the features of the data that appear interesting and meaningful. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) are of the views that the third step involves searching for themes. This step includes the start of the interpretive analysis of the collated codes. Relevant data extracts are sorted according to main themes.

The fourth step includes reviewing themes. This step comprises sticking data together meaningfully within themes, while clearing and identifying distinctions between the themes. This is usually done over two phases, where the themes need to be checked in relation to the coded extracts (phase 1), and then for the overall data set (phase 2). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the fifth step involves refining and defining the themes and potential subthemes within the data. The researcher needs to provide theme names and clear working definitions that capture the essence of each theme in a brief manner. The sixth step includes producing a final report. The report must relay the results of the analysis in a way that convinces the reader of the validity of the analysis. It must go beyond a description of the themes and portray an analysis supported by evidence that addresses the research question.

3.9. Pilot testing

According to Mitchel (2014), a pilot study is a process of testing out the administering of the instrument to a limited number of subjects from the same population as that for which the eventual project is intended. Bless et al. (2006) define a pilot study as a small study conducted prior to a large piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instrument and analysis are adequate and appropriate. A pilot study was conducted with five social workers to test whether the research methodology is adequate and appropriate for the study.

3.10. Quality criteria (Validity and Reliability)

According to Neuman (2011), validity suggests truthfulness. It refers to how well an ideal fits with actual reality. Mouton (1996) states that validity is an epistemic criterion, which means that it is quality of the element of knowledge. Reliability is defined as dependability or consistency. It suggests that the same thing is repeated under identical or very similar conditions (Neuman, 2011). Five central factors of qualitative study were taken into consideration to ensure that quality of the study is achieved. According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), the five factors include credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and trustworthiness. Credibility is used in this study to determine how honest and reliable the results of the study are. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), credibility means the concept of internal consistency, where the core issue is how we make sure of rigour in the research process, and the way we communicate to other people that we have done so. To ensure credibility, the researcher made sure that the respondents were identified and described accurately. Furthermore, to ensure credibility in this study, the researcher utilised the prolonged engagement strategy through investing enough time in the study. "Prolonged engagement is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning the "culture"; testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the participants; and building trust" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

The second factor involved in ensuring quality of this study is transferability. Transferability refers to the probability that the study findings have meaning to others in similar situations. "Transferability is also called "fittingness" for it determines whether the findings fit in or are transferable to similar situations" (Struebert, Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). To ensure transferability, the researcher supplied a highly detailed description of the research situation and methods. The third factor of confirming quality in the study is dependability. Mertens (2005) defines dependability as the inquiry process that is appropriate and of high quality. Strategies or focus may change as the study continues. A dependability audit can be done. Therefore, the researcher avoided careless mistakes in collecting the data, interpreting the findings and reporting results. The researcher was consistent in this research process so that the results are dependable. Furthermore, the

study provides evidence such as interview schedules that will validate correlation between the findings of the study and the data collected.

The fourth factor of ensuring quality of this study is conformability. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), conformability deals with the main issue that findings should signify, as far as possible, the specific situation being investigated as opposed to the beliefs, pet theories or biases of the researcher. To achieve this criterion, once the researcher has analysed the data, the respondents were given an opportunity to review the content of the results before the research was finally compiled. Furthermore, Seale (1999) claims that auditing could also be used to establish conformability in which the researcher makes the provision of a methodological self-critical account of how the research was done. So in order to make auditing possible by other researchers, the researcher archived all collected data in a well-organised, retrievable form so that it can be made available to them if the findings are challenged.

The fifth factor to be considered to ensure quality of this study is trustworthiness. According to La Banca (2010), trustworthiness refers to demonstration that the evidence of the results reported is sound and when the argument made based on the results is strong. To ensure trustworthiness of this study, the researcher considered all five central factors of qualitative study indicated above.

3.11. Ethical Consideration

According to Gray (2009), ethics in research are guidelines for research that enable the researcher to ensure that all respondents participate voluntarily and are not harmed. According to Terre blanche, Durkheim and Painter (2006), ethics is a field of applied ethics, that seeks to ensure that the welfare of the respondent is protected. The aim of ethics is to prevent the participants in the research from being harmed by both the researcher and the research process.

The researcher considered the following ethical issues:

- **Voluntary participation**

Dane and Thomas (2008) define voluntary participation as the right of the participants to freely subject themselves to scouting inherent in research, and one involved in research should be willing to participate. The participants must be aware that their participation is voluntary and, thus, they have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. The researcher ensured that the participants take part in the study out of their own free will. The researcher informed the participants that they have the right to withdraw from at any stage of the study.

- **Permission to conduct the study**

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of Limpopo before stating the research, which serves as an assurance document that the researcher has been given permission by the university to conduct research. Ethical clearance is required when the research participants are human beings, and because the participants were human being, ethical clearance was necessary. The researcher also obtained permission from Limpopo Department of Social Development to visit offices to conduct research with social workers in their offices.

- **Informed consent**

According to Neuman (2011), informed consent is a statement, usually written, that explains aspects of the study to the participants, and to asks for their voluntary agreement to participate before the study begins. Informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which the participants may be exposed, are discussed (Strydom in De Vos et al., 1998). This entails making full disclosure of the nature of the study subsequent to which the participants will be required to read and sign a consent form. The participants were informed about the nature and goal of the study before they were requested to take part in the research project. The informed consent was also obtained from the participants before the commencement of the study.

- **Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

Privacy is defined as ethical protection that participants remains nameless, and that their identity is protected from disclosure and remains unknown (Neuman, 2011). The aim of confidentiality is to conceal the true identity and to ensure the privacy and anonymity of the participants (Gray, 2009). It is, therefore, necessary to refrain from revealing participants' identities. In some instances, fictitious names were used in the notes and transcripts, in reference to the offices where they worked, and in the research report itself when discussing their verbatim explanations. In other contexts, the participants' identities were avoided altogether. The researcher further ensured that data collected from participants were only used by the researcher and only for study purposes.

- **Avoiding of plagiarism**

According to Neuman (2011), plagiarism is defined as theft of another person's ideas by using his or her exact words and ideas without properly documenting the original source. The researcher ensured that all the data obtained from other sources were acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

- **Avoiding potential harm to the participants**

During the research, the participants could be exposed to emotional or physical harm (Strydom & De Vos, 2005). Ethics is, thus based on the principle of individualism and free will of participation (Neuman, 2011). It aims at respecting the dignity and worth of every individual and his right to self-determination. It is, therefore, a means of protecting the participants from harm or exploitation by the researcher. The researcher informed participants of any possible harm at the start of the interview. However, reasonable steps were taken to prevent any harm from taking place. They were given an opportunity to make their decisions about whether or not to participate in the research.

