

***EXPLORING CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF FOSTER CARE BACKLOG AT THE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE,
SOUTH AFRICA***

by

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MINI-DISSERTATION

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this study to my late friend Nandala “Sango’s” Annah Masango. We promised each other to continue with our studies after we completed our first degree but sadly God took you before you could even start, so I made a vow to myself that every degree I acquire will go to you. You might have left my life, but you will never leave my heart. Your life was indeed a blessing to me. May your soul continue to rest in peace my friend.

DECLARATION

I, Sisimogang Philadelphia Matsoso, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation for the degree Master of Development Planning and Management is my actual work through professional guidance of my supervisors. This has not previously been submitted for any other degree to this or any other University. I further declare that the material and the sources used or quoted have been fully acknowledged.

Matsoso, Sisimogang Philadelphia

DATE

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ABSTRACT

The foster care backlog has been a challenge in the National Department of Social Development for some years which resulted in the lapsing of foster care grants and thousands of children left without legal and statutory protection. Due to this, civil society took the Department of Social Development to court as this challenge impacted negatively on the family functioning of foster families as they lost access to social grants. The Department of Social Development was ordered by the South Gauteng High Court to come up with an extensive legal solution by the end of December 2014 but, to date, the foster care backlog is still piling up and foster families' standard of life is threatened. The social workers who are mandated by the Children's Act to conduct the statutory process and place children in foster care are inundated by the high foster care backlog. The aim of the research study was to explore the challenges social workers face in relation to managing foster care backlog cases at the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area, Limpopo Province. The research study was based on a qualitative research method whereby a small sample of 21 foster care social workers from three service points (Aganang Cluster, Polokwane East and Polokwane West) were interviewed. The researcher used face to face semi-structured interviews to collect primary data from the participants. The findings from the study affirmed that there were indeed challenges in managing the foster care backlog. Lack of support and training, together with inequitable distribution of cases, are the most dominant challenges identified by the participants.

In order for the provincial Department of Social Development to reduce the high caseload and for the clients to continue receiving the best service, the research study recommends that the vacant post be filled as soon as possible. Furthermore, training on legislation dealing with children including the Children's Act is also recommended for social workers.

The researcher is of the opinion that the findings and the recommendations of the study may add value in managing foster care backlog in the Polokwane Municipality area and Limpopo Province as a whole, if they can be considered and applied.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since South Africa was liberated from apartheid in 1994, the National Department of Social Development has made a commitment to develop policies which are in accordance with the South African Constitution. Patel (2005:98) indicated that these policies were developed in order to correct the injustices of the apartheid regime. This was done by adopting the White Paper for Social Welfare in 1997 which indicates that social welfare programmes and services should emanate from the respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights as outlined by the Constitution of South Africa (White Paper for Social Welfare; 1997).

Adopting White Paper for Social Welfare in 1997 influenced change within the provision of social service, which included foster care services. The means to alleviate pressure from the management, supervision and support of children in foster care is not a new proposal but was suggested in 1996 by the Child Rights Organisations and the South African Law Reform Commission also recommended it when proposing a Children's Bill. This proposed Children's Bill, if implemented, will significantly reduce children within the foster care system, which would have the effect of reducing the existing backlog (Breen, 2015).

Böning and Ferreira (2013:519) stated that the South African foster care service is under a lot of pressure due to various social reasons. Children living in hazardous and dangerous communities are exposed to risks such as sexual abuse, poverty, violence and malnutrition. Despite the overburdened foster care system, a sustainable solution has not yet been put forward by the government to alleviate the backlog; hence, the study on the challenges social workers face in relation to managing foster care backlog in the Polokwane Municipality area.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In South Africa, presently foster care service is faced with a rising number of children depending on foster care services because of the existing social ills. DSD (2018) outlined that there are 17 731 402 social grant beneficiaries and presently in South Africa 345 560 are foster care grant beneficiaries whereby Limpopo Province has 36 730 foster care grant beneficiaries. The Limpopo Department of Social

Development has a strategic plan for dealing with the foster care backlog but it seems as if it is not easy to reach the legal and policy commitment (O'Donoghue & Louw-Potgieter 2013:522). Hence, the Centre for Child Law urgently made a Court Application in 2011 to provide interim relief to foster care cases that lapsed. The court order issued by the North Gauteng High Court stating that all grants that had lapsed because of the backlog were deemed not to have lapsed and should be administratively reviewed until the National DSD proposes a systematic plan. (Centre for Child Law, 2011). In December 2014 the court order lapsed with no plan or solution being reached even with efforts made by the High Court.

Ngwenya and Botha (2012:102) in their previous research findings indicated the need to address foster care applications and extensions; as a result, statutory social workers are burdened with pressure to finalise foster care cases. However, the foster care backlog is still accumulating and no visible progress has been made.

The researcher, as one of the social workers coordinating foster care, has observed that various foster care backlog challenges which are indicated by social workers includes shortage of tools of trade, lack of specialized field, unequal distribution of files, poor implementation of the department's strategies, insufficient supervisors, poor cooperation of clients, high caseload, red tape and poor administration. However, the authenticity of these challenges has not been proven, Thus the abovementioned problems in the foster care system have necessitated the researcher to undertake a study with the goal of exploring the challenges that social workers face when managing cases of foster care backlog in area.

3. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to explore the challenges social workers face in relation to managing foster care backlog cases at the provincial Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area, Limpopo Province.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011), states that the researcher has to make a conscious decision on what the research objectives and goals would to be.

For the researcher to realise the abovementioned aim, the objectives of the study were developed as follows:

- **To identify the impact of the foster care backlog in the area of study.** The researcher would like to measure the impact of the foster care backlog within the area of study because eight years following the order issued for the Department of Social Development to develop legal solutions and mechanisms to fix the foster care system, the situation is even more shocking as approximately 150 000 foster care orders are about to expire sometime towards the end of 2019 and this might have some kind of impact on service delivery and this objective will clearly state if the impact will be negative or positive.
- **To determine the current programmes that are in place to alleviate the backlog.** The reason to establish whether the current programmes employed alleviate the foster care backlog or not was necessitated by the departmental reports which suggest that there are a lot of programmes and legislations but the foster care backlog is still out of control regardless of the extension of orders granted to the Department of Social Development to deal with the backlog by the High Court.
- **To explore the challenges that social workers face in managing foster care backlog cases.** Due to the alarming foster care backlog, the researcher would like to find out if there are any kind of challenges that hinder social workers from dealing with the foster care backlog.
- **To identify strategies that could assist the Provincial Department of Social Development in the Polokwane area in dealing with the challenges.** If indeed the study might confirm that the challenges do exist, then this objective will assist the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area together with the National Department of Social Development to comprehensively tackle the problem of foster care backlog

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions assist the researcher to give guidance on how the study should be conducted and also what needs to be accomplished.

- What is the impact of the foster care backlog in the chosen area of study?
- What current programmes are in place to alleviate the backlog?
- What kind of challenges social workers face in managing foster care backlog cases?
- What possible strategies could assist the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area in dealing with the challenges?

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study on the challenges social workers face in relation to the management of foster care backlog at Polokwane Municipality area will assist the stakeholders like the Department of Social Development, SASSA and Department of Justice and Constitutional Development in the following ways:

- The study will give the Department of Social Development a clearer notion of the nature and the significance of the issues identified within the community.
- The researcher anticipates that the study will also help the social workers in identifying suitable programmes meant to alleviate the backlog.
- The study will assist stakeholders in identifying challenges social workers face in relation to the case management of the foster care backlog at the Polokwane Municipality area.
- The study will provide guidance to the Department of Social Development on which mechanisms could be used to alleviate foster care backlog when developing a legal policy document.

7. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE FOSTER CARE SERVICES

Every piece of legislation has an important contribution in the lives of South African children. Hence, after 1994, the South African government has been adopting and amending previous policies to align them with the Constitution and also to ensure shift in the delivery of services in all government spheres and services, which also includes foster care services. This legislative framework includes the following:

7.1. The South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996

The rights of children in need of care and protection as stated in Section 28.1(b) of the Constitution of South Africa highlights that “every child has the right to family care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment” (RSA, 1996:14). This clearly stipulates the responsibilities of a social worker managing foster care whereby there is a need to regularly visit the residences of the children and the foster parents in order to make sure the foster children adapt well in their new environment and all the challenges discovered during assessment are addressed accordingly. By doing this, social workers will be in line with what the Constitution stipulates.

7.2. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)

According to the Social Development Strategic Plan (2010–2015: 11) the White Paper for Social Welfare serves as the guideline which comprises of the principles, policies and recommendations meant to carry out the social services. It encourages a holistic social services whereby programmes facilitates social development approach are promoted in South Africa.

7.3. The Children’s Act No 38 of 2005

The National Department of Social Development Annual Performance Plan (2011 – 2012:12) indicates that “the Act addresses the issues affecting the children and outlines the legal processes and procedures governing the foster care service”. The Children’s Act also assists on issues of conformity among different international

instruments that the South Africa Government is a signatory to, and it also enforces the Rights of Children.

7.4. Integrated Service Delivery Model (2006)

The (ISDM) Integrated Service Delivery Model (DSD, 2006) expresses DSD's developmental approach to social services. It highlights that social services must firstly be directed at Community Awareness and Prevention, then Early Intervention, then Statutory Intervention (including formal foster care) and if possible, as a final step Reconstruction and Aftercare (reuniting a child with his/her biological parents). The ISDM makes provision for integration between social security, social welfare services and community development. DSD (2006) highlighted that this approach seeks "to promote the meeting of needs for vulnerable households, individuals and communities while considering the cause and effect of their vulnerability, recognising their strengths, and developing suitable strategies for sustainable socio-economic development". DSD (2006) indicated that the ISDM signifies a formal acknowledgement that providing access to holistic developmental opportunities necessitates intergovernmental coordination together with coordination of other sectors e.g. the Non-Governmental Organisation sector (NGOs).

7.5. Information guide on the management of statutory services

The information guide on the management of statutory services offers relevant information to all the Social Services Professionals concerning the application of the legislative requirements of the Children's Act No 38 of 2005. It is regarded as an additional assistance to be utilised together with the Children's Act, other policies, guidelines, regulations, norms and standards, other related child care legislations and the strategies established in implementing the Children's Act (Information guide on the management of statutory services, 2012: 11)

7.6. The Social Assistance Act

The Social Assistance Act No13 of 2004 states that the "foster parents qualify for the foster care grant (FCG) provided they are South African citizens, permanent residents or refugees" (RSA, 2004). The foster family whom the concerned children

are placed with in terms of the court order are eligible for the Foster Child Grant (FCG). There are no means tests when applying for the grant as it is outlined in the Annexure C of the Act. The FCG amount increases on a yearly basis and is currently R960 per month.

7.7. Social worker's report

The legal framework for foster care depends heavily on investigation and reports by social workers. Social worker are required to do investigations on circumstances of the children concerned and furnish the court with a report stating whether the child concerned needs care and protection or not. The social worker is responsible in making sure that the original court order is reviewed for the period of two years. The report is needed every two years for the order to be extended, unless the foster care order is extended in terms of Section 186 (1) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 which gives provision for the extension until the child reaches the age of 18 years. Even when the order is extended beyond two years, a two-yearly visit for the purpose of monitoring is needed. There was a change in the responsibilities of the statutory social workers and the courts when the current Children's Act was introduced regarding the extension of existing foster care court orders. In terms Child Care Act social workers were allowed to extend the original foster care orders by submitting a request for extension together with the report of the statutory social worker and other relevant documents for approval to Social Development; however, the Children's Act which was implemented in 2010 makes provision for the order to be extended by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

The following section gives a global perspective on managing foster care and the implementation processes that can be compared and contrasted with the foster care programme in Limpopo.

8. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

8.1. Foster care

As stated in the Children's Act No 38 of 2005, "foster care is defined as the process of placing children in need of care and protection legally with a person or family other than their biological parents". Manukuza (2013:7) further defines "foster care as the legal service of placing children that cannot be looked after by their own parents in a family setting for a period of short, medium or long term".

8.2. Social worker

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 defines a "social worker as individuals registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) as stated on the Social Service Professions Act No 110 of 1978". Social workers within the Department of Social Development or child protection organisations are legally mandated to carry out statutory work which includes placing children in foster care if they need care and protection.

8.3. Management

According to Cumming & Worley (2005:367) management is a concept that "maintains that activities of an organisation are accordingly planned, coordinated and executed in a manner which produces the required and expected results". Parkhouse and Ball (2011:23) define "management as concerned with coordination of materials, human resources, technologies, support units dealing with facilities and the contextual factors such as organizational networks, government regulations and community expectations".

The term "Management" is defined from different perspectives by different authors but Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2015:257) defines Social Work Management as one of the social work functions that includes the generic functions of planning, directing,

organising, monitoring and controlling service programmes implemented by a social worker.

8.4. Motivation

“Motivation is described as the ability of human beings to conduct themselves in a particular or specific way and to continue persevering even when facing one or more obstacles, with the goal of achieving organisational objectives” (Grobler, Wörnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield; 2011: 237)

9. OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

The study will be divided in to five chapters and the outline is as follows:

Chapter one: General Introduction and background: The chapter will present a brief introduction of the study and the background. It will also outline the reasons for conducting the study and also highlight the aim and objectives which will eventually be related to the research questions.

Chapter two: Literature Review: This chapter will focus on the legislative framework in managing the foster care backlog. The chapter will put an emphasis on the previous investigations conducted on foster care.

Chapter three: Research Design and Methodology: The chapter will entail the methodology that was used for data collection including design, sampling methods, population and give the reason behind the selection of the methodology.

Chapter four: Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation: This chapter will discuss the empirical findings, the method used to analyse data and interpretation.

Chapter five: Conclusions and Recommendations: Chapter 5 summarizes the study, outlines conclusions drawn from the findings as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter will review and analyse the existing or available literature relating to the case management of foster care backlog. The reason behind reviewing of literature is to discover new information that has not been explored in connection with the current study. Supporting the above statement, Mouton (2011) corroborates that one of the main goal of a researcher is to discover what has been researched in the area of study and to further inquire whether other researchers have investigated the identified problem. If any information is found to be available, then the researcher will have to establish what the information is about and relates the research to practice.