3.12. Summary

This chapter outlined the research methods that the researcher employed in the study. The research used the qualitative research methodology. Explanations of the research design, sampling, data collection and data interpretation were provided. The researcher employed descriptive method to collect primary data required for the study. Furthermore, the researcher utilised purposive sampling to select the sample of the study. The population sample of the research was 15 male and female social workers from Makhado Municipality. The study opted for face-to-face interviews to collect data from the respondents, and thematic data analysis to analyse the data.

Furthermore, this chapter outlined the quality criteria, pilot testing and ethical considerations. In this study, trustworthiness is achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Ethical issues that were considered in the study included ethical clearance, privacy, voluntary participation, avoiding of harm to the participants, avoiding of plagiarism, and informed consent. The next chapter focuses on presentation and analysis of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER: 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data through thematic analysis. It also presents the findings of the study, which are categorised into three themes: the provision of resources to social workers at Makhado Municipality; the challenges of social workers related to supervision; and caseload of social workers at municipality. The chapter further presents the biographical information of the respondents.

4.2. Profile of the respondents: social workers working at Makhado Municipality as respondents

This section is about the biographical information of the respondents. The respondents were social workers working at Makhado Municipality in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. The data are presented in a tabular form in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1.

The biography information of social workers as respondents in the study

Respondent	Gender	Age	Occupation	Working experience	Municipality
A	Male	31	Social worker	8 years	Makhado
B	Male	27	Social worker	5 years	Makhado
C	Female	37	Social worker	5 years	Makhado
D	Female	30	Social worker	8 years	Makhado
E	Female	40	Social worker	9 years	Makhado
F	Male	31	Social worker	5 years	Makhado
G	Female	27	Social worker	4 years	Makhado
H	Female	29	Social worker	5 years	Makhado
I	Female	31	Social worker	5 years	Makhado
J	Female	42	Social worker	5 years	Makhado
K	Male	30	Social worker	6 years	Makhado
L	Female	31	Social worker	5 years	Makhado
M	Female	30	Social worker	1year	Makhado
N	Female	30	Social worker	8 years	Makhado
O	Male	30	Social worker	4 years	Makhado

Table 4.1 indicates the biographical data of the respondents which includes the gender, age, occupation, working experience as a social worker and a municipality in which the respondent is working. Table 4.1 shows that there were five (5) male and ten (10) female respondents and the total was fifteen (15). The majority of the respondents were female and this is not uncommon within the social work field. Earle (2008), states that previous research studies have shown a female dominance within social work profession.

Furthermore, Table 4.1 shows that the respondents' age range from twenty-seven years (27) to forty-two (42) years, and majority of them are youth. All the respondents were

social workers working at Makhado Municipality. Moreover, the Table 4.1 indicates different working experiences of the respondents. Seven (7) have been working as social workers for five years, three (3) for eight years, one for nine years, another one for six years and only one respondent has a one-year working experience. The majority of the respondents have been working as social workers for five years or more.

4.3.1. Theme one: the provision of resources to social workers at Makhado Municipality

This theme was about the provision of resources to social workers to render services. The researcher wanted to find out if social workers get adequate resources to render quality services. From this theme, the following sub-themes were developed: allocation and availability of transport to social workers, the state of social workers' offices, and the provision of trade tools.

a) Allocation and availability of transport to social workers

This sub-theme is about the allocation and availability of transport and challenges that social workers experience with the allocation of transport. From the data collected, it is clear that social workers are experiencing a serious transport problem. There is a shortage of transport. Social workers have to share cars, and, in some instances, eight social workers have to share one car. From the data collected, social workers' offices are allocated a car once in a week, and, as such, they are bound to make arrangements with one another. It was found that social workers at Makhado Municipality are experiencing a serious problem with the allocation of transport. It was found that most social workers have to share cars in order to deliver services. Some of them fail to meet their targets of attending to their cases due to shortage of transport. It was found that in some instances, social workers failed to conduct home visits due to this problem.

The problem of shortage of transport within the social work field is not uncommon. Authors such as Schenck (2004) and Department of Labour (2008) also found that there is a serious problem of shortage of transport for social workers. This finding concurs with the findings of a study by Schenck (2004), which found that cars were a huge problem for social workers. In some cases, 12 social workers share one car while in

other offices, the social worker did not have a car at all, not even his/her own vehicle. It was found that in one area, two social workers shared a car, although their offices were 70km away from each other. The social workers had to make arrangement with each other that one would have the car for the first two weeks of the month and the other in the last two weeks. If anything happened in between, the social worker who did not have a car could not attend to a problem if the client could not come to her/his office. Scheck (2004) found that the challenge of cars is a serious problem that created intense conflict amongst the social workers and others who shared the cars. This finding further concurs with that of the study conducted by Department of Labour (2008), which found that social work is an undervalued and under-resourced profession, and that social workers often fail to respond to most serious crisis cases due to lack of resources such as transport.

The study finding also agrees with a study conducted by Dlamini and Sepaul (2015), which found that shortage of resources created division, tension, fighting and unpleasant circumstances among social workers, and that some social workers steal cars on the days when they had no car allocated to them because of the pressure from the management to meet targets.

Sharing of transport by many social workers has become common in the social work profession. This was confirmed by the study by Dlamini and Sepaul (2015), who found that in some offices, there are seven cars that need to be shared by 37 social workers. All those social workers needed to meet their targets; and this demoralised and demotivated them.

The following are some of the responses from the respondents:

“In our office we have 20 social workers who share three cars, the cars are share according to areas and as a result it is hard to reach the target due to shortage of transport. Again I had to use a car once a week however we are four in our in our office and we all had to use one car one per week and as a result it is hard to do home-visit and campaign” (Respondent A).

“We have three cars which are used by 18 social workers from three different offices. There is a lack of transport when is needed to attend early childhood panel and other commitment such as monitoring and home-visit” (Respondent O).

“There is one vehicle allocated to one office consisting of five employees, the officers have to share that vehicle when and where needed and necessary. Our vehicle cannot meet the demand of the execution of the job at hand ,conducting home visit become challenging and sometime it clash with other administrative work” (Respondent F).