In order to achieve the above process, the chapter evaluates existing studies on how social workers in South Africa and other countries manage foster care services. The aim of this review was to establish the state of knowledge on the subject and to identify any gaps in information. This will actually justify why the study was undertaken and its possible contribution. The chapter is structured into a number of sections as follows:

2.2. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE FOSTER CARE BACKLOG AS A CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Since South Africa inherited extreme inequalities, violence and social dislocation from the Apartheid regime, this made it difficult for many families to care for their children. Foster care is one important form of alternative care utilized to address the abovementioned challenges of orphaned and vulnerable children (Breen, 2015). He further indicated that foster care cases across South Africa increased drastically after the then Minister of Social Development encouraged family members taking care of orphans to consult the Children's Court and request court orders for the legal

placement of the children in their care and this overwhelmed the system in South Africa.

Mentjies, Budlender, Giese and Johnson (2003) on their previous research findings attest that most researchers warned that the foster care system would become overwhelmed. Presently in South Africa 478 158 children receives foster child grant as at the end of February 2018. Consequently, over 30 232 foster care orders have lapsed between January to March 2018 as the system is unable to cope with a large number of new applications and the foster care orders which are supposed to be extended on a two-year basis in terms of Section 159 (RSA.2018). Due to the alarming backlog, the National Department of Social Development was litigated.

On the 11 May 2011, the North Gauteng High Court handed down an order and on the 02 June 2011 a variation order was also issued as an alternative mechanism instructing the Department of Social Development to administratively extend foster care orders until 31 December 2014 but the order was again extended further to the 31 December 2017 (DSD, 2017). However, according to the 4 September 2017 Social Development Report, all nine provinces still had an estimated at 39 102 in foster care backlog. Apart from the backlog, new orders lapse on a monthly basis as the order's cycle for the foster child is two years. Some Provinces indicated that they are could not eradicate the backlog due to some of the Children's Act.

As part of an agreement between the Centre for Child Law and the Department of Social Development, the North Gauteng High Court issued a court order in November 2017 whereby it provided a temporary solution to continue payment and manage lapsed foster care orders and also the Department was instructed to propose a comprehensive legal solution for the foster care.

The social workers registered in the country is said to be 29 495 as at 30 November 2017 (SACSSP Newsletter). The number of social workers registered with SACSSP does not automatically mean the total number employed because there are social workers who are still unemployed in South Africa and those practising the profession spend a lot of their professional time on paperwork for grant administration, instead of offering other support services such as family preservation, psychosocial support and attending to abuse cases for which they are also trained.

Taking into consideration the backlog that still exists six years after the North Gauteng High Court and the number of employed social workers in South Africa, it indicates that drastic interventions to manage the foster care backlog are needed, As the presently used interventions or strategies proved to have not been effective in dealing with the backlog, hence this study on exploring the challenges social workers face with the case management of the foster care backlog and possibly coming up with strategies on how to reduce or alleviate the foster care backlog in South Africa.

2.3. CONCEPTUALISING FOSTER CARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Social Work Practice has three basic methods, namely Community work, group work and casework. The social work administration and research are regarded as the secondary methods. The term administration in social work is often used interchangeably with management (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015:145). Typically, the term management is normally found in literature on commerce and business, but it is limited when coming to foster care management, more especially in South Africa.

Children's Act 38 of 2005 outlines 3 types of foster care in South Africa which is related, unrelated foster care and cluster foster care scheme. They are mentioned as follows:

- **Unrelated foster care**

Section 180 (3a) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, indicates that "unrelated foster care is placing children with an order issued by the Children's Court in the care of any person not related".

- **Related foster care**

According to the Children's Act 38 of 2005, Section 180 (3b) "related foster care involves placement of children in alternative care of the relatives or family members, who is/are neither a parent nor a guardian to the foster child'.

- **Cluster foster care**

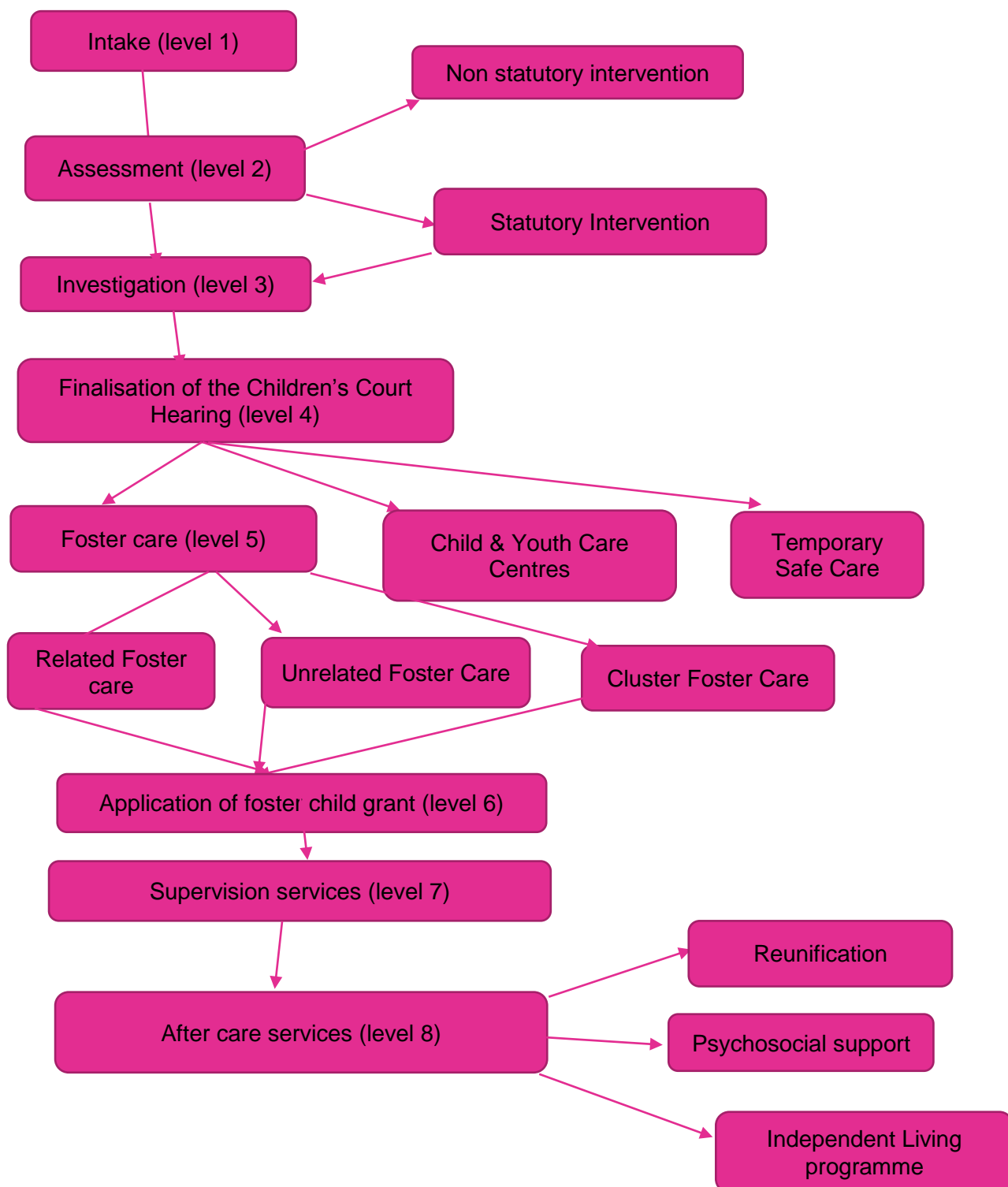
According to Martin (2010:50) Children's Act 38 of 2005, Section 180 (3c), indicates that "cluster foster care is a form of foster care at which a group of children in foster care are cared for within a Non-Profit Organisation that is registered as such in terms of the Non-Profit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 and monitored by the Provincial Head of Social Development"

Consequently, children may be placed in terms of one of the types referred to above. After foster care placement, statutory social workers are expected to compile different reports, supervise and manage placement. For the statutory social worker to effectively manage foster care placements, one needs to follow the foster care business process which is illustrated as follows in the figure below:

The figure below illustrates essential steps that serve as a procedure for managing foster care system. It demonstrates that foster care service delivery starts with the **intake (level 1)** where a prospective foster parent is recruited, screened and trained on foster care. The next level is **Assessment (level 2)** which is for assessing the need for statutory or non-statutory intervention. If statutory intervention is required, the concerned child will be placed in temporary safe care, whereby the temporary safe care parent will be required to apply for the temporary safe care fee. The next stage is **investigation (level 3)** which guides the finalisation of the statutory process at the **Children's Court (level 4)** where children have an option of being placed in foster care or in temporary safe care or residential care facility. In **foster care (level 5)** the children are placed in the care of their relative, non-relative or cluster foster care. Then the foster parent qualifies to apply for a **foster care grant (level 6)** at SASSA with the court order obtained and **supervision (level 7)** of the foster care placement and **aftercare (level 8)** may be rendered. The reunification services is the next possible service rendered by the social worker or the child to continue in foster care until 18 years or live independently after reaching the age of 21 years.

2.1. Foster Care Business Process

Figure 2.1: Foster care business process

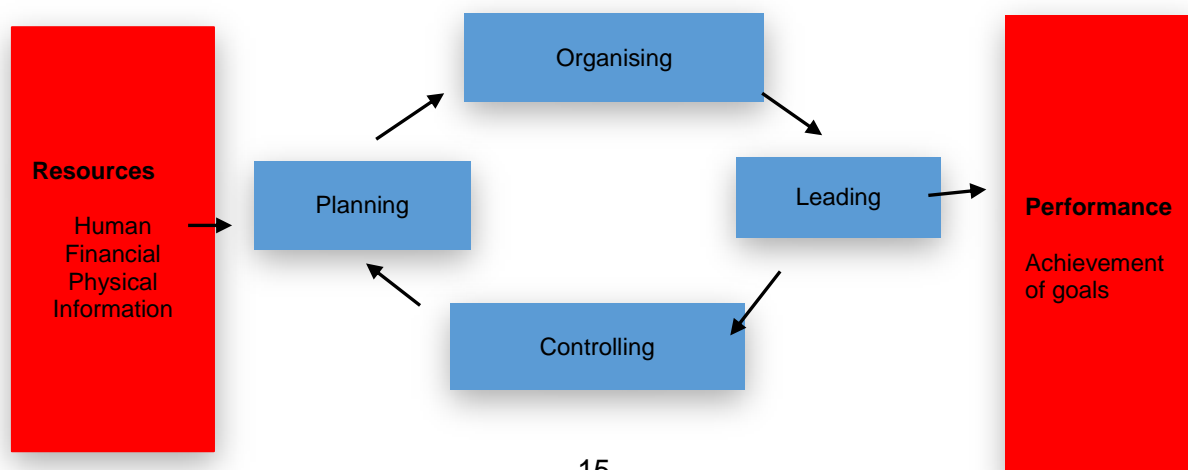


2.4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: FACTORS DETERMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN DELIVERING FOSTER CARE SERVICES.

On the basis of the literature reviewed by the researcher, Whitelaw, Downs, Moore, McFadden, Michaud & Costin (2007) mentioned that social workers have control of the welfare organisations and the influence acquired from knowledge together with the competence of being social workers. The literature has proved that for social workers to exercise their knowledge and competency in delivering effective foster care services, management and social work administration is very important.

Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba (2014:9) describes “management as the planning, organising, leading, and controlling of resources to effectively and efficiently attain the organisational goals”. “Social Work Management is as the social work function that includes the generic functions of planning, directing, organising, monitoring and controlling service programmes implemented by social workers” (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015:257). According to social work dictionary as stated by Barker (2003) social work administration is a ‘method utilised by those that are administratively responsible in influencing goals of the organization in an agency; or those that are responsible to gather resources and distribute them for the purpose of carrying out a program. For the purpose of this study, management will be explained in accordance with the administration of social work.

Figure 2.2: The process of Management



2.4.1. Planning

Planning is explained as the process defining the objectives or goals of the organization, developing a plan of action for reaching those goals, and to further developing an extensive chain of plans to integrate and organise activities (Robbins, DeCenzo and Coulter ;2013:110). Brevis and Vrba (2013:58) further explain planning as the entry point in the management process which requires a systematic and intelligent description of the direction that an organisation must follow to meet its determined objectives.

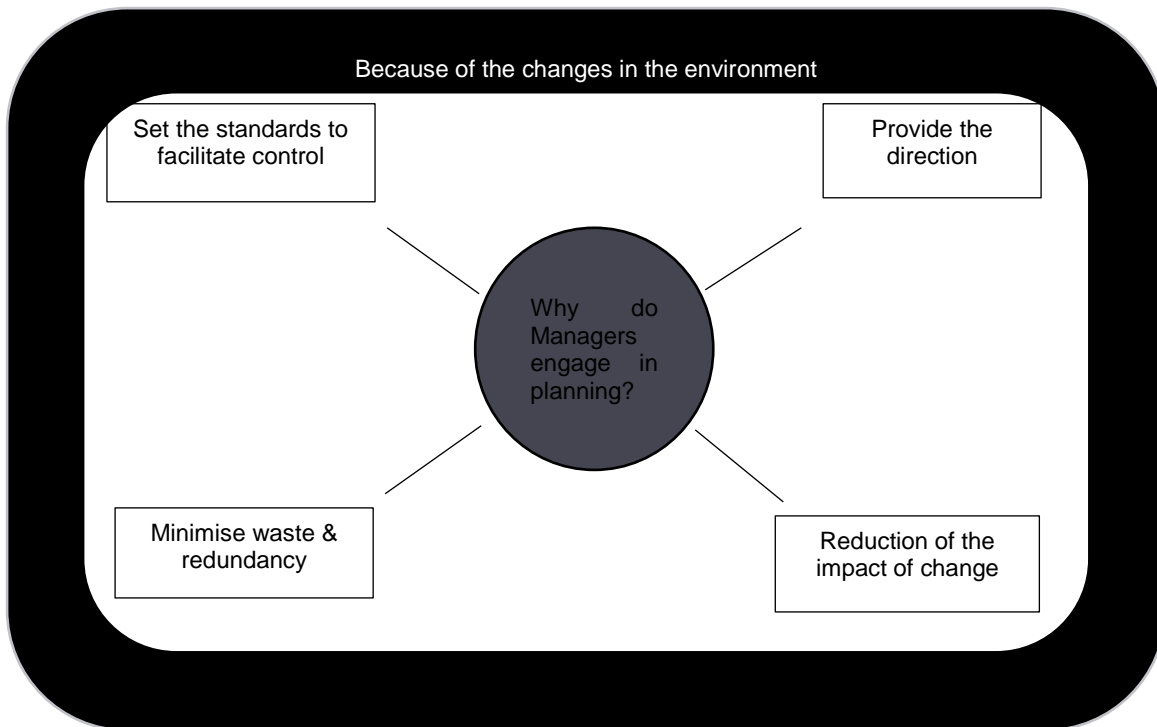
Therefore, planning may be regarded as the primary management function for managing the foster care backlog as it indicates the basis for all the other processes social workers needs to do as they organise, lead and control.