“In our office eight social workers need to share one vehicle and sometimes we are unable to use transport, when is your day due to workshop, meeting and monthly reporting, when there is a workshop and meeting transport should be used officers who are delegated to attend” (Respondent D).

From data presented above, most of the respondents alluded to having serious problem of shortage of transport, and that this has a negative impact on provision of services to their clients as they failed to meet their targets. It further made them inaccessible and unavailable to their clients. The research findings show that lack of transport has a negative impact on the delivery of social work services. Most of the respondents indicated that they have to share their cars with other offices and colleagues, and that this has led to the development of poor relationship amongst themselves as social workers. The shortage of transport is a serious problem that needs to be attended to, as it has the potential to dent the image of social workers and service delivery to the people. The researcher’s general view is that the Department of Social Development must prioritise the provision of transport to social workers to ensure that service delivery is not affected.

b) The state of social workers’ office

From data presented it was found that the state of social workers’ offices is very poor and uncondusive. The majority of the respondents are working from offices that are in a dilapidated state. Most of the respondents are working from small offices and they have to share these offices. Only a few respondents have their own offices which are in good condition. Most of the respondents who are working at one-stop centres and offices of

the Department of Health, said the offices are in good condition. The findings show that there is a serious problem of provision of infrastructure by the Department of Social Development. Most of the respondents indicated that their offices are in bad condition, leak when it rains and have cracks. These findings are linked to a study conducted by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) in Ethekewini Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, which found that social workers are working in offices that leak during rain, that had no windows and carpets, and that they are sitting on torn chairs, and ceiling boards are failing.

The findings are also linked to a study conducted by the Department of Labour (2008), which stated that social workers are generally frustrated with the needs of their communities in relation to their lack of resources such as office space. This finding concurs with Schenck (2004), who states that the state of social workers' offices is poor. Furthermore, the study finding agreed with a study by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), which found that the offices of social workers are dirty; and those in park homes are cold, with no waiting rooms for clients.

Moreover, the findings show that the lack of office space is a serious problem for social workers and these findings agrees with the literature. Alpaslan and Schenck (2012) argued that lack of offices and office space is a serious challenge amongst social workers. This is further stated by Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015), who states that social workers are frustrated by lack of resources and that some social workers work in deplorable offices.

The following are some of the responses from the respondents:

"My office is not in good condition it has cracks and its leak when its rain, my office is too small in a way that I find it difficult to be productive" (Respondent C).

"The condition of my office is not good at all since I work in a park home, it leaks when its rain and it is also very hot when it is hot and cold when it is cold" (Respondent F).

"I worked in a park home which leak during rain and it is also not conducive for client with disability" (Respondent K).

“My office is not in good condition, some of windows are no longer functioning well and also the doors is no longer functioning” (Respondent H).

Furthermore, the study findings show that social workers are sharing offices and that these offices are very small. The majority of the respondents indicated that they share offices, and that this has a negative impact on the privacy and confidentiality of their clients. Only a few respondents are not sharing offices. The study findings show that it is very difficult for social workers to keep private and confidentiality information of their clients under their current working conditions. The study findings agree with the literature. Taylor and Makofane (2015) found that unfavourable working conditions are attributed to lack of office space, which is a serious challenge for social workers working with women living with HIV, who need to be shown respect and provided with privacy. Some women living with HIV are fearful of disclosing their status. It requires social workers to create a non-threatening environment for them and to uphold confidentiality. The lack of space confidentiality due to lack of office space poses a serious challenge, and contributes negatively towards the provision of services to women living with HIV. Due to this, many clients choose to stay with their problem and not go to social workers’.

The findings also concur with Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015), who found that the working conditions of social workers have an impact on the capacity to validate their clients. Their office conditions did not instill feelings of hope to their clients. Schenck (2004) holds that social workers’ offices are limited, and that they had to share offices. This situation fails to create a professional and dignified atmosphere. The problem of office space was also mentioned by social workers when they went on a march on the 19 September 2016 to hand over their memorandum of demands to the Presidency and the Minister of Social Development. They indicated that they are working under horrible working conditions, where they are sharing offices, which compromises their client’s privacy (Madibogo, 2016).

Some of the respondents expressed their views in this way:

“My office is too small and because I worked in a park home when my clients talk to me in my office other colleagues and clients in other office can hear what my client is saying” (Respondent K).

“My cubicle which is so called office do not have any confidentiality at all because if your busy assisting the client in your office the person who is in the next office hears all the things your saying to the client” (Respondent E).

“The office space is too small and I have to share the office with a colleague. There is no privacy and confidentiality within our office as the client has to share their private life with me and my colleagues” (Respondent J).

“My office has no privacy at all because the client will enter the office and find that there are five social workers and the client find it difficult to share his/her problem and if it is raining outside the officers will be forced to stay in the office” (Respondent C).

“My office have a serious impact on the privacy and confidentiality of my client because the client can hear what other colleague are saying with other clients from other offices, the privacy is not protected at all” (Respondent F).

From the data collected, it is clear that social workers’ offices are not in a good state. Most respondents are sharing offices, which has a negative impact in keeping and promoting the privacy and confidentiality of information of their clients. The state of social workers’ office demoralises them and has a bearing on service delivery.

c) Provision of trade tools

The data collected strongly suggests that there is a serious shortage of trade tools such as telephones, fax machines, computers, photocopying machines, printers and stationery. Most of the respondents do not have telephones and a fax machines in their offices. They have to use their own cell phones for work purposes, and in some instances, they have to travel in order to get access to a telephones or a fax-machines.

These are some of the responses from respondents:

“In our office we do not have telephone, if you want to do call you have to travel Tshilwavhusiku on top of that we do not have a car since it breakdown 2017 September and I do not have a fax machine” (Respondent E).

“I only have a printer, I have to use my own phone to make appointment, when I wanted to use fax machine I have to travel for a kilometer” (Respondent J).

“There is no provision of telephone in our office, we only use our cell phone to call our client” (Respondent C).

This finding agrees with the literature. The Department of Labour (2008) found that social workers are generally frustrated with lack of resources such as stationery and furniture. Limited access to resources such as a telephone has resulted in some social workers doing little field work, while others use their own telephones to deal with emergencies. These findings are linked to the findings of study conducted by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012) and Schenck (2004), which found that social workers are working without telephones, and fax machines. According to Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), many social workers have no telephones, computers and fax machines.