Robbins et al. (2013:110) further outlined the importance of planning as follows:

- **Planning establishes coordinated effort:** Planning gives guidance to managers meaning that it provides the roadmap telling managers where to go and how to get there. When the social workers understands the organisational vision and what contribution is required in order to reach the goals, they will begin to arrange their activities in such a way that they allow teamwork and this will lead to proper management of caseloads.
- **Planning forces managers to look ahead, be in a position to anticipate change, review the impact and develop appropriate feedback needed:** Planning influences the managers to be proactive and not reactive. Many social workers are involved in the daily activities of other cases and forget about the increasing demand for foster care administration. One of the most dramatic changes that we see every day is the rise of technology and the organisation must look into the technological changes and reflect on how it will assist in reducing the foster care backlog.

- **Planning reduces overlapping and wasteful activities:** By Coordinating activities based on the plans established, eliminates wasting time and resources unnecessarily. Furthermore, when procedures and processes are made clear through planning, inefficiencies are easily spotted and can be corrected.
- **Planning assists in setting up the goals that facilitates the process of control:** In case foster care social workers are not sure of the specific goals needed to be accomplished, then planning will assist the organisation to determine what they have achieve. Through controlling, the organisation will also be in a position to measure the actual performance against the goals set, identify the discrepancies and take necessary corrective measures.

Figure 2.3. : Illustration of the reasons for planning



Source: Adapted from Robbins et al. (2013:111)

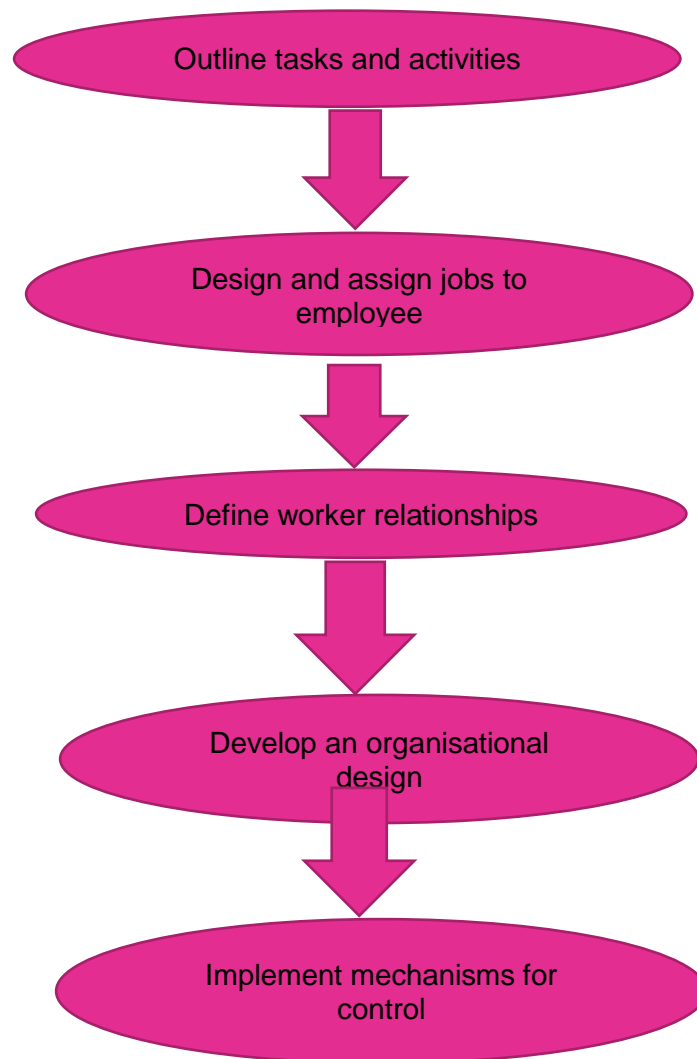
In summary, planning enables foster care social workers to grow and plan course of action needed to accomplish organisational objectives. Objectives must clearly spell out what needs to be achieved when, why and by whom. Planning, which occurs daily, should be realistic, anticipatory and based on a consideration of alternatives.

2.4.2. Organising

According to Robbins et al (2013:154) organising is a process which assist with the delegation and coordination of tasks and resources in order to achieve specific objectives .Brevis and Vrba (2013:102) support the above definition by defining “organising as the process of creating an organizational structure that enables its employees to effectively work towards achieving the vision, mission and objectives”. Brevis and Vrba (2013:102) continue to indicate that “the starting point in the organising process is the vision, mission and objectives of the organisation which were developed at the planning phase”.

The figure 2.4. below illustrates that the initial stage in the organising process entails **outlining the tasks and activities** needed for the goals and objective of the organisation to be achieved. The Department of Social Development should outline the task activities that need to be performed within the service points in order to manage foster care properly. After the tasks and activities being outlined, **jobs must be designed and allocated to employees** within the organisation. This refers to the Department of Social Development designing posts for foster care coordinators and foster care social workers and assigning them to relevant qualifying candidates. **Relationships** between workers and groups needs to be clearly defined. The second step in the organising process is the **development of organisational design** that will give support to the strategic and operational plans of the organisation. This step requires social workers to be grouped into working teams; for instance, the department needs to set up a functional canalisation unit, foster care coordinators forum and supervisors and also come up with mechanisms that will assist these groups to effectively work together. The last step in the organising process serves as **mechanism for control** that are put in place to ascertain that the selected organisational structure does indeed attain the mission and goals of the organisation. This refers to systems that are in place to manage foster care cases like developing an electronic reminder system as a time tracking tool in order to manage the expiry dates and reports that needs reviewing instead of relying on memory. It may be a manual or computerised system, and it must be investigated whether these systems are effective or not in reducing the crisis of the foster care backlog.

Figure 2.4: The Organising process



Source: Figure adapted from Brevis & Vrba (2013:103)

There are certain organising principles that guides the organising process in order to ensure that structure is sound. According to Smit et al. (2007:219), managers of an organisation must organise physical, financial, human and information resources so as to attain the organisational goals. In organising the abovementioned resources,

Smit et al. (2007:220) outlined that the managers need to be guided by the principles of organisation which are as follows:

Unity of command and direction: Refers to foster care social workers reporting to one supervisor as reporting to more than one supervisor (supervisor and foster care coordinators) may be very confusing to social workers due to the fact that each supervisor will give attention to different aspects of their work. Direction means for the foster care backlog to be reduced all activities and tasks should be directed to it.

Span of control: This term refers to the number of staff members reporting to the manager. In the Department of Social Development this refers to the number of social workers reporting to one foster care coordinator/Supervisor. If many social workers report to one coordinator/Supervisor at the service point, coordinators' tasks will become impossible to perform.

Division of work: This refers to related work being grouped together under one supervisor for example in the Department, foster care social workers together with canalisation officers may be grouped together under the supervision of Foster Care Coordinator and generic social workers and intake officers may also be grouped together under supervision of one person.

Standardisation: Refers to a process whereby social workers follow a uniform practice in dealing with the foster care backlog; for instance if legislation requires that there should be foster care coordinators and canalisation officers within a service point, this should not be optional but implemented in all the service points.

Responsibility, authority and accountability: Smit et al. (2007: 223) explained that the three terms are related and can be utilised interchangeably. They also emphasised the importance of understanding the difference. When clear goals are set, the responsible social workers for achieving those goals should be clearly identified; after identifying this social workers they are supposed to know who has the authority to make decisions, issue orders and make resources available for them to manage foster care effectively. Accountability includes monitoring performance, achievement of objective, quality of services and implementing corrective measures, together with assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented programmes and the performance of workers in delivering the service.

Chain of command: According to Robbins et al. (2013:345), chain of command is the hierarchical chain that extends from the highest organisational levels to the lowest organisational levels which will describe who reports to whom. Within the Department of Social Development, in respect to foster care, authority from upper level to lower level is vested in the Deputy Director at the District level, flows to the District Foster Care Coordinators, Social Work Municipal Manager, then to the Social Work Supervisor, Municipal Foster Care Coordinator and ultimately rests upon social workers.

2.4.3. Leading

Brevis and Vrba (2013:120) describe “leadership as the ability to influence people, it can either be, as individuals or in group setting in order to attain the goals of the organisation”. They further indicated that this definition consists of a lot of activities such as giving instructions, motivation to people, consultations, directing groups and rewarding people for outstanding performance. The above definitions, it is clearly indicates that leadership involves people, so it takes place amongst people, it requires influence and it is also utilised to attain a goal or goals.

This phase of the management process means that the social work managers must establish direction for foster care social workers and initiate daily work that is significant for the Department of Social Development to effectively accomplishing a zero backlog. This may only be done when considering certain factors like the level of authority a manager has, the number of social workers managing and other technical or hands-on responsibilities the social work manager may have to fulfil.

2.4.4. Controlling

The final phase of the management process is controlling. According to Robbins et al. (2013:370) control is described as an activity to establish and implement mechanisms that ensures the organisational objectives are achieved. Smit et al. (2007:229) support the above by defining motivation as the organisation’s primary goal-oriented function of management.

Robbins et al. (2013:370–373) identified the types of control as follows:

- **Feed forward control (preliminary control)** – This type of control assists in anticipating problems prior to occurrence. Therefore, preventative measures can be taken before such a circumstance arises. The weekly reports and presentations are designed to control the social workers’ work in order to prevent a backlog from occurring and also may assist in coming up with alternatives if a backlog may exist.
- **Concurrent control** – This takes place while a particular task is in motion. This is intended to ensure that employees’ work activities produce the desired results. This kind of control may be exercised when the Department of Social Development works hand in hand with SASSA in order to check if the orders are captured instead of just being issued and kept in the files.
- **Feedback control** – This process entails collecting information regarding a completed task, evaluating the collected data and improvising the same tasks for the future. This type of control is said to have two advantages, which are:
 - It gives managers significant data on the effectiveness of the planning efforts. If the response indicates minor differences between the targets set and the actual performance regarding the foster care backlog, then it is clear that planning was generally on par. But if most social workers have high numbers of foster care backlog cases, then the management should use that information when coming up with new plans.
 - Feedback control can improve employees’ motivation. This is of utmost importance because if targets are met and a particular social worker does not have a backlog they be compensated in a certain way as part of motivation in order to eliminate the high foster care backlog.

2.4.4.1. Organisational Control Process

Smit et al. (2007:229) outlined that the “control process involves data collection about a system, process, person or group of people in order for necessary decisions to take place about each”. The top management within the Department of Social Development need to set up control systems so as to check if social workers are in a position to manage their caseload and take corrective action so that a foster care backlog may be avoided or minimized.

Smit et al. (2007: 231 – 233) identified four key control system steps, namely to “establish standards to measure performance, measure the actual performance,

compare performance with the set standards, and to take necessary corrective actions”.

(a) Establishing Standards to measure performance

Standards to measure performance are the chosen points in the entire planning process whereby performance is measured for managers to receive indications about how work is being done and thus do not have to follow every step in the implementation of plans (Smit et al., 2014: 231).

Foster care social workers should always have an updated electronic database of all their cases in order to track their expiry dates. Targets for individual social workers should also be derived from those cases and they must also have work attendance goals whereby they will outline how they are going to achieve those goals and proper record of all work done must be kept.

(b) Measure actual performance

According to Smit et al. (2007:231), measurement of performance against standards should be consistent, regularly facilitated in order to acquire the required data that will inform decisions on performance. When performance is regularly measured this assists the management to acquire substantial information required for necessary adjustments.

For Social Work Managers to track progress on foster-care cases, weekly reports must be submitted and presented by foster care social workers so that possibilities of backlog may be detected in advance and be avoided.

(c) Compare performance with the standards

According to Robbins et al. (2013:359) comparing performance with standards determines the difference between actual performance and the set standards. Robbins et al. (2013:359) further explain that if the first two steps have been done well, the third step of controlling the process should be straight forward. Sometimes it is not easy to make comparisons because some of the deviations from the set out standards may be due to environmental conditions or other reasons and as a result performance may be viewed as higher, lower or even identical to the standards.

If the performance is less than expected, the social work managers must find out why the foster care backlog exists in a particular service point. When doing this, the focus should entirely be on the cause rather than on a particular social worker. If performance matches the standard set out, then social work managers may assume that everything is under control and they need not have to intervene.

(d) Take corrective actions

Smit et al. (2007:233) indicated that corrective action is a process whereby managers communicate with the affected employee to improve attendance, unwelcomed behaviour or performance. After the cause or causes of deviation are determined, then the fourth step, which is corrective action, follows. Smit et al. (2007:233) further explains that the organisation may have a set of prescribed policies as an effective measure for corrective action or it may be left up to the employer's judgement and initiative.

This clearly shows that corrective action may involve a change in some of the activities in the organisation's operation. For example, social work managers might find out that there is a need for social workers to be employed so that the standard of reviewing cases three months before the cases lapse can be met and also to reduce workload of social workers.

Setting performance levels is the yardstick towards which efforts of the whole department are directed. All the steps are very important to have effective and efficient foster care social workers. However, for social workers to continue achieving the organisational goals, even when they are faced with everyday obstacles, motivation is very important.

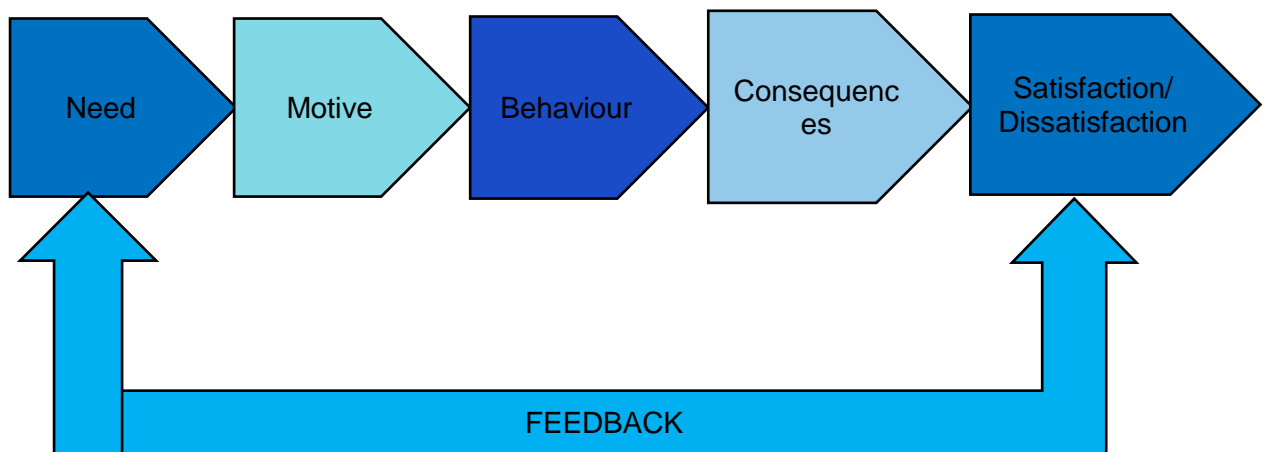
2.5. Motivation as a factor determining the effectiveness of social workers in providing foster-care services within the department of social development.

Motivation is an essential part of social work profession, as the supervisors and coordinators have to motivate social workers to give exceptional service to individual members, families, groups and the community at large. Brevis and Vrba (2013:140) describe "motivation as the eagerness of the employee to act or perform in a specific, goal-directed way in order to attain the organisational goals". Smit et al. (2007:384) defines motivation as the internal drive leading individuals to act in a certain way. Broadwell (2010:100) further indicates that social workers want a

chance to succeed, they want recognition, they want to feel that they have an opportunity to grow and they want to believe that they are making a contribution to the achievement of the organisation's goals. In terms of the abovementioned definitions, one may conclude that the concept of motivation has three elements or aspects which are encouraged by the needs of individuals, their behaviour and goal achievement. Therefore, the motivation process is made up of an individual's emotional state that moves their behaviour and energy towards the achievement of the goal of the organisation.

2.5.1. The Motivation Process

Figure 2.5. Motivation Process



Source: Figure adapted from Smit et al. (2007:385)

The figure 2.7 above represents the process of motivation. According to Smit et al. (2007:385) the figure illustrates that the first process of motivation begins when an individual experiences a need, for instance a social worker might have a need for promotion. The employees' behaviour will be directed towards a particular goal in order to satisfy a need; for instance, they may work harder in reducing the foster care backlog for them to be promoted. The next step is for the person to implement their plan of action and then evaluate the consequence of their behaviour; this may either be positive or negative. If the social worker succeeds in getting the promotion,

then he/she will be satisfied and keep on working hard in reducing the foster care backlog, but if the outcome is negative, then the process starts all over again. From the above information, it becomes clear that a social worker must have high level of motivation and the relevant training, skills and knowledge necessary to effectively reduce the foster care backlog.

The Supervisors and Foster Care Coordinators' responsibility is to listen, evaluate, encourage, defend, criticise, coach and advise social worker so that they eventually respond to the needs or change their behaviour.

It is important that the Social Work Supervisors or the Foster Care Coordinators to have knowledge of different theories of motivation known in the literature. Smit et al. (2007:387) classifies the theories of motivation in accordance with the three theories which are as follows: physiological theories, cognitive theories and social/behaviourist theories. Only the physiological theories will be emphasised as a motivation theory that social workers need in order to manage the foster care backlog for this particular study.

2.5.1.1. Physiological theories

The physiological theories are linked with the well-known researchers such as Herzberg and Maslow. These physiological theories' main strengths are to identify the motivational influence on people, as they concentrate on the natural or most basic needs. According to Smit et al. (2007:386), "these theories attempt to give a response to this questions: What needs do individuals want to satisfy, and what are the factors that determines the individual's behaviour?" From the above perspective, one may conclude by saying the behaviour of individuals is guided by the presence of the basic needs.

The main critique against these theories is the fact that they rely completely on submissive response to natural needs and do not allow the influence of logical, conscious thoughts or the effect of the societal and environmental components.

For the supervisors or Foster Care Coordinators to be in a position to give motivation to social workers using the background of these theories it may be a difficult task to

achieve, since their behaviour may be influenced by many other factors. However, if policies may also be developed in such a way that they help in satisfying the natural needs of the social workers. This challenges the Supervisors and Foster Care Coordinators to always be informed of the needs of social workers and to potentially satisfy those particular needs so that social workers can experience job satisfaction and effectively reduce the foster care backlog.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs together with Herzberg's two-factor theories are some of the early theories of motivation. Although explanations on motivations have evolved, supervisors need to learn these theories because (1) they are the foundation from which modern theories were developed and (2) managers in different organisations still continue to use these theories to explain employee motivation (Smit et al., 2007:388)

- **Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory**

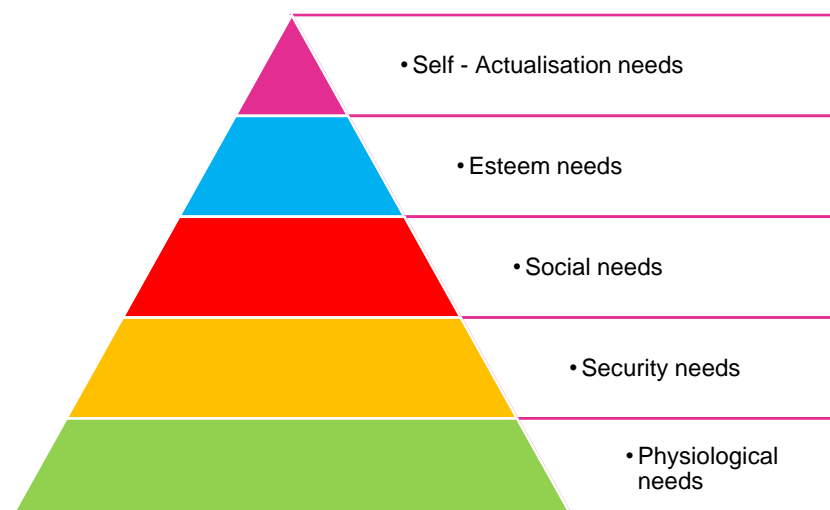
Maslow (in Smit et al., 2007:388) identified a five-step hierarchy of needs theory as follows:

- **Physiological needs** – These needs are the most basic in the hierarchy and consists of needs such as salaries or wage and better working conditions of employment. The trade unions that most employees affiliated with are the ones negotiating for higher salaries and better working conditions in order to satisfy the basic needs of their affiliated members. However, the trade unions are not based at the Service Points so it remains the manager's responsibility to ensure that social workers have their lunch breaks, and there are toilets and decent offices. By ensuring this, then social workers will be in a position to produce excellent results and not be preoccupied by their daily needs.
- **Security needs** – When the basic physiological needs have been met, then the security need comes to play. This need includes the following aspect of the employees' life security in the workplace, pension funds, job security, insurance and medical aid schemes. Managers or the department should ensure that there are security guards at the entrance as social workers deal with sensitive cases which may put their lives in danger, and that social workers' salaries and incentives be paid to assist employees to meet other essential needs like buying houses and cars. This will encourage social workers to pay attention to the achievements of the department's goals which

might be to drastically reduce the foster care backlog than to concentrate on this particular need.

- **Social needs** – Social needs comprises of the needs for love, the need to have friends, the need to be accepted and understood by everyone. In organisations, employees align themselves with different groups in order to satisfy their social needs. The managers' role is to encourage sense of social belonging within the service points by ensuring that employees supports each other during bereavements and when they celebrate different achievements in their lives. This will motivate employees to work as a unit and it will also encourage them to reach zero backlog as a team.
- **Esteem needs** – The second highest in the hierarchy is the need for self-respect and recognition by others. Some of the examples of this need are the need to be successful, to be recognised and being appreciated for your achievement. Acknowledging high achievement and encouraging such with awards such as a certificate for best social worker of the year or even just recognising and appreciating a social worker with a zero backlog, be it with incentives or a certificate will encourage high esteem need.
- **Self-actualisation needs** – Self Actualisation need is the highest level in the hierarchy of needs. Self-actualisation may be regarded as the full development of an individual's potential. Those in top management can assist by enabling an environment that makes self-actualisation possible, for instance, by equipping social workers with knowledge and skills that are relevant in tackling their high caseload and they should also be afforded the chance to be creative and fulfil their unique potential like participating in soccer, athletics, and netball teams.

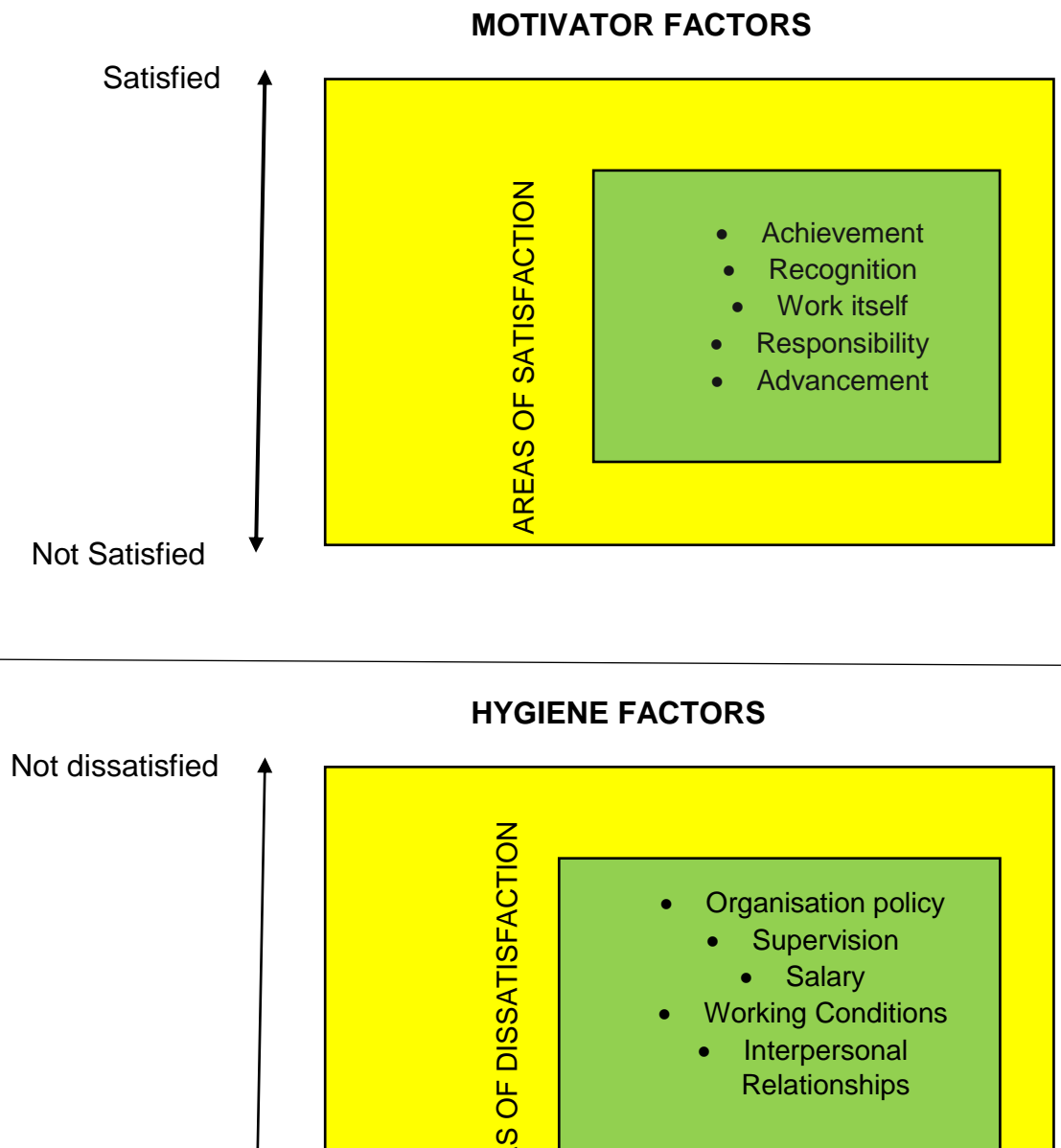
The figure 2.6 below illustrates Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory



- **Herzberg's two-factor theory**

Herzberg (in Robbins et al., 2013:295) states that job satisfaction in the workplace is influenced by certain factors, while dissatisfaction may also be caused by a separate set of factors altogether. Herzberg categorised these job factors into two, which are hygiene and motivational factors.

Figure 2.7. HERZBERG'S TWO-FACTOR THEORY



Dissatisfied

Source: adapted from Smit et al. (2007:390)

He further named the sources of work satisfaction as “Motivator factors” and named sources of work dissatisfaction as “Hygiene factors”.

According to Brevis and Vrba (2013:146), in the Two-factor Theory there are four possible combinations which are as follows

- High Hygiene + High Motivation: Here employees are regarded as highly motivated.
- High Hygiene + Low Motivation: It a situation where employees may have new complaints but at the same time they are highly motivated.
- Low Hygiene + High Motivation: This is a situation whereby employees seem to be motivated but their complaints are higher. Here the work might be exciting and challenging but the standard of work conditions and salaries are not satisfactory.
- Low Hygiene + Low Motivation: Here the situation is at its worst as employees are demotivated and have a lot of complaints.

This theory indicates that to improve job attitudes and productivity, the managers in the department of social development would have to recognise and take into consideration both factors and not take it for granted that an increase in satisfaction automatically cause a decrease in dissatisfaction.

2.6. FOSTER CARE SERVICES FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The review on global practice is intended to provide cross-border and expanded insights on introduction of foster care programmes in other countries. The three countries (Sweden, Brazil and Botswana) were selected because, like South Africa, they fall within middle-income countries with vast numbers of children who needs

care and protection, enough documentation was publicly available to allow for a comparison and in a country like Sweden they also have the best child protection practices which one can use to assess foster care system in other countries.