From the data collected, it was found that a few respondents have printers and photocopying machines in their offices. However, those printers and photocopying machines have to share with other colleagues. These printers always run out of tonner, which has a negative impact on their productivity.

This is how some of the respondents responded:

“We only have one printer in our office which we share with other six social workers which brings the total to 13 social workers sharing one printer” (Respondent O).

“We have a shortage of working equipment and as such we only have one printer which we have to share with other colleague including our supervisor” (Respondent K).

“We do have a photocopy machine which is combined with a printer, but we are always running out of stationery as a result it also affects service delivery” (Respondent B).

I have a printer but it has run out of toner for eight months” (Respondent A).

Yes we have a photocopy machine, printer however we sometime experience shortage of tonner” (Respondent H).

The problem of lack of printers and photocopying machines is not uncommon in the social work profession. Authors like Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) found that social workers have to share printers and photocopying machines, which causes much delay as they often have to queue for printing and photocopying.

Furthermore, the finding of the study strongly suggests that many social workers are not provided with computers in order for them to produce reports and do other administrative work. Most respondents argued that they use their own computers to write reports and do other administrative work. Some of the respondents expressed themselves in this way:

“In my office you had to buy you own computer in order to work” (Respondent A).

“I do not have a computer, I have to use my own computer” (Respondent F).

“I use my own laptop and it has being like that for since I was employed in 2013 and the department is doing nothing” (Respondent M).

The findings reconfirmed the finding of a study conducted by Dlamini and Sawpaul (2015), which found that out of 37 social workers who participated in the study, only 15 had computers. This finding also concurs with Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), who found that many social workers had no computers.

With regards to the provision of stationery, the finding of the study suggests that most social workers do not have adequate stationery such as papers and pens. They indicated that they get stationery once in six months and it is always not enough. Some respondents held that they even used their hard-earned cash to buy stationery in order to provide services to their clients.

The researcher’s general view is that many social workers are working without trade tools such as phones, computers, printers, photocopying machines and fax machines.

Furthermore, many social workers are not provided with stationery and that this has a negative impact on social service delivery.

4.3.2 Theme two: provision of supervision

This theme was about the provision of supervision to social workers. The following sub-themes were developed: challenges of supervision and how supportive supervisors are to their supervisees.

a). Challenges with provision of supervision

From the data collected, there is a clear indication that there is a lack of quality supervision to social workers. The majority of respondents indicated that they attend supervision sessions once in six months despite their working experiences. This is despite the fact that the Department of Social Development's Norms and Standards (2013) states that social welfare service providers should make consultation and supervision available to social welfare service practitioners and newly-qualified practitioners should be supervised for a minimum of two years. Social workers who have just got employed are supervised as other social workers who have been working for more than five years. Engelbrecht (2014) argued that though supervision is commonly associated with entry-level social workers, there are considerable benefits to supervision at all experience levels. According to the developmental approach, the process of supervision continues irrespective of the experience of the social worker. The duration and frequency of supervision should be determined by the supervisor in consultation with the supervisee, and should take into account the experience of the supervisee and the complexity of the work. Despite this provision, the data presented found that the majority of respondents hardly attend supervision sessions.

The data also suggests that supervisors lack supervision skills. It was found that supervisors do not have qualifications in supervision. Lack of quality supervision has a negative impact on the quality of service delivery to the clients and demotivates social workers. It also has a negative impact on the organisational ability to achieve its goals. This finding concurs with literature. According the Department of Social Development (2006), lack of quality supervision is caused by lack of structured supervision and poor

quality supervisors, who themselves also lack capacity to conduct professional supervision. This problem is exacerbated by historical practices, which assign supervisory functions to new white social workers, thus defeating the purpose of this critical function, resulting in the development of negative perceptions about supervision. In some instances, social workers have to function without structured supervision and poor quality supervisors.

These findings are linked to the findings by the Department of Labour (2008), which found that in many cases, supervisors are non-existent, and social workers do not receive guidance/mentorship that will enable them to become better workers. This is further supported by Schenck (2004), who states that 58% of social workers experience none or little support from organisations. Furthermore, a study conducted by Alpaslan and Schenck (2012) found that social workers feel neglected due to lack of proper supervision. Based on these findings, it is clear that there is a serious problem in terms of the provision of quality supervision. This reconfirms the findings by Meyer in Alpaslan and Schenck (2012), who states that lack of supervision is a serious challenge for social workers.

Taylor and Makofane (2015) state that shortage of supervisors and social workers leads to lack of professional guidance, resulting in inadequate and ineffective social work services. According to Engelbrecht, (2014), quality supervision creates professional development through learnt procedures; but it also allows workers to identify their key strengths. As these strengths are highlighted and encouraged, increased satisfaction and feelings of accomplishment develop, ultimately improving job satisfaction. Furthermore, quality and effective supervision includes offering praise, highlighting key strengths of the social worker, being a good listener, being sensitive to the unique emotional experiences of the worker, and being understanding to the demands and responsibilities placed upon the worker (Westbrook, Ellis & Ellet., 2006). Similarly, the supervisor also needs a sound knowledge of the process and procedures of the organisation (Westbrook et al., 2006).

This is how some of the respondents expressed themselves:

“Supervision sessions are supposed to be done once in three months if there is no time supervision sessions are done once in six months most of the time when we are doing performance assessment which is done one in six months. The biggest challenge with our supervisor it is the qualification our supervisor become a supervisor based on her working experience, I think it should be by education that one become a supervisor because one can have many years of working experience but remain empty in the head” (Respondent A).

“I attend supervision once per quarter and my supervisor lack good preparation before the session and she sometimes become shock about the challenges we encounter in our cases because she is always not around” (Respondent O).

“Our supervisor have no time for supervision and the only supervision we get is feedback from meeting, she has to canalised our reports and she also has to go for meeting, submit monthly reports” (Respondent J).