The purpose of reviewing global experiences on how social workers manage foster care services is also to learn how other countries could be supporting social workers in effectively managing foster care services and to find out the best practices regarding foster care.

2.6.1. Child Welfare in Sweden

Two hundred and ninety municipalities in Sweden have social service organisations that are under the management of politically appointed laypersons within the local Social Welfare Board. Their mandate is to ensure that children that needs help or those that are exposed to any harm are receiving the support and protection needed (Liljegren, Hojer & Forkby; 2014: 165). Andersson (2011) indicated that since 1980 Sweden does not have any particular Children's Act. The Children are incorporated in the existing Social Service Act. This Act is regarded as action-oriented, based upon individual who volunteer their services and it clearly specifies the overall principles for municipalities regarding their social service obligations. He further indicated that the Care of Young Persons Act is used to supplement the Social Service Act, whereby its mandate is to regulate the conditions that will require the authorities to take children into compulsory care.

Rasmusson, Hyvonen, Nygren and Khoo (2010:458) further indicate that the Swedish system is generally viewed as being a child welfare system rather than being a child protection type of a system, because their services are child-centred with aspects of family service. "A family centred intervention regard the child's problems as systemic and the intervention therefore will be centred around strengthening the family's capacities and the family relations through parental support" (Gilbert, Parton & Skivene; 2011)

Sweden's Social Welfare services for the support of the vulnerable:

- **Contact person/family service**

The service is mostly used as the statutory support for children and families. This service is flexible for children and young people up to the age of 18 or 20 in some cases. According to Wijkstrom (2011: 170), "Sweden's child welfare is predominantly owned by the public sector and does not allow non-governmental or voluntary organisations as alternatives". The contact person/family service is voluntary and must be approved, funded and supervised by the public social service. The volunteers offering this service are just ordinary people and did not receive any special training. The following are the requirements for a volunteer to become a contact person/family:

- They must have necessary spare time.
- They must have empathy for people with social problems
- They must also be in a position to give support to the parents and children concerned.

In Sweden, this service is reviewed every after six months but it can go on for a year (Wijkstrom; 2011: 171).

- **Out of home care**

The out of home care requires parental consent. There are two ways for children to be placed in this type of care which is children placed with the consent of parents as per the Social Service Act, and children placed without parental consent in terms of the Care of Young Person's Act (Rasmusson et al., 2010:460)

Rasmusson further indicated that the Social Welfare Board in the Municipalities reviews the service every six months. The Act does not give a time limit in care for children below the age of 12 or 13 years. The placement in the out of home care is mostly influenced by the shortcoming of the parents. It might be abuse or neglect but, for teenagers, placement is often motivated by their own behaviour.

Out of home care is classified into two, that is, Foster Care and Residential Care

- (a) Foster care**

The Sweden's foster care aim is family reunification and the time is not stipulated for the rehabilitation of the parents who are in the system. The law is silent on what to

do if reunification is not possible. Even though Sweden does not encourage children to stay for a long time in foster care, but there are children who still cannot be reunited with their families and end up staying in long term foster care (Brannstrom, Vinnerljung & Hjern; 2015: 47). After the amendment of the Care of Young Persons Act, there was an inclusion that if a child stays for three years in foster care then there should be a provision for special assessment by the Social Welfare Committee to transfer custody of the concerned child to the foster parents. Brannstrom, Vinnerljung and Hjern (2015) point out that the legislation governing foster care in Sweden is very strict comparing to other countries.

(b) Residential Care

According to the Social Service Act of 1980, foster care and residential care in Sweden are not absolutely separated units. The Act states “that if a foster home accommodates four or more children, and their main income comes from foster care, then the home will change to be a residential unit”. The reason for this amendment was for the care of children to have strict control. On the other hand, the Act also allowed private residential care to exist (Brannstrom, Vinnerljung & Hjern; 2015: 48). The private residential care institutions are also called “specialist foster care” and in most cases they admit teenagers. The public institutions in Sweden are called homes for care and accommodation (HVB). These kinds of homes accommodate children from the ages of 0 to 12 years. According to Sallnäs (2009: 39), the children are admitted for a shorter period and, in most cases, they are admitted together with their parents. Sallnäs (2009: 43) further indicated that these public institutions are very small and they accommodate nine children or less.

2.6.2. Foster care in Brazil

The Convention of the rights of children (1989) has set out the foundation for international child protection law. In terms of the convention all the signatory states have a responsibility to ensure that the implementation of the national laws considers the best interest of children as paramount always. “Brazil, like South Africa, is one of the signatory to the key international and regional frameworks that are meant to protect the rights of children” (Sobantu & Warria, 2013). The researcher saw a need

to select Brazil as it is also a middle-income country with many challenges similar to South Africa but they are in a position to manage their foster care services well.

Brazil experienced major adjustments in the alternative care system over the past 30 years. According to de Assis, Pinto and Avanci (2014), previously, the alternative care programmes in Brazil exclusively focused on institutional care, whereby a group of children were placed in the custody of caregivers at numerous institutions around Brazil. Nonetheless, recently Brazil has actively accepted the international movement with regards to children's right to family (Sanfilippo, Martorano & de Neubourg, 2012).

Delap and Fulford (2011) indicated that Brazil legally included foster care as an alternative care only at the beginning of 2009. Brazilian law recognises foster care and institutional care as the two core key types of alternative care. In 2010 it was reported that there are more than 2 500 institutional care units registered around Brazil that assisted more than 36 500 Brazilian children. De Assis et al. (2014) stated that the key cause for these children requiring care is due to the neglect by their families, abandonment by the biological parents or guardians and substance abuse. De Assis et al. (2014) further explain that the children in the care of their families were to some extent less than 1000 in 2010 and they are commonly found in smaller municipalities where poverty is rife. This number of children increased to more than 1019 children within a formal family setting in 2013.

In Brazil, the children residing with relatives or extended family members are not regarded as children that needs care and protection. The Brazilian law (Statute of the Child and Adolescent, amended by-law 12.010/09) indicates that "a child within the extended family care is considered as having maintained family ties and therefore as being in the care of family". Brazil regards care by family members as the main preference for children who do not have biological parents and it is not referred to as alternative care. De Assis et al. (2014) further explain that this practice is common and also culturally motivated as the children can visit the extended family members during holidays and can even live with relatives while their parents are still alive and are able to provide. For these reasons, only children who are under the custody of a non-relative are regarded to need care and protection.

De Assis et al. (2014) indicated that the Brazilian government introduced the National Operating Guidelines in an attempt to standardise and regulate foster care. He further explained that Brazil is in an evolutionary era, with some improvement as well as gaps and weaknesses.

Keshavarzian (2012) indicated that the Brazilians are encouraged to care for the foster children for a period of two years as the concerned children will qualify for a foster child state grant and other services during that two-year period.

Brazil also introduced the National Plan on Family and Community-based Care which emphasizes the deinstitutionalisation with an obligation to increase prevention and alternative care options (Delap and Fulford, 2011). The plan reflects the Brazilian government's distinctive focus on family reunification. According to De Assis et al. (2014) it is outlined that by law children are only allowed to be institutionalised or placed in foster care for the duration of two years. Throughout that two years, the professions are required to work with the family on a "follow-up plan" with the aim to assist families to overcome the conditions that necessitated the removal of the concerned children.

2.6.3. Alternative care in Botswana

Like South Africa, Botswana is also experiencing rapid changes socially, economically and culturally (Maundeni, 2009). One of the attributes coming with this transformation is the collapse of families which makes it difficult for the extended families to look after the orphaned and vulnerable children. Botswana is selected as one of the comparator countries because their context is closer to that of South Africa and the researcher was keen to study how Botswana is handling their child protection service, particularly the foster care services.

According to the Government of Botswana (2005), "alternative care is the legal temporary transfer of a person under the age of 18 years, who is regarded to be in need of care, a place of safety, be it an individual, family or residential facility, where there is a provision for social, spiritual, psychological, economic and mental wellbeing in the best interest of the concerned child".

Initially, Botswana had three types of alternative care which are kinship care, adoption (permanent alternative care) and residential care, but recently they have introduced the fourth one which is statutory foster care.

- **Kinship care in Botswana**

According to Testa and Rolock (1999:557), as cited by Malinga and Ntshwarang (2011), kinship care is “the full time nurturing and protection of children who must be separated from their parents by relatives, members of their tribe, clans, godfathers, stepparents or other adults who have a kinship bond with a child.”

Malinga and Ntshwarang (2011) indicated that despite the difficulties experienced by extended families, they are still the most effective and easily accessible form of safety net for responding to the existing economic and social crisis. He further emphasised that kinship care in Botswana was and is still meant to cater for the care and protection of children whose biological parents are not in a position to do so. However, the societal and environmental pressures other than HIV and AIDS, make it difficult for extended families to care for the orphaned and vulnerable children. According to Foster (2004), as cited by Malinga and Ntshwarang (2011), “due to the increased number of orphans and a reduction in age of maturity for caregivers, extended families end up being overextended”. The Botswana government therefore realised that there is a serious need to secure viable processes for the upbringing and welfare of their children (Tshitswana, 2003), hence they developed some guidelines regulating the alternative care of children who are in need of care.

- **Residential care**

Residential care is a fairly new alternative care system in Botswana. According to Maundeni (2009), the current economic and socio-cultural circumstances in Botswana have forced the acceptance of residential care. He further indicated that Botswana has child welfare institutions which are approved by the government. These institutions cater for the abused, neglected, abandoned vulnerable children and provide facilities for children living with disabilities.

The approved residential care sites in Botswana are the 3 SOS Children’s Villages, namely: Mpule Kwelagobe Children’s Home, Childline Botswana and Paolo Zanichille. The abovementioned facilities cater for the entire residents of Botswana (Maundeni, 2009).

Malinga and Ntshwarang (2011) indicated that the residential care facilities face challenges of retaining the caregivers and this impacts negatively on the finances of the facilities as they'll always have to train new caregivers. He further outlined the other challenge as finances, as most residential care facilities are run by Non-governmental Organisations and they mostly depend on donors for operations. However, the government of Botswana does assist in addressing the child welfare challenges by issuing some grants (Maundeni, 2009) but still the assistance is not sufficient in addressing all the organisations' needs.

According to the Childline Draft Annual Report (2018), Childline is struggling to fulfil its mandate and requests grants from the government. Foster (2004) as cited by Malinga and Ntshwarang (2011) mentioned financial costs experienced by residential care facilities and he argued that the maintenance is more expensive than when children are placed in the care of families.

➤ **FOSTER CARE IN BOTSWANA**

The types of alternative care mentioned above indicates that Botswana has a high rate of children that are in need of care and that alternative care needs to be prioritised in order to provide for the needs of children since the extended families are not in a position to handle the high demand of children that requires their care and protection.

Children in Need of Care regulations (2005) defines foster care as “the placement of a child in the custody of a person who is not his/her parent and who is willing to undertake the care and maintenance of the child until the child reaches the age of fifteen, is adopted or returned to his/her natural parents or is placed at an approved Child Welfare Institution”.

Jacques (2009) indicated that the key objective of the foster care policy in Botswana is to design statutory placement in such a way that children be placed in a home environment with individuals or families unrelated instead of their own related family members.

The guidelines for the statutory foster care in Botswana were approved by the Department of Social Services under the Local Government Ministry. Maundeni

(2009) further indicated that the first foster care programme in Botswana was piloted in 2007 by Childline Botswana in collaboration with the Department of Social Services. When piloting this programme, the role of both the organisations was training the trainer in which the local social workers were prepared for placement of children in foster care following the court processes.

Even after the policy has been piloted, the adoption and implementation has been delayed in which Jacques (2009) argues that it's due to cultural beliefs and practices.

- **Foster care process in Botswana**

According to Malinga and Ntshwarang (2011), statutory foster care is an extensive and complicated process. The following is the foster care process followed in Botswana in declaring a child that needs care and protection:

- ✓ Recruiting foster parents
- ✓ Foster parents to be Screened
- ✓ Foster parents to be trained
- ✓ Placement to be monitored on an on – going basis
- ✓ Family of origin receiving reconstruction services
- ✓ Group formation to give support to foster children, foster parents and birth parents
- ✓ Allowing positive contact between children and relatives.

Furthermore, before a child may be regarded to need care and protection and be placed in foster care, The Social worker will have to follow the necessary court proceedings [Botswana Children's Act 2009; Section 6(i)].

2.7. Lesson learnt from the three chosen countries.

It appears that there are differences between South Africa and the three chosen countries which is Sweden, Brazil and Botswana with regard to foster care services. South Africa seems to have the highest number of children placed with their immediate families and relatives and a limited number when coming to the unrelated foster care. The study done in Kwazulu-Natal indicated that, foster care is mostly focused on financial aspect (George, Govender, Bachoo, Penning and Quinlan;

2013). The escalating foster care backlog in South Africa has a negative impact on quality of service whereby it creates stress and frustration among social workers and it interferes with the livelihood of the foster families who have insufficient finances to provide for the basic needs of the concerned children.

However, in the three chosen countries they have similar approaches to foster care services whereby in most cases the biological parents are still around and this makes placements to be for a shorter period so that the concerned parents may receive the necessary intervention. The focus of the three countries is more on caring for the children whilst their parents are equipped with the necessary skill to improve their lives so that their children may eventually be reunified with them.

2.7. CONCLUSION

Through the implementation of the Children's Act No 38 of 2005 in April 2010, foster care became popular in South Africa and consequently overcrowded the system. As outlined in this chapter, foster care service seems to be implemented differently internationally using different approaches. The foster care business process in South African acts as a guideline ensuring that foster care service is effectively and efficiently carried out. The chapter also outlines theories of motivation which suggest that by stimulating the behaviour, then employers will be satisfying the employees' needs. Based on these theories, the Department of Social Development would benefit from understanding what the social workers need so that their actions regarding the alarming foster care backlog can be understood and managed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter analysed and discussed the existing or available literature with regard to the management of the foster care backlog. Chapter 3's purpose is to outline and give a description of the research approaches, designs and the methodology which the researcher has employed in achieving the objectives of the study. This was accomplished by presenting the research design and methods adopted, area of study, population, describing the sampling methods, data collection, data analysis followed by the researcher. The last part will present the ethical considerations and limitations of the study. From the above statement, it is essential that the researcher indicates the reasons behind choosing the research design and methodology and to further justify the processes and procedures guiding the data collection and data analysis.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to De Vos et al. (2011:143) research design is defined "as a plan outlining how observations will be made and how the researcher will carry out the intended project". He further explains that the research design's emphasis is on the steps taken in order to achieve a planned project. To support this, Matthews and Ross

(2010: 117) describe “research design as the researcher’s ability to go back and answer their research questions and determine how they would like to collect and analyse the data collected in order to address their research questions”.