A few respondents indicated that supervisors are unable to provide quality supervision due to high caseloads and large number of supervisees who need to supervised. It was found that, in some instances, some supervisors have 15 supervisees and other work. This has a negative impact on their work. Supervisors are not available to assist their supervisees due to high caseloads. From the data collected, it is clear that one supervisor has many supervisees. Having many supervisees has a negative impact on the provision of quality supervision. This finding concurs with the literature as elucidated by Taylor and Makofane (2015), that some social workers function without supervisors in their offices, and that some offices have one supervisor who has to supervise 12 social workers. This finding is linked with a study conducted by Engelbrecht (2010), who found that supervisors are overwhelmed by expectations within the organisation. Thus they do not have enough time to create a space for supervision that is calm, nurturing and open. As Engelbrecht (2010) points out that a supervisor who is stressed and burned out himself will find it extremely difficult to offer quality supervision to other staff. From the finding, it is clear that the respondents understand the conditions in which

supervisors are working under. This concurs with a study conducted by Engelbrecht (2010), who states that the respondents in his study acknowledged and understood the extreme stress and pressure that supervisors find themselves in.

This is how some of the respondent expressed themselves:

“I attend supervision once per quarter due to the large number of supervisee that our supervisor have. She have 18 social workers to supervise with additional three intern social workers” (Respondent O).

“Our supervisor is struggling a lot to supervise all members of the staff including cleaners but she is trying her best to be supportive” (Respondent J).

The supervisors have a high caseload and that makes them unable to create time and space for supervision. This has a negative impact and leads to high caseloads. This was further supported by Engelbrecht (2010), who argued that the effects of poor or no supervision are intense. He stresses that low supervision creates a spiral; it begins with less time available for supervision, leading to higher attrition rates, ultimately higher caseloads for remaining social workers, then subsequently even less available time for supervision as the supervisor is overwhelmed by attending to practical needs within the organisation.

b) Support from supervisors

To find out if supervisors are providing support to their supervisees, the following question was asked: How supportive is your supervisor? From data collected, it was found that despite supervisors' high caseloads, they are supportive to their supervisees. The majority of the respondents indicated that their supervisors are very supportive and always available to assist them despite their high caseloads. Respondents feel that the work of their supervisors is not well recognised as some of them are not compensated for working as supervisors. These findings contradict literature which indicated that social workers are getting little support from their supervisors. According to the Department of Labour (2008), lack of supportive supervisors is one of the challenges faced by social workers on a daily basis. This is further supported by Schenck (2004),

who stated that 58% of social workers experience none or little support from the organisation.

This is how some of the respondents expressed themselves:

“My supervisor is very supportive despite not being compensated for the role she is playing. I think they are not properly recognised and this destabilised them and sometime she is told things in the eleven hour” (Respondent F).

“My supervisor is very much supportive, she is always there when I need her, sometimes she can attend the session to identify the gap” (Respondent C).

“She is very much supportive since when I come across a case where I do not have experience I consulted with her to help me with case and she always do so every time” (Respondent H).

4.3.3 Theme three: caseload management

This theme is about the workload of social workers. The researcher wanted to examine workload of social workers. One sub-theme was developed from the above theme: caseload.

a) Caseload

In order to understand caseloads of social workers, the following questions were asked: How many cases do you have? How is the allocation of cases in your office? Are you happy with the cases allocated to you? In accordance with the Department of Social Development (2013), social work services should be provided according to a manageable workload. In terms of the Department of Social Development (2013), one social worker must only be allocated 60 cases per month and be responsible for 2500 people in rural areas and 1500 in urban areas.

Despite this provision of norms and standards, many authors such as Cock (2008), Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015) and Taylor and Makofane (2015) have found that social workers have high caseloads. The findings of the study reconfirm the study findings by the aforementioned authors. The majority of respondents indicated that they have

unmanageable workload, and that a high caseload has a negative impact on their delivery of service as they are dealing with many cases. The majority of the respondents are not happy with their caseloads; they focus on pushing their target, than rendering quality services to their clients. The findings also show that the allocation of cases is not based on the population but on the area of operation. Most respondents are serving four to six areas, while a few respondents are serving two areas.

This is how some of the respondents expressed themselves:

“Am not happy with my caseload because I have to monitor and support 42 register crèches, 23 unregistered crèches and 04 partial care centers. My caseload lead to lot of crèches to be unregistered and other not been register” (Respondent O).

“Am not happy at all with my caseload, I have 100 foster care cases that I have to attended to and I also have other cases that I have to attend too” (Respondent H).

“I have many cases that I need to attend too, I have many key areas from family, child care, administrative, substance abuse, and welfare services” (Respondent K).

This notion agrees with a study conducted by Dlamini and Sawpaul (2015), who found that social workers have too much work to do. Social workers are doing foster care placement, monitoring and supervision of those placements, and issuing social relief of distress. Furthermore they are also doing the guardianship report, where they were also part of an elderly programme, done late registration of birth requested by client who does not have identity document or birth certificate, and family preservation in family conflict.

The findings of the study strongly suggest that there is a need for specialisation with social work services. Furthermore, there is shortage of social workers and auxiliary social workers, leading to high caseloads among the respondents. The majority of the respondents have many key areas of responsibility. As a result, they are not able to grow and develop as practitioners because they have to offer all social worker services.

“Am not happy with my caseload ,my caseload is too much, there is no focus area or specialisation, as a social worker I have do all foster care cases and family cases” (Respondent I).

“I have a lot of job to do without any assistance from anyone else, I think it would be best if our department appoint social auxiliary workers to help with administration work” (Respondent H).

“My problem is being a generic social worker, if we had the focus things it would have been better and we would not be working for quantity” (Respondent D).

The study findings are supported by the Department of Social Development (2006), which states that lack of specialisation and low numbers of social workers forces social workers to do all forms of social work, which results in high caseloads, stressful workplace environment, anxiety and malpractice. According to Lombard in Cock (2008), there was an increase in the caseloads of social workers since 1994. The increase was due to the decreasing number of social workers at a time when there was an increase in services to the masses in South Africa. This was also highlighted by Calitz et al. (2014), who stated that the social work profession in South Africa has experienced a decrease in social workers. Gutshe et al. (2015) state that there is a shortage of approximately 60% of social workers in South Africa, and that this is the main problem that leads to big caseloads for social workers.

From the study some respondents indicated that they are happy with their caseloads. Most of these respondents have few areas that they are serving. From the data, it was found that the Department of Social Development employs new social workers every year. Although they employ few of them, it goes a long way in reducing caseloads to social workers.

The general view of the researcher is that social workers have unmanageable caseloads, which has a negative impact on the provision of quality services to recipients of social work services. Lack of specialisation, shortage of social workers and auxiliary social workers also contribute to the high caseloads. Furthermore, the Department of

Social Development is not adhering to their norms and standards as social workers are allocated more cases, which is not in line with the norms and standards.

5. SUMMARY

In summation, the chapter has looked at data presentation and analysis. The data was presented in prose and analysed through thematic analysis. Furthermore, the chapter shows some of the literature which is related to the findings. The chapter looked at the findings based on three different main themes, namely, the provision of resources to social workers, the provision of supervision and caseload management. This chapter gives a clear picture of the state of working conditions of social workers. From the study findings, it is clear that there is a shortage of transport for social workers to execute their duties. The shortage has a negative impact on the delivery of social work services as social workers are unable to attend to their cases.

Social workers have to share cars in order to render services. This has led to poor working relationships amongst social workers and infighting and conflict. The findings indicate that social workers are working from offices that are in a poor state and office space is very small. The space has a negative impact on building rapport with clients, and has a negative impact on keeping the information of the client private. The study findings clearly show that social workers are not provided with adequate trade tools. It is clear that there is a need for the Department of Social Development to prioritise the provision of trade tools.

The provision of quality supervision is very important to ensure quality social work services and growth of social workers. However, the findings show that there is lack or no provision of quality supervision. The findings show that supervisors do not have time for supervision due to their high caseloads. They have high caseloads, which has a negative impact on the provision of supervision. Despite supervisors' high caseloads, they are very supportive to their supervisees. Lastly, the study findings show that social workers have high workloads, and further suggest that there is a need for more social workers and auxiliary social workers. Social workers are not happy with their caseloads.

The findings show that the allocation of cases is not in line with Department of Social Development's norms and standards. The findings suggest that there is a serious need for focus and specialisation with social work services to reduce high caseloads and improve service delivery.

Chapter: 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter focused on analysis and interpretation of the research findings from the respondents. This chapter discusses the findings and makes recommendations. Furthermore, the chapter covers the overview of the study. The limitations of the study findings and conclusions are also covered in this chapter.

5.2. Overview of the study

The study explored social workers working conditions at Makhado Municipality. The researcher wanted to find out if social workers get adequate resources to render services and to examine their caseloads. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to find out if social workers are getting adequate support and quality supervision. The researcher described the working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality.

5.3. Overview of the study findings

The researcher explored social worker's working conditions, focusing on three themes: the provision of resources, supervision and caseload management. The first theme was about the provision of resources to social workers to render services. The researcher found that the provision of resources is still a serious problem for social workers. They are working without necessary trade tools. The study found that social workers are not provided with adequate resources to render quality services.

The second theme was about the provision of supervision to social workers. The researcher found that there is poor provision of quality supervision. It was further found that supervisors have high caseloads, and, as such, do not have time for supervision. Furthermore, it was found that supervisors are very supportive of their supervisees. The third theme was about caseload management. It was found that social workers have high caseloads and are not happy with the caseloads. It was further found that social workers are allocated cases based on the area of operation, not population ratio.

5.4 The research findings

This study explored working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province. The findings of the study are based on three major themes. The findings were determined by the research instrument and the presentation of data in Chapter 4.

5.4.1. Provision of resources to social workers

The aim of this theme was to establish if social workers at Makhado Municipality have adequate resources to render quality services to their clients. The theme focused on the availability of transport, the availability of office space and the provision of trade tools. The major findings also show that there is a lack of resources to social workers and of the availability of transport for social workers to do field work such as home visits and community campaigns. Due to the unavailability of transport, social workers have to share transport. Although the Department of Social Development has introduced subsidised cars and scheme B system, the problem of shortage of transport remains the same.

The findings indicate that lack of availability of transport has led many social workers to do less community work and are inaccessible to their clients. Transport is essential for social workers to render services as they are expected to do field work. This is negatively effecting social work service delivery and leaves social workers frustrated. Lack of transport has contributes to social work high caseload .The failure of social workers to do home visits has led the community and clients to losing trust in social workers as they fail to respond to client's crisis. This is a serious problem that the Department of Social Development needs to attend as a matter of urgency. The study findings suggest that the Department of Social Development needs to review its subsidised cars and the scheme B system policy.

Furthermore, from the study findings as presented in Chapter 4, social workers are working from improper offices which are in poor conditions. Some social workers are working from park homes that leak during rain and thus not conducive for clients with disabilities. The research findings show that offices of social workers put their lives and

those of their clients in danger as they are working from offices that have cracks and that might collapse any time. They are working in horrific conditions. Sharing of offices is influenced by the Department of Social Development's failure to prioritise the provision of infrastructure when they introduce the recruitment and retention strategy of social workers. The Department of Social Development has employed more social workers, but not built new offices to accommodate them, resulting in the sharing of offices.

Moreover, the study findings show that social workers are not provided with adequate trade tools to execute their duties. They use their cell phones and computers to render government services. They do not have access to fax machines. They are not provided with trade tools such as printers and photocopying machines. As such, they have to share printers with other colleagues, and in some instances, 12 social workers have to share one printer. Although the problem of lack of provision has been raised in many instances like social work indaba, social workers marched to the Union Buildings. From the results of the study, provision of trade tools remains a serious problem for social workers, who are using their personal and hard earned cash to buy computers and airtime in order to render services.

5.4.2. Provision of supervision to social workers

The major findings show that there is lack of quality supervision because supervisors do not have time for supervision. Lack of quality supervision is influenced by high caseloads of supervisors as it was found that they have many supervisees, and, in some instances, one supervisor has 18 supervisees. The findings show that despite the provision of Norms and Standards in the Department of Social Development, that one supervisor should have 10 supervisees and supervisors' caseloads remain high. The study findings further demonstrate that supervisors lack supervisory skills and that this is influenced by their lack of qualifications in management.

It was found that social workers (supervisees) only attend supervision once in six months and mostly during assessment time. Supervision is not considered as an important element as supervisors focus on producing reports. Lack of quality

supervision leaves many social workers to rely on their colleagues for guidance, and, in some instances, they have to take decisions without inputs from their supervisors. Lack of quality supervision deprives social workers of the opportunity to grow and be exposed to quality supervision. Lack of supervision has led many social workers to be reported to council and others struck off the council due to poor decisions they take.