Babbie (2013:117) adds that a “research design encompasses the researcher’s decisions in determining what to be studied among which population, using which method of research, and for what purpose”. The above definitions indicate that through the research design one may decide and make their thoughts known regarding the type of study design they intend using, how to collect data from the participants, analysed and to communicate the findings of their research.

With this type of a study the researcher attempts to explore the challenges social workers face in managing foster care backlog and possibly suggest the strategies needed to address the backlog, hence the adoption of an explorative and descriptive research design.

De Vos (2011:109) indicated that “exploratory research is conducted as a way of getting new perspective about situations, phenomenon, community or individual”. According to Fouché (2002:109) the descriptive research focuses on the “how” and “why” part of the questions by representing the exact details of a situation. He further explains that the researcher needs to begin with a clearly defined subject matter when conducting a study in order to describe it correctly and realistically.

The researcher utilised qualitative research design, which is descriptive in nature. De Vos et al. (2011:64) indicated that qualitative research design is aimed at answering complicated questions about a specific subject, with the main objective of interpreting that particular phenomena from the respondents’ perspective. For the above to be achieved, qualitative research design was adopted so as to have a deeper understanding on how foster care is managed in the area of study and the kinds of challenges they face in the process.

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACHES

Research approach is defined as a “plan that is utilised in order to outline detailed steps of obtaining data and analysing the evidence or information as part of the

research study” (Babbie, 2013: 89). He further indicates that there are two broad approaches that may be used to collect data which are a quantitative research approach and a qualitative research approach. He also explained that both qualitative and quantitative research approaches may be used in combination and this is referred to as a mixed research approach. The three approaches are discussed below.

3.3.1. Quantitative Research Approach

Neuman (2006: 149) defines quantitative research approach is more concerned about issues of measurements because their deductive approach requires a comprehensive plan even before data may be collected or analysed. This type of research approach is mainly evaluated in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of statistical analysis.

3.3.2. Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative Research Approach refers to the “design where data is collected in the form of words and observations as opposed to numbers, and analysis is based on interpretation of data collected as opposed to statistical analysis” (Partington; 2003: 109). To support the above definition, Holliday (2002:4) further indicate that a “qualitative research approach evokes the need to find out as much as possible about the research subject, feelings of the respondents and information provided”.

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research approach has been used. The reason behind the selected approach is due to the chosen research problem and the type of questions needed to be answered, which in the case of the study, were to investigate and understand the challenges experienced by social workers towards the management of the foster care backlog. Therefore, taking into consideration this reason, a qualitative research approach is more suitable for the intended study.

Babbie and Mouton (2011:53) further outline the goal of qualitative research as “to develop an understanding of a social or human problem from multiple perspectives”. Taking the above view in to consideration, the researcher’s focus in this study is how the social workers rather than the researcher interpret their experiences with regard to the foster care backlog and eventually constructs their reality. Babbie and Mouton

(2011: 270) indicated that “the strength of qualitative research approach is based on its emphasis on words rather than numbers”. This is necessary when reflecting and interpreting the perceptions and also the significance of individual’s past life and their actual or real lives.

The table below assists in giving the distinction between qualitative and quantitative designs as follows:

Table 3.1: Illustration of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Testing of the hypothesis that the researcher starts with.	The researcher captures and discovers meaning data when they become involved.
Concepts are presented as distinct variables	Concepts are presented as themes, motifs, generalizations and taxonomies.
Measures are thoroughly planned before collecting data and they are standardized	Measures are created when necessary or needed and are often specific to an individual or researcher.
Data is presented in terms of numbers from precise measurements.	Data is presented as words and images from documents, observations and transcripts.
Theory is largely causal and is deductive.	Theory can be causal or non-causal and is often inductive.
Procedures are standardized and duplication is common	The research procedures are particular and duplication is very rare.
Analysis is done by using statistics, tables or charts and discussing how what they show relates to hypotheses.	Analysis is done in terms of themes or by generalizing evidence and organizing data to present a clear and dependable picture

Source: Adapted from Neuman (2006:157)

Besides the research approaches mentioned above, the following research paradigms also helped the researcher in collecting data for this study. The paradigms are discussed further in the next section below.

3.4. RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Doyle, Brady and Byrne (2009:176) urge researchers to locate their research in a selected paradigm. To support the above view, Bryman (2012:630) describes paradigm as “a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influences what should be studied, how research should be done and how results should be interpreted”. Morgan (2007:49) further describes a “paradigm as the set of beliefs and practices that guide a field and can also be used in summarising the beliefs of researchers”. Babbie and Mouton (2013:644) support the two definitions by explaining a paradigm as “model or framework for observation and understanding which shapes both what we see and how we understand it”.

In this section the researcher discusses three relevant research paradigms for the intended study. The following paradigms are identified and will be discussed below:

2. Phenomenology;
3. Positivism; and
4. Hermeneutics.

3.4.1. The Hermeneutics Research Paradigm

This kind of paradigm is when the researcher combines positivist and phenomenological research paradigm in a single research. A researcher may use research approaches that have characteristics of both a quantitative and qualitative research approach. Blaikie (2009:119) outlines that the hermeneutic research paradigm focuses its concepts in the everyday language of the people being investigated and not in the language of the discipline. This implies that rather than the researcher turning to academic and scientific literature to conceptualise certain phenomena, they should instead spend time within the people’s world to learn how they view or experience the phenomena under investigation. In doing this, the researcher might develop a new concept altogether or may adapt the existing definitions or meaning associated with the phenomena under investigation.

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout (2014: 232) further explain that the aim of this type of paradigm is generating concepts that fits the problem at hand and work on providing useful descriptions and understanding. He further indicates that, within

the hermeneutic research paradigm, concepts are developed by mediating between the particular language used by the participants or people under observation, and some version of the theoretical language of the subject of the research study. The information above confirms clearly that hermeneutics research paradigm is similar to interpreting a text.

Imenda and Muyangwa (2009) criticise the hermeneutics paradigm by indicating that it may be regarded as highly biased as it depends on the researcher's instinct and past events.

3.4.2. Positivist Research Paradigm

The positivist research paradigm is defined as the “approach of the Natural Sciences because the Positivists advocates the application of Natural Science methods when studying certain phenomena, including social phenomena” (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014: 24). Payne and Payne (2014:171) further explain positivism as one type of an approach that poses questions about the world, how people experience it, and how well are the ideas used to understand its actual nature.

Looking at the word “Positivism” or “Positivist” one will realise that it originates from “Positive”. This is due to the positive view of science by the early positivists. It is said that they believed that science has the potential to improve individuals and, in the process create a better world to live in.

The main aim of the Positivist Research Paradigm “is to discover the causal relationships in order to predict and control the natural and social worlds” (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 25). This implies that, if the researcher may be able to predict something, it will be easier to take action in improving the situation. According to Payne and Payne (2014:172), Positivists also believe that knowledge comes as a result of empirical observation only, meaning the positivist researchers obtain knowledge through observation and tests hypotheses against the real world whereby they must find evidence to either support or reject their hypotheses. Therefore, they mostly rely on experiments, utilising control groups and experimental groups to

establish the relationship. This type of research paradigm may also be referred to as qualitative since the main objective of positivist research is to discover the causal relationships and also to document the “facts” as quantities or numbers that can be administered by using statistical techniques.

3.4.3. Phenomenological Research Paradigm

The phenomenological research paradigm attempts to determine the appearance of a given phenomenon and how that particular phenomenon is interpreted to be. Different researchers argue that the aim of the phenomenological paradigm is to set up important qualities of a particular phenomenon, object or idea whereby, such a phenomenon, object or idea is construed to be known as such according to the researcher’s perception.

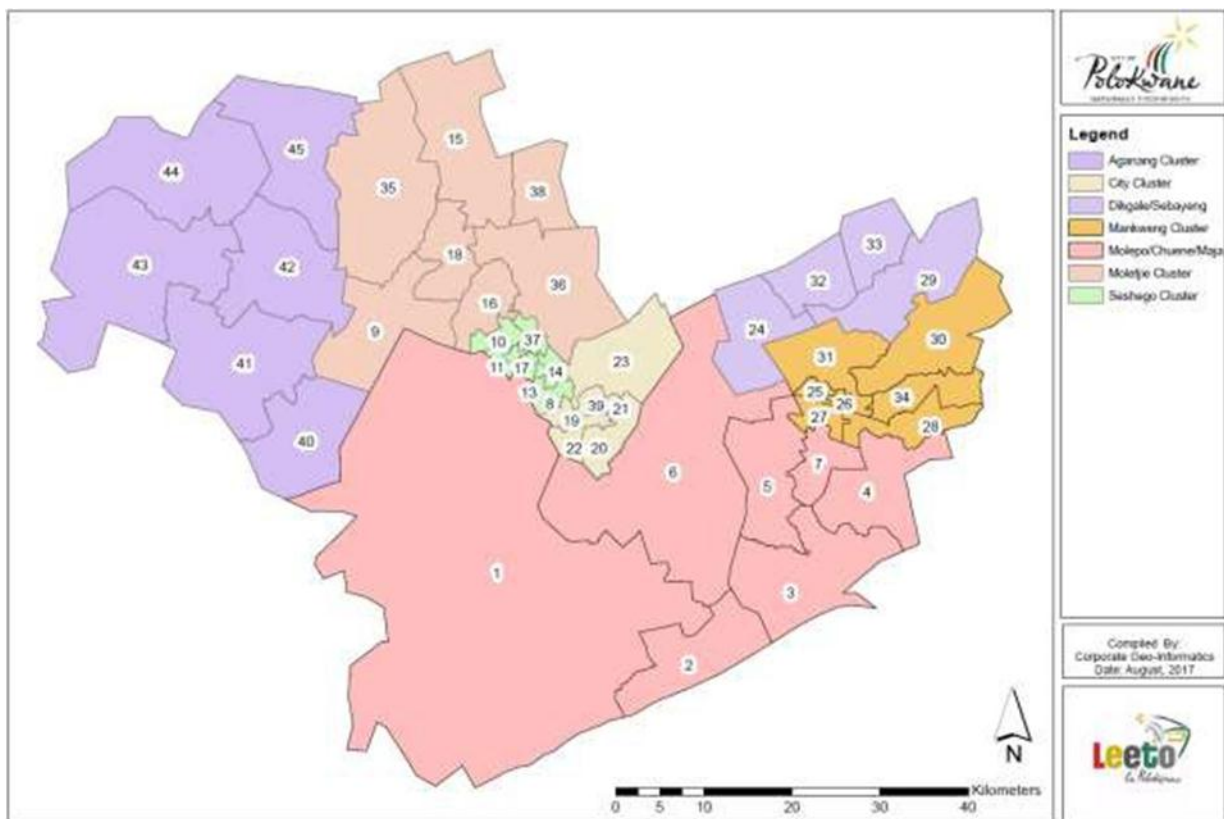
According to Locke, Silverman and Spirduso (2010:187) “phenomenology is defined as a perspective that underlines all qualitative research traditions especially when used in examining the meaning of something (an event, a role, a process, a status or a context) from a perspective of someone who actually experiences that phenomenon”. Fox, Bayat and Ferreira (2006:70) argue that, “the view of phenomenology is from what the researcher observed, which is not necessarily a reality, but an interpreted one”.

The qualitative research design conducted for this particular study is referred to as a phenomenological study. De Vos et al. (2011:165), states that “phenomenological study involves systematic data collection of meanings, themes and general descriptions of the experiences analysed within a specific context”. To obtain this, the researcher has interpreted information that was gathered through interviews. The collected and analysed qualitative data helped in extensively understanding the feelings of the participants. The phenomenological viewpoint helped the researcher in understanding and properly evaluating the significance of such events for people in a particular environment.

3.5. STUDY AREA

The researcher conducted the study at the Polokwane Municipality which is located at Capricorn District in the Limpopo Province. The Polokwane Municipality is regarded as the economic hub of Limpopo Province. The largest part of the community within the municipality stays in the rural tribal villages, followed by urban settlement and Polokwane as an urban area. The above municipality has an increasing number of orphaned and vulnerable children due to its large population.

Figure 3.1. Polokwane Local Municipality Map



Source: Polokwane Local Municipality IDP 2017/2018

3.6. POPULATION

According to Strydom (as quoted by De Vos et al., 2011:223), “a population is defined as an individual in the universe who possess specific features”. Population is referred to as being “an entire group that is of interest to the researcher” (Wilson & MacLean 2011: 681; Babbie & Mouton 2011:174). In this regard, the population of the study will be foster care social workers from the three service points (Aganang Cluster, Polokwane East and Polokwane West) from the Department of Social Development at the Polokwane Municipality.

The total population in the area of study is 83 foster care social workers from the Department of Social Development, Polokwane Municipality. Due to the large number of social workers within the Department, one will not be in a position to use all the employees therefore samples were drawn from foster care social workers.

3.7. SAMPLING METHOD AND SAMPLE SIZE

Neuman (2006:219) refers to “sampling as a small set of cases a researcher selects from a larger group and generalises to the population”. Sampling is further defined as “taking a portion of a population or universe as a representative of that population or universe” (De Vos et al.; 2011:193)

The two sampling methods to be considered by the researcher are the probability and non-probability sampling.

“Probability sampling determines the likelihood that any element or member of the population will be included” (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2005: 56). To support the above view, it was further indicated that every element in probability sampling has the possibility of being part of the sample (Saunders, Lewis, Phillip and Thornhill, 2007:152). This type of sampling technique includes the following: simple random, stratified random, systematic, and cluster sampling.

The second sampling method is called non-probability sampling technique which is defined in Uys and Basson (2005) as a “sampling that indicates the sample which are not randomly selected. When analysing the elements within the population, each has an equal opportunity of being part of the sample”. This sampling technique

includes quota, haphazard/accidental, snowball and purposive sampling. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was the chosen technique as it includes selecting respondents purposively depending on the researcher's own judgment.

Neuman (2006:222) refers to "purposive sampling as a valuable kind of sampling which may be used in exploratory research". He further indicates that this type of sampling uses the judgements of experts in selecting cases with a definite goal in mind.