The results of the study indicated that although supervisors have high caseloads and do not have time for supervision, they are very supportive to their supervisees. The study outcomes displayed that supervisors are always available to assist their supervisees. However, their high caseloads and pressure from management to meet targets has a negative influence on the provision of quality supervision. It was found that supervisors have high caseloads and, that in some instances, are not appointed but acting as supervisors. Although those supervisors are not appointed and recognised, they are very supportive to supervisees. The Department of Social Development needs to appoint more supervisors in order to improve the provision of supervision and of social work services.

5.4.3. Social workers workload

The aim of this theme was to examine social workers' caseloads at Makhado Municipality. The major results of this theme indicated that social workers have high caseloads and they are not happy with this caseload. According to the Department of Social Development's Norms and Standards (2013), one social worker needs to be allocated 60 cases per month. However, the findings showed that social workers have many cases, and in some instances, one social worker has 120 cases to attend on a monthly basis. The findings also showed that cases are not allocated to social workers based on population ratio, but on area of operation, which is not in line with the provision of norms and standards. The findings show that lack of specialisation in social work services has influence on high caseloads.

Social workers have many key responsibility areas that they have to focus on, such as rendering social welfare services, child and family services, and restorative services and social work administration. The failure by the Department of Social Development to

appoint social auxiliary workers has an influence on high social work caseloads. The absence of social auxiliary workers has resulted in social workers having a lot of paper work and a lot of time focused on administration and other functions that should be done by social auxiliary workers. The high caseloads demonstrate that the Department of Social Development still needs to appoint more social workers.

5.5. Study limitation

The study focuses on exploring social workers' working condition at Makhado Municipality. For this reason 15 social workers were interviewed. The study might have been better if it covered other municipalities and if it had more respondents. The results from the study cannot be generalised to all social workers in the province and the country. The time also has an impact on the study. The study could have been better if the researcher had much time to conduct the study. The study only focuses on exploring social workers' working conditions at Makhado Municipality and it could have been better than it is now if the researcher was allowed to cover other municipalities and to explore other areas of working conditions of social workers'.

5.6. Recommendation

5.6.1. Recommendation to the Department of Social Development

Based on the study findings, the researcher therefore recommends that:

- a) The Department of Social Development must prioritise the provision of trade tools such as transport, computers, cell-phones, printers, photocopy machines and stationery.
- b) The Department of Social Development must review the provision of transport subsidies and scheme B policy to accelerate the provision of transport to all social workers.
- c) The Department of Social Development must establish a task team to monitor and evaluate the implementation of norms and standards.

d) The Department of Social Development must employ more supervisors, social auxiliary workers and social workers to reduce high caseloads.

e) The Department of Social Development must increase the infrastructure budget to ensure that they build more offices for social workers.

5.6.2. Recommendation to social work profession

b) It is recommended that universities prepare social work students to deal with harsh working conditions of social workers in rural areas.

5.6.3. Recommendation to future researchers

Based on the study findings, the researcher recommends to future researchers the following topic:

a) An assessment and evaluation of the impact of recruitment and retention strategy of social workers on the working conditions of social workers.

b) An investigation of the challenges faced by social workers' supervisors.

c) An assessment of the impact of social workers' remuneration on service delivery by social workers.

6. Conclusion

Having considered the study findings, it can be concluded that the working conditions of social workers remain poor. They are working without the necessary trade tools to provide quality social work services. The lack of trade tools such as cell-phones, computers, transport, fax machines, printers and photocopying machines is a serious problem for social workers at Makhado Municipality. They are not provided with adequate resources to render their services. Unavailability of transport has been an on-going problem within social work services and failure by the Department of Social Development to provide transport to social workers continues to have a severe negative impact on the provision of social work services. Lack of office space is a serious challenge for social workers at Makhado Municipality. Social workers do not have proper offices and the Department of Social Development needs to accelerate and prioritise the provision of infrastructure for social workers.

Social work supervisors have high caseload, leading to their failure to provide quality supervision, which is a serious challenge for social workers. However, lack of supervision is influenced by lack of supervisory skills from supervisors. The caseload of social workers is very high and the Department of Social Development must ensure that more social workers, supervisors and social auxiliary workers are employed. The introduction of specialisation in social work profession service could assist to reduce the caseload of social workers.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

EXPLORING WORKING CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS AT MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

SECTION A: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS

- Age

- Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

CONFIRMATION QUESTIONS

- Are you a social worker?
- Are you employed by Department of social Development at Makhado municipality?
- How long have you been working as a social worker?

SECTION B: PROVISION OF RESOURCES

- How is the allocation of transport amongst your colleagues in your office?
- What are challenges that you experience with allocation of transport?
- What is the state of your office condition?

- Do you have your own office? Yes or No Explain
- Does your Department provide you with adequate working equipment such as telephone, stationery, photocopying machine, fax machine, and printer? yes or No if yes or No explain

SECTION C: PROVISION OF SUPERVISION

- How often do you consult your supervisor?
- What are the challenges that you encounter with the provision of supervision?
- How supportive is your supervisor?

SECTION D: CASELOAD

- How many cases do you have?
- Is the allocation of cases in your office based on population ratio? Yes or No Explain
- Are you happy with the cases allocated to you? Yes or No Explain

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring working condition of social workers at Makhado municipality in Limpopo province

PROJECT LEADER: Makongoza A.A

I, **Participant** hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the following project:

I realise that:

1. The study deals with the working condition of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo province.
2. The procedure or treatment envisaged may hold some risk for me that cannot be foreseen at this stage.
3. The Ethics Committee has approved that individuals may be approached to participate in the study.
4. The research project, ie. the extent, aims and methods of the research, has been explained to me.
5. The project sets out the risks that can be reasonably expected as well as possible discomfort for persons participating in the research, an explanation of the anticipated advantages for myself or others that are reasonably expected from the research and alternative procedures that may be to my advantage.
6. I will be informed of any new information that may become available during the research that may influence my willingness to continue my participation.
7. Access to the records that pertain to my participation in the study will be restricted to persons directly involved in the research.

8. Any questions that I may have regarding the research, or related matters, will be answered by the researcher/s.

9. If I have any questions about, or problems regarding the study, or experience any undesirable effects, I may contact a the researcher

10. Participation in this research is voluntary and I can withdraw my participation at any stage.

11. I indemnify the University of Limpopo and all persons involved with the above project from any liability that may arise from my participation in the above project or that may be related to it, for whatever reasons, including negligence on the part of the mentioned persons.

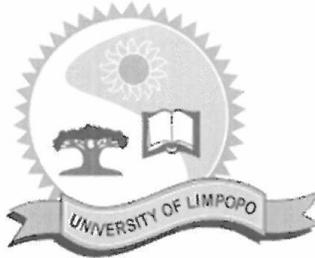
SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHED PERSON SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

Makongoza A.A

SIGNATURE OF PERSON THAT INFORMED SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

THE RESEARCHED PERSON

Signed at Tshikuwi this 07 day of October 2017



University of Limpopo
Faculty of Management and Law
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DEAN
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 2558, Fax: (015) 268 2873, Email: johannes.tsheola@ul.ac.za

30 August 2017

A.A Makongoza(201734111)
TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Dear Mr AA Makongoza

FACULTY APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I have pleasure in informing you that your Masters proposal served at the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee meeting on **23 August 2017** and your title was approved as follows:

"Exploring Working Conditions of Social Workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province".

Note the following: The study

Ethical Clearance	Tick One
Requires no ethical clearance Proceed with the study	
Requires ethical clearance (Human) (TREC) (apply online) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	✓
Requires ethical clearance (Animal) (AREC) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	

Yours faithfully

Jsc 6. 10/09/2017

Prof MP Sebola

Chairperson: Faculty Higher Degrees Committee

CC: Dr E Zwane, Supervisor, and Acting Programme Manager and Prof MX Lethoko, Acting Director of School



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 4029, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: Abdul.Maluleke@ul.ac.za

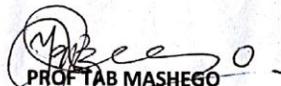
**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

MEETING: 02 November 2017

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/411/2017: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Exploring working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province
Researcher: AA Makongoza
Supervisor: Dr NE Zwane
Co-Supervisor: N/A
School: Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership
Degree: Masters in Public Administration


PROF TAB MASHEGO

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:

- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
- ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.



University of Limpopo
Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership
P O Box 756, Fauna Park, 0787
Tel: (015) 268 4179, Email: nthabiseng.letsebe@ul.ac.za

MEMORANDUM

To : To Whom It May Concern

From : Dr. E Zwane
Supervisor

Date : 14 June 2017

Subject : **Request for Permission to Conduct Research Study**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. Makongoza AA (student number: 201734111) is a Master of Public Administration (MPA) student in Turfloop School of Leadership (TGSL) at the University of Limpopo. Mr. Makongoza is conducting a research for her Master's Degree entitled "**Exploring working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo province**".

It would be appreciated if permission would be granted to Mr. Makongoza in order to conduct research on the matter. The purpose of the research is mainly academic.

Yours Sincerely

Dr. N. Zwane
Supervisor
Tel: 015 268 4253
Email: Engeline@ul.ac.za

APPENDIX F

Eng: Makongoza A.A

Cel: 072 343 9646

**To: Head of Department
Department of Social Development
Limpopo province**

From: Makongoza A.A

Subject: Request for permission to conduct a research study

To whom it may concerned

I Makongoza Azwihangwisi Abel a social worker employed by Vhembe Department of Social Development stationed at Tshikuwi clinic hereby apply for a permission to conduct a research study. I am currently registered as a student (Student NO:201734111) for Masters of Public Administration at University of Limpopo in the school of leadership. Am hereby applying for a permission to conduct a research study for my masters and the topic of my study is “ **Exploring the working condition of social workers at Makhado municipality in Limpopo province**”. The respondent in my study will be social workers from Makhado and the purpose of the study is mainly academic

Hope you will find the above matter in order

Makongoza A.A

15.01.2018

CONFIDENTIAL



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

TO: R MOKOBANE

FROM: DR T MABILA

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)

DATE: 06th AUGUST 2018

SUBJECT: EXPLORING WORKING CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS AT MAKHADO MUNICIPALITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

RESEARCHER: A.A MAKONGOZA

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) meeting on the 06th August 2018.

The committee has noted that the candidate has displayed the understanding and application of scientific research. The committee is satisfied with the research proposal.

Decision: The research proposal is granted full approval and ethical clearance.

Regards

Deputy Chairperson: Dr T Mabila

Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi

Date: 07/09/2018

APPENDIX H

ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

**CONFIDENTIAL
LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

Meeting: 06th August 2018

Project Number: LPREC/20/2018: PG

Title: Exploring Working Conditions of Social Workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province

Researcher: A.A Makongoza

Department: Department of Social Development

Dr Thembinkosi Mabila

Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number **REC-111513-038**.

Note:

- i. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**
- ii. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.**
- iii. The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department.**
- iv. The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat.**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIE



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TO: RESEARCH COMMITTEE

APPROVAL TO USE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'S FACILITIES

This certifies that Mr Mokongoza AA has presented the significance of his research study titled: **'Exploring the working conditions of Social Workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province'**

Mr. Makongoza's research study

1. Significance of the Study

As the study will focus on exploring the working condition of social workers at Makhado Municipality, the finding will assist the Limpopo Department of Social Development to gain insight into the experience of social workers related to working condition. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge in Public Administration by bring new insight on working conditions of social workers which will assist in the improvement of working condition. The study will further contribute to the development of general norms and standard, service delivery model, recruitment and retention strategy of social workers by Limpopo Department of Social Development. Furthermore the study findings will provide valuable information to the researcher and academics interested in proposed topic.

2. **Population and area of study**

The population of the study will be 15 registered social workers from Makhado west region in Vhembe district.

3. In view of the above, this letter grants Mr. Makongoza permission to use the Department of Social Development facilities.



Deputy Director: Population Development Unit
Mokobane R

12/04/2018
Date

APPENDIX J
EDITOR'S LETTER

University of Limpopo
School of Languages and Communication Studies
Translation Studies and Linguistics
Private Bag x1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3707, Fax: (015) 268 2868, email:joe.kubayi@ul.ac.za

28 May 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

SUBJECT: EDITING OF MASTERS MINI-DISSERTATION

This is to certify that the Masters Mini-dissertation entitled 'Exploring working conditions of social workers at Makhado Municipality in Limpopo Province' by Azwihangwisi Abel Makongoza (201734111) was proofread and edited by me, and that unless further tampered with, I am content that all editorial issues have been dealt with.

Kind regards



Dr SJ Kubayi (DLitt et Phil - Unisa)
Senior Lecturer (Department of Translation Studies and Linguistics – UL)
SATI Membership No. 1002606