Purposive sampling was used to choose foster care social workers. They were purposively selected due to their involvement in working with foster care cases on a daily basis, which made them the suitable candidates that may have the necessary information needed. The other advantage for selecting purposive sampling was due to the sample not being homogeneous. The researcher chose both gender (male and female) involved in foster care services, the aim being the possibility that males and females might handle foster care backlog differently and also the selection was made taking in to consideration the number of years dealing with foster care whereby both long serving social workers and newly recruited ones were selected. The reason for the criteria is to understand the challenges from the perspective of different types of social workers.

This study required social workers in the three service points within the Polokwane Municipality area. Department of Social Development processes were followed by making the Department aware about the study and requesting permission. Babbie and Rubin (2010:179) explains "purposive sampling as the selection of participants based on the researcher's choice on who will be more representative of the whole population". The researcher selected a sample consisting 7 foster care social workers from each of the three service points. The sample is relevant to the study as they have experience and knowledge dealing with foster care and the challenges encountered daily. The total sample for the study was 21 participants. Gender equity and equality policy were considered when selecting a sample.

3.8. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.8.1. Research Instruments

De Vos et al. (2011: 287) defines “interviewing as the main method of data or information collection in qualitative research”. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:188) distinguish between three different types of interview as follows:

- **Informal, conversational interview:** During interview, the researcher allows the interview to flow on its own and does not ask questions that will influence the process. This interview permits the researcher to be flexible and receptive to the reactions and responses of the respondents.
- **General Interview approach:** This kind of an interview follows a conversational route. Respondents have freedom to answer questions but certain themes are covered by the pre - arranged interview schedule. The researcher may adjust the focus of the interview if there is a need interview.
- **Standardised, open-ended interview:** This type of interview’s emphasis is on asking the same set of open-ended questions to all the interviewees. Data acquired during this interview is easier to be analysed and also it assists the researcher making a comparison on the views and opinion of the interviewees in a more organised way.

The researcher used the standardised, open ended interview as a data collection method. The researcher used this interview so as to get a comprehensive overview of the respondents’ perceptions or beliefs or narrative issues on the challenges social workers face when managing foster care backlog in the Polokwane Municipality area.

During the interview; an interview schedule with prearranged questions was utilised by the researcher. De Vos (2011:297) further indicated that the interview schedule is only utilised to guide the interview rather than to dictate it. Twenty one foster care social workers were interviewed at their service point boardrooms that provided privacy, comfort and were also accessible to the participants.

3.8.2 Administration of research instrument

Two participants took part in the pilot study prior to the actual study in order to measure whether the research instrument is understandable and would assist in obtaining the kind of data required to meet the research purpose (Maree, 2012:216).

The Department of Social Development in the Capricorn District granted the researcher permission to conduct the study. Twenty-one foster care social workers were interviewed individually at their own workplace. This did not disturb their interaction with clients as the respondents chose to be interviewed during their free time.

3.9. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014:253) defines “validity and reliability in research as a way in which human beings start to develop feelings of trust in certain people, meaning in research it is imperative for people to trust the findings of researchers”. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014: 253) indicated “that the term validity and reliability are commonly utilised in the quantitative research”. This is because, when conducting this type of research, researchers use research methods that are generating measurable, numerical and statistical results.

Contrary to quantitative research, the aim of qualitative research is not dependant on the causal relationships or the outcome generated from a larger population. Instead, qualitative researchers’ main aim is to bring forth an extensive understanding of a subject under study.

For the purpose of this study, trustworthiness in regard to the challenges social workers face in relation managing foster care backlog at the Polokwane Municipality will be discussed below.

3.10. TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014:253) “the aim of qualitative research is not to generalise results so the term “validity “and “reliability” are regarded not useful terms within a qualitative study”. Contrary to using “validity” and “reliability” by the quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers rather refers to the trustworthiness which comprises of four dimensions stated as follows: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014:258).

- **Credibility:** Points out to the accurateness of the study whereby the researcher interprets the data provided by the respondents. The researcher increased credibility of the research by spending time with the social workers so as to better understand and gain insight into their everyday work in respect of foster care. The researcher demonstrated credibility also by sharing questions about the research process and also the findings were returned to the participants in order to determine if the findings reflects their experiences or challenges in relation to the foster care backlog.
- **Transferability:** This term refers to the ability of the research results being applied in similar situations which is foster care backlog and they come up with similar results. The findings of this particular study may be relevant to other districts in the Limpopo Province or even to other Provinces in South Africa and not only in the selected area of study.
- **Dependability:** As a quality measure, dependability is needed when exploring challenges social workers face in relation to the management of foster care backlog. The researcher requested a social work lecturer to audit the process applied and the data analysis method for ensuring that the findings on challenges faced by social workers managing foster care backlog are consistent and may be repeated
- **Confirmability:** To establish confirmability the researcher kept evidence which shows all the steps made when analysing data, so as to justify the reasons for the decisions taken. The field notes, memos and the tape recorder safe are kept safe by the researcher for future reference.

3.11. ELIMINATION OF BIAS

The researcher recruited and selected participants with extensive experience in foster care in order to eliminate selection/participants' bias. In order to authentically interpret the data collected, the researcher strived to study the data with limited biasness or any outside influence and also to ensure questions asked during the interview did not influence the responses given.

3.12. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014:263 defines "ethics in research as the moral or professional code of conduct that sets standards for the researchers' attitudes and behaviour". The University of Limpopo issued ethical clearance certificate for the study. The ethical considerations considered by the researcher are as follows:

3.12.1. Permission

The researcher carefully followed the guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Permission was requested from the University of Limpopo's Research Ethics Committee. The researcher also requested permission from the Department of Social Development to conduct research and utilise their employees as the participants.

3.12.2. Voluntary participation and informed consent.

The participants were given full explanation on what the research study entail and what is required from them should they choose to participate. Each participant signed an informed consent form as an indication that they agreed to be part of the research study and they understood the purpose of the study.

3.12.3. Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality

The prospective participants were informed about keeping their information private and the research findings will also be presented anonymously to protect the participants.

3.12.4. No harm to participants

According to Strydom (2011:115) even though physical injury may completely be ruled out, but the most dominant harm which may be experienced in social research is the emotional distress. Therefore, the researcher will put more effort in reducing the risks. The respondents were guaranteed not to be subjected to any physical and emotional harm nor to environments or situations that will harm them professionally.

3.12.5. Fair selection of participants

Research respondents to this study were selected fairly without personal bias or preference. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. The chosen sample is relevant to the study as they have the necessary experience regarding foster care and the challenges encountered on a daily basis. The selection criteria were explained to the Provincial department of social development so that the target population understood and accepted the researcher's approach.

3.12.6. Safe custody of records

To protect the integrity of participants, the records from the research (including notes and recorded information) were carefully filed in the Department after the completion of the research write-up.

3.13. LIMITATIONS

According to Fouché and Delport (2002:119) "problems can never be entirely eliminated from any study and this study is no exception". The limitations are as follows:

- The greatest limitation to this study is its small sample size, as the study had 21 participants. The goal of qualitative research is to give a platform to the experienced to be heard and made sense of, and the sample size will confirm the descriptive nature of this study.
- Literature is limited regarding foster care backlog management system in South Africa.

3.14. CONCLUSION

The chapter explained and described research methodology utilised to gather information in managing foster care backlog. Methodology gives a detailed description of the selected population as well as the sampling method. Furthermore, the ethical issues taken in to consideration and research instruments used to collect data were also outlined in detail.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter aims at presenting the findings of the information collected in a form of key themes and sub-themes. The focus is on the biographical information of respondents employed by the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area at the satellite offices, namely Polokwane East, Polokwane West and Aganang Cluster. Research findings from the study conducted are supported by the answers from the respondents.

The presentation and interpretation of findings are controlled by the objectives and research questions that were set out in Chapter One. These are restated since they will inform the structure of the chapter. Thematic analysis was the method utilised in analysing the responses from the respondents and those thematic findings will be presented under each research objective and research question.

4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The following table illustrates the biographical information of the respondents indicating the gender, the years of experience employed as a social worker and years of experience in carrying out foster care services. Twenty one respondents were interviewed and the strategy employed was one on one interviews. The respondents were all black and with regard to their work experience, the respondents have been employed as social workers from 3 years to 16 years or more.

TABLE 4.1: PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Service Office	Gender	Years of experience employed as a Social worker	Years of experience in carrying out foster care services
Aganang Cluster	Male	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Female	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
	Female	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Female	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Female	11 – 15 years	11 – 15 years
	Female	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
	Female	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
Polokwane East	Female	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Female	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
	Female	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years

	Female	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Male	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
	Male	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Male	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
Polokwane West	Male	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Male	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
	Female	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
	Female	6 – 10 years	6 – 10 years
	Female	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Female	0 – 5 years	0 – 5 years
	Female	16 + years	16 + years

The table above outlines a table of the research respondents in different sub offices of the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area. The table shows or makes a comparison of the ratio of male and female social workers in the Polokwane Municipality, years of experience and social workers' years in rendering foster care services.

Of the 21 respondents participating in the study, 6 were males and 15 were females. It was evident that females are dominating the social work profession. The table above further indicates that, of 21 participants, ten had between 0 to 5 years' experience employed as social workers and in carrying out foster care services, nine had between 6 to 10 years, one between 11 years and one had 16 + years of experience employed as social worker and also in rendering foster care services.

The findings of the research study suggests that the majority of the respondents are practising as social workers and carry out foster care services for less than five years. The information above implies that they still need support and training with regard to managing foster care cases as the higher learning institutions do not reflect much on foster care services.

4.3. PRESENTATION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The following section outlines the findings from the qualitative study by utilising themes and sub-themes as specified in the table below.

Table 4.2: Classification of themes and sub-themes as identified during data analysis

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
THEME 1: Social workers' view on their preferred manageable foster care cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
THEME 2: The impact of the foster care backlog on both the social workers and the clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or poor service to clients • Illegal placement • Feeling demoralised & burnt out • Non-compliance to legislation
THEME 3: Current programmes implemented in managing the foster care backlog.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Act • Foster care strategy • Review cases three months before expiry date
THEME 4: Challenges in managing foster care backlog cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources • Unequal distribution of cases & high caseload • Delay in receiving form 30 & budget for advertisements • Lack of support & training
THEME 5: Suggestions addressing the challenges in managing the foster care backlog.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of foster care strategy • Employment of new social workers • Decentralisation of form 30

In the next section, each theme with its related sub-themes presents narratives to substantiate each of the aforementioned. Those narratives are subjected to literature review and theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter Two.

Preferred manageable foster care cases

Different views on what is a manageable foster care caseload were discussed. The participants' responses on their preferred manageable foster care caseload range between 40 to 100 cases. Out of the twenty-one participants interviewed, sixteen (76%) of them indicated that cases less than 50 are manageable because they will be in a position to give clients individual attention and also be empowered in dealing with foster care services as they are still new in the profession. Four (19%) participants believed 100 cases and one (5%) participants preferred 120 cases.

The participants' views on the preferred manageable foster care cases are reflected on the responses below:

“How can any person expect a new social worker to manage 100 foster care cases without proper supervision and training?”

“I don't think it is possible to supervise or manage more the 50 foster care cases if the social worker wants to do justice to the client.”

From the above responses, it is clear that more than 50 foster care cases are not manageable. The abovementioned findings is supported by the article from an article in the Cape Argus (Jooste, 2009:3) which states that “Social workers are overburdened with heavy work-loads due to handling more than 70 cases each day”.

Thematic findings are summarized under each research objective and research questions.

Research objective one: To identify the impact of foster care backlogs in the area of study

Guiding research question: What is the impact of foster care backlogs in the area of study?

In terms of the findings the respondents have four different opinions with regard to the impact foster care backlog has on the lives of the social workers and the community. Out of twenty-one respondents, ten (47%) respondents identified illegal placements as the main impact of the existing foster care backlog,

Some of the responses were as follows:

“The impact of foster care backlog is that the order will lapse and child will be placed illegally.”

“Foster care is a statutory intervention whereby children are placed in foster care through a valid court order and after the order lapses those children become vulnerable as they are not covered by any legal document.”

“Our system is really overburdened and as long as there are no support mechanisms, structures and resources to deal with foster care backlog, the impact will be much worse as the placements will be illegal, unconstitutional and invalid.”

Six (29%) respondents identified non-compliance to legislation:

“SASSA is paying lapsed cases and the impact goes back to the department as they would not be complying with legislation because the Act says the foster care grant should be paid to children legally placed in foster care by the court order.”

“There is a contradiction with regard to the purpose of foster care because its primary objective is family reunification but looking at the duration and termination as stated in the Children’s Act, the two do not talk to each other. This really impacts negatively on complying with the legislation as it is difficult to keep up with the fast-growing demand for foster care”

The results gathered also show that three (14%) respondents indicated that the foster care backlog has made social workers feel demoralised and burnt out as they are no longer practising their social work skills due to having a lot of backlog that needs paperwork.

“This backlog makes us reactive instead of being pro-active; we are not adding value to the lives of our clients. I sometimes ask myself if this is what I studied for all these years.”

“Foster care backlog demoralises me, it completely de-motivates me. I lost my self-esteem; sometimes I come to work just to push the day and at the end of the month you get paid, that’s all.”

The study also revealed no or poor service to clients with two (10%) responses indicating it having the least impact.

“This foster care backlog makes us not to serve our clients as we are supposed to. Remember, some of these kids lost their parents due to death and in most cases we only concentrate on placing the children in foster care and neglect other services like grief counselling.”

Based on the abovementioned findings, it is apparent that the main impact of the existing backlog is placing children in foster care illegally as outlined by the majority of the respondents. Hence the Centre for Child Law filed on 20 October stating the failure by the Minister of Social Development to amend the current legislation and come up with a solution to the overstretched foster care services as illegal, unconstitutional and invalid whereby this results in children being in foster care placements without valid court orders (Department of Social Development, 2018)

Research objective two: To determine current programmes that are in place to alleviate the backlog.

Guiding research questions: What current programmes are in place to alleviate the backlog?

The results reveal that a total of nineteen (90%) out of twenty-one respondents interviewed identified Children’s Act 38 of 2005 as the only policy document that regulates the management of the foster care backlog.

“The only policy that I know of and am using on a daily basis when dealing with foster care is the Children’s Act.”

“Chapter 12 of the Children’s Act is dedicated specifically to foster care and it assists me when dealing with cases of children.”

One (5%) respondent has shown that other than the Children’s Act she is fully aware of the foster care strategy.

“I know of the draft foster care strategy that was developed but was never finalised, hence I don’t even have much information about i.t”

From the findings gathered, one respondent (5%) indicated that the strategy of reviewing foster care cases three months before the lapse date is one strategy used in minimising the foster care backlog.

“I’m not sure if it’s a strategy or what but I know that we normally try to review foster care placements three months before the expiry date and sometimes this is very challenging due to the number of cases one has to attend to”.

The above analysis, clearly indicates that the majority of the participants know Children’s Act 38 of 2005 as the only policy document/guideline that regulates the management of the foster care backlog.

The above-mentioned results show that every legislation plays an important role within the foster care services, therefore it is crucial for social workers to be aware and also to understand different Acts so as to provide appropriate intervention. To accomplish the public service’s main objective of rendering extraordinary services to the community, all the superiors employed in the public service are required to ensure that their subordinates have the necessary knowledge and skills needed to perform their tasks exceptionally well (Public Service Commission, 2002:31).

Research objective three: To explore the challenges faced by social workers in managing foster care backlog cases.

Guiding research question: What kinds of challenges are faced by social workers in managing foster care backlog cases?

A total of nine (43%) out of the twenty-one participants who were interviewed identified lack of support and training as one of the main challenge in managing the foster care backlog. The respondents indicated that the management do not offer the much needed support to the social workers. Supervision is non-existent, and the newly appointed social workers are not given training when coming to the policies and legislation governing foster care.

These are some of the responses from the participants:

“Not getting the necessary on-the-job support in terms of understanding what exactly is required, frustrated me as a newly employed social worker. The worst part was having to use trial and error just to service the clients and report at the end of the month.”

“Department does not assist in putting structures in place to prepare us as newly appointed workers to actually fit in; I mean the supervisory measures are not of quality or I can say supervision is not there at all.”

Evidence collected shows similarities of challenges social workers face when performing their duties and one of the challenges is unequal distribution of cases and high caseload with nine (43%) responses:

“The ratio of cases per social worker is too high, supervisors are not distributing files evenly to us. I have one hundred and twenty something files to attend to whereas someone in the same office as mine has seventy files”

“I think the department should actually make funds available to employ social workers who are presently not working so that the ratio is actually a manageable one.”

Two (9%) respondents mentioned the lack or shortage of resources as one of the contributing factors in managing the foster care backlog; the resources identified included stationery, computers, offices, cars, lack of human resources, telephones and stationery. They also indicated that the conditions of employment are not encouraging good service delivery, hence their anger and frustration regarding the lack of resources because it hinders their potential to deliver excellent foster care service.

“We are placed in sub-offices which are not resourced, we don’t have phone, one computer is used by four social workers, the office is overcrowded and these kinds of things also cause foster care backlog to escalate.”

“On the issue of resources, we don’t even have stationery, no cars and furnishings. I have been employed for three years now but I still do not have a proper chair. I have nothing and that is the main thing: I cannot work effectively.”

At the bottom of the list was delay in receiving form 30 and budget for advertisements with one (5%) response as indicated in the findings gathered:

“As long as different sections such as the one dealing with form 30s is centralised in Pretoria, foster care will remain a challenge for a long time and also the long process taken before adverts are placed is really stressing us”.

It came out of the study that lack of support and training, together with unequal distribution of cases and high caseload, are the most dominant challenges in managing the foster care backlog.

According to the researcher’s opinion, distributing cases unevenly among social workers contributes to the high caseload for some social workers. Social workers

also have other responsibilities, like, family preservation, services to older person, adoption, etc. and not only foster care.

From the above, it appears to be clear that there is a need for unfilled posts to be attended to as quickly as possible to reduce the backlog. The respondents also feels that the appointment of more social workers and supervisors needs to be prioritised so that cases may be distributed equitably and they also indicated that they regard training and support as core elements in developing and maintaining high standard of social work practice.

Public Service Commission (2002: 33) indicated that supervisors should guard against the inequitable distribution of work among social workers and also they should ensure that their subordinates delivers quality service.

Research objective four: To identify strategies that might assist the Department of Social Development in dealing with the challenges.

Guiding research question: What possible strategies could assist the Department of Social Development to deal with the challenges?

The study indicated a lot of suggestions and ideas made by the respondents; however, nine (43%) of the respondents emphasised the need for social workers to receive continuous training and support from supervisors to assist in effectively managing the foster care backlog.

“We must be given continuous training in terms of legislation issues and policy directives; then we’ll be good to go.”

“I think we should be capacitated, and not only social workers but also other stakeholders such as SASSA and the Department of Justice, so that we can be on the same level of understanding and this will also assist us to move at the same pace.”

Nine (43%) other respondents suggested that the department should seek funding so that they employ qualified social workers who are unemployed in order to reduce the caseload per social worker.

“The ratio of cases per social worker is too high, files are not distributed evenly to area social workers. If unemployed social workers may be employed, I might manage half of the present cases.”

“The Department should employ both the social workers and supervisors because if they only look at employing social workers who’s going to supervise those social workers to make sure that they are doing what they are required to do by the legislation.”

The last three (14%) respondents suggested the decentralisation of form 30 from the National office to the Provincial offices for effective and efficient management of the foster care backlog.

“What is the main reason of having the Child Protection Unit dealing specifically with the distribution of Form 30s at the National Office rather than establishing the very same unit at different Provincial Offices for effective management of Form 30s?”

The researcher concurs with the participants that social workers’ training when coming to the legislation and the understanding of foster care policy is insufficient. The orientation of newly appointed social workers seems to be inadequately in terms foster care and also supervisors need to guide and give direction for foster care to be properly managed.

4.4. Conclusion

The challenges social workers face when managing foster care backlog depends on managerial skills such as planning, controlling, leading, accountability, monitoring,

evaluation and other alternative strategies within the social work sphere. This chapter revealed that the problem of support and training together with high caseloads exists at the Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area. The findings indicate that another strategy is needed to improve and enhance the management of foster care backlog is needed. The next chapter will be the presentation of summary of the study, key findings, recommendations, limitations and an overall conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter's main focus is to check whether the intended aim and objectives were achieved and summarising the significant issues raised by the participants. Furthermore, the researcher will present the main results and the conclusions drawn from the study. Lastly, the recommendations dealing with foster care backlog will also be made considering the findings and conclusions.

5.2. Summary of the key findings

The main findings of the study were drawn from the themes and sub-themes derived from the interviews conducted and the researcher's observations. These themes include the impact of foster care backlogs in the chosen area of study, current programmes that meant to alleviate the backlog, the challenges social workers face

in managing foster care backlog cases and the strategies that may assist the Department of Social Development in dealing with the challenges.

5.2.1. The impact of the foster care backlog

It is clear based on the participants' responses that foster care backlog negatively impacts and influences the client's lives and the social work profession. The research findings has also highlighted that the foster care service seems to be incorrectly perceived in the country as most people choose foster care as it financially provide more and this puts a lot of strain in the system, hence the orders lapse and children are in foster care placement illegally without a valid court order.

Therefore, it is concluded that a comprehensive legal solution be identified so as to categorise the children within the foster care system which will eventually reduce the backlog or alleviate it all together.

5.2.2. Current programmes implemented

The study has revealed that the majority of social workers have not familiarized themselves with other legislation governing the foster care service and both the Children's Act and other applicable legislation when handling foster care cases in order to reduce the backlog.

The conclusion is that limited information on the legislation governing foster care services seems to be a problem for the social workers to execute their statutory obligation. It was also established that for social workers to provide the best foster care services they require deliberate planning and implementation of the intervention strategies within the Department.

5.2.3. Types of challenges facing social workers

According to the participant's responses it is clear that various challenges that determines the foster care backlog including lack of support and training together with unequal distribution of cases and high caseload. The study further revealed the

need to employ additional social workers and supervisors as soon as possible in order to curb the backlog, not forgetting the much need support from the management to assist in motivating social workers to put more effort in their work.

It can be concluded that workload management and the equitable distribution of cases may control the foster care backlog. If social workers might narrow down their work, it will give them plenty of time to deal with other cases such as adoption, family reunification and other services. It is further concluded that if the management can improve work relations by providing resources including support and training, social workers will function effectively and efficiently.

5.2.4. Suggestion to address the challenges

The study has revealed that according to the respondents' opinion there is a need for changes in managing the foster care backlog in order to curb the challenges experienced. Training regarding the legislation should be intense and top management should familiarise themselves with social work as a profession in order for them to make appropriate decisions regarding foster care issues.

5.3. Recommendations

On the bases of the findings, the recommendations made are as follows:

5.3.1. Recommendations concerning the research process

The qualitative research approach utilising a focus group may be considered for future investigations so as to have a deeper understanding of the participants' everyday experiences. It is also recommended that other methods for collecting data may be used in order to obtain different opinions on the management of the foster care backlog.

5.3.2. Recommendations for practice based on the research findings

The following are the recommendations made:

Vacant posts to be filled as soon as possible

The Provincial Department of Social Development should fill the available posts as a matter of urgency, in order to reduce the high caseload and for clients to continue receiving the best service. The unemployed social workers in the past four years should be employed so that they may give more attention to reviewing the foster care cases within three months before the expiry date.

Specialisation

When one social worker's responsibility is to open and finalise a case furthermore investigate and do supervision at the same time, this affects service delivery and the level of productivity. The profession is also affected negatively; as participants highlighted that it becomes difficult for them to deliver quality work and services to the clients. As per the study conducted together with the participants' and the researcher's observations, it is further suggested that the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) develop specialisation with regard to foster care as a service. Some social workers' focus may be on new applications and all the obligatory procedures. Whereas others may supervise placements. This will work, since the courts are responsible for extensions of orders and the new applications. This will reduce frustrations experienced by the foster families.

Induction and Training

It is also recommended that the Department of Social Development provide proper training for social workers on legislation regarding child protection and understanding foster care policy. Supervisors should also guide and give direction to newly appointed social workers for at least three months before handing cases to them.

Implementation of foster care strategy

It is recommended that the foster care strategy may be finalised and kinship care placements be implemented to reduce the burden in foster care. This service would be strictly meant for children who are orphaned and staying with their relatives. Kinship care placement, in terms of the draft strategy, does not require much

supervision and statutory intervention; instead social workers would do initial assessment of the children's situations only. This would drastically reduce the burden placed on social workers.

Adoption for orphans

Since one of the challenges raised is children who are within the foster care system but often not requiring care and protection, and also those that family reunification will not be an option, adoption needs to be discussed and explored as one of the options. Social workers need to market adoption because most of the communities still have stigma and stereotypes with regard to adoption. The social workers also need to engage the communities in dialogues in order to address their fears so that more people opt for adoption rather than foster care.

Electronic Database

The social workers indicated that they have limited to no knowledge on managing a database on excel spreadsheet, yet the expectation is for them to have a record of their caseloads. They further reported that there is a need for standardisation when coming to managing and keeping of the database. The electronic database is a process of providing information in an easier and faster way to social workers, but this can only be possible if necessary training is provided. The National Department of Social Development should fast track the electronic database that is linked to SASSA and Home Affairs.

5.3.3. Recommendations for further research

The aim of every research study is to propose other researchable topics or study because it's not possible for any research to allege that all the gaps are covered. For further research the topics suggested are as follows:

- An investigation on the factors that can accelerate the application of the foster care strategy.
- The impact of an electronic database on the existing foster care backlog.

- The significance of human resource (personnel) in relation to the management of the foster care backlog.

It is also proposed that more provinces in South Africa be included for future research.

5.4. Limitations of the study

Fouché (2005:119) indicated that “problems are not entirely eliminated from any study and this study is no exception”. The following are the limitations of the study:

- An interview with small sample of respondents was chosen so as to have an understanding of the experiences of the respondents to the fullest extent. The chosen methodology was limited and this compromised the ability of measuring a larger sample of respondents.
- There is limited literature on the foster care backlog management system in South Africa.
- The possibility of being provided with unreliable figures of the foster care backlog poses as a limitation. Figures usually differ and also one cannot depend on the data due to the discrepancies. The researcher believes that the actual statistics could be higher than the stated numbers.

5.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the researcher managed to reach the initial goal with the research project, which was to investigate the challenges social workers face in relation to the management of the foster care backlog at the Limpopo Department of Social Development in the Polokwane Municipality area, by means of giving voice to the social workers' views and experiences. The experience in conducting this study was valuable, firstly by obtaining first-hand information and experience from foster care social workers and secondly by applying the acquired knowledge when carrying out daily foster care activities.

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ANNEXURE A



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06 May 2019

Matsoso S.P (201735082) MDEV
TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP
MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (Course Work)

Dear Matsoso S.P,

FACULTY APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I have pleasure in informing you that your Masters proposal served at the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee meeting on 19 March 2019 and it was **approved in principle** with the following title.

"Exploring Challenges Faced by Social Workers on the Management of Foster Care Backlog at the Department of Social Development, Limpopo Province, South Africa"

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,


Prof MP Sebola

Chairperson: Faculty Higher Degrees Committee

CC: Dr K S Milondzo, Supervisor, Co-supervisor, Prof T Moyo, Acting Programme Manager, M.B Ntoko and Prof MX Lethoko, Acting Director of School.

Finding solutions for Africa

ANNEXURE B



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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 02 October 2019

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/348/2019: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Exploring Challenges Faced by Social Workers On the Management of Foster Care Backlog at The Department of Social Development, Limpopo Province, South Africa
Researcher: SP Matsoso
Supervisor: Dr KS Milondzo
Co-Supervisor/s: Prof T Moyo
School: Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership
Degree: Masters of Development in Planning and Management


PROF P MASOKO
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) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

Anne Kruger Language Practice

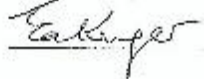
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 - ✦ tel 072 374 6277 or 021 863 7315
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-

To whom it may concern

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

I, Elsje Anne Kruger, hereby declare that I have personally read through the dissertation of Siskimogang Philadelphia Matsoso and have highlighted language errors and checked referances. The track changes function was used and the author was responsible for accepting the editor's changes and finalising the references. I did no structural rewriting of the content.

Yours faithfully



Date

18-12-2019