The experiences of newly qualified social workers' readiness in providing services to families and children in Gauteng.

by

Clarissa Lynette Muller

(12004473)

A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements of the degree

Master of Social Work (Play-based Intervention)

in the

Department of Social Work and Criminology

at the

University of Pretoria

Faculty of Humanities

Supervisor: Mrs. L. Jordaan

December 2023

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The Department of Social Work and Criminology places great emphasis on integrity and ethical conduct in the preparation of all written work submitted for academic evaluation.

While academic staff teach you about referencing techniques and how to avoid plagiarism, you too have a responsibility in this regard. If you are at any stage uncertain as to what is required, you should speak to your lecturer before any written work is submitted.

You are guilty of plagiarism if you copy something from another author's work (e.g. a book, an article or a website) without acknowledging the source and pass it off as your own. In effect you are stealing something that belongs to someone else. This is not only the case when you copy work word-for-word (verbatim), but also when you submit someone else's work in a slightly altered form (paraphrase) or use a line of argument without acknowledging it. You are not allowed to use work previously produced by another student. You are also not allowed to let anybody copy your work with the intention of passing if off as his/her work.

Students who commit plagiarism will not be given any credit for plagiarised work. The matter may also be referred to the Disciplinary Committee (Students) for a ruling. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious contravention of the University's rules and can lead to expulsion from the University.

The declaration which follows must accompany all written work submitted while you are a student of the Department of Social Work and Criminology. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and attached.

Full names of student: Clarissa Lynette Muller
Student number: 12004473
Topic of work: The experiences of newly qualified social workers' readiness in providing services to families and children in Gauteng.

Declaration
1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this mini-dissertation is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.
3. I have not used work previously produced by another student or any other person to hand in as my own.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

[signature]

SIGNATURE:

DATE: 06/12/2023

i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my profound gratitude to God. He guided me into my profession, and I am overwhelmingly grateful for His blessings that have enabled me to complete this endeavour.

I would like to also extend my appreciation to the following people:

- My research supervisor, Mrs. L. Jordaan, for being "the blue line"- always there. I do not think you realise the profound impact you have on students. I am unable to express in words the inspiration you have been, not only in completing this mini dissertation but also in my career. Your guidance and motivation had a significant impact on my life.
- My husband, Barend Muller, inspires me to follow my passions. Thank you for taking pride in my accomplishments, and for always helping me to transform my dreams into reality.
- My family - De Bruyn's; Viljoens, Cronje's and Mullers. Thank you for your support during the past two years, and for your encouragement to always pursue my dreams.
- My friends and colleagues for their continuous support, encouragement and advice.
- All the participants and organisations that employ them, and the individuals affiliated thereto, for their instrumental role in the realisation of this study.

This mini dissertation is dedicated to my late grandmother, Lynn Cronje' - How pleased she would be with me…

ABSTRACT

The experiences of newly qualified social workers' readiness in providing services to families and children in Gauteng.

Researcher: Mrs. Clarissa Lynette Muller
Supervisor: Mrs. Leanne Jordaan
Degree: MSW (Play-based Intervention)
Institution: University of Pretoria

Newly qualified social workers' (NQSWs) preparedness for practice appears to be a growing area of research. Little attention has however been paid to the viewpoints and experiences of NQSWs' regarding their preparedness to serve families and children in South Africa. In order to deliver Social work services (SWS) to families and children, NQSWs' perceived job preparedness has to be explicitly studied within the South African setting.

The goal of this study was to explore and describe NQSWs' experiences regarding their work readiness to provide SWS to families and children in Gauteng. A qualitative research approach was utilised to conduct this study and the interpretivist paradigm was used to explore the experiences of NQSWs providing SWS to families and children. Applied research was conducted in this study with an instrumental case study design, and the study population consisted of NQSWs employed by organisations in Gauteng rendering services to families and children.

Non-probability, specifically purposive sampling was utilised, and 7 participants were recruited. Data was collected to the point of data saturation through the use of semi-structured interviews with an interview schedule (Addendum D). Thematic analysis was used as a method of data analysis with an inductive and latent approach for coding. By considering the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, the researcher ensured trustworthiness. This study was regulated by ethical principles that included participant anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and avoidance of harm.

Key findings were based on the research question: *"What are the experiences of newly qualified social workers providing social work services to families and children in Gauteng regarding their work readiness to provide these services?"* The findings of this study included that most NQSWs did not feel ready to provide certain services to families and children upon graduating, and a lack of practical experience was highlighted. After a few months in practice, however, their readiness improved. Upon entering the workplace, the participants found a multitude of challenges including high caseloads, a lack of resources, a lack of knowledge and skills, and challenges when working with external stakeholders.

From the findings of the study, it was clear that collaborations between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), organisations and supervisors at these organisations, external stakeholders and NQSWs are required to enhance the readiness of NQSWs rendering services to families and children. It is recommended that HEIs provide students with realistic expectations of the realities and challenges in the social work (SW) profession during the course of the BSW curriculum, to mitigate possible challenges NQSWs could face during the transitional period. Furthermore, it is recommended that when organisations employ NQSWs, they should provide formal orientation- and induction programmes to ensure a successful transition from the HEIs to the workplace. From this study's findings, it became evident that future research should be conducted on the prevalence of burnout amongst NQSWs in South Africa, as they are faced with a multitude of challenges.

KEY CONCEPTS:
Social Work

Newly Qualified Social Worker

Social work service experience

Readiness

Family

Child

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DSD	National Department of Social Development
NASW	American National Association of Social Workers
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SW	Social Worker
SWS	SWS
TA	Thematic Analysis
TCA	Theory of Collaborative Advantage
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

The readiness of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) for practice appears to be a growing area of research, however, there is little focus on the perspectives and experiences of NQSWs' readiness to provide services to families and children in the South African context. The shift from student to social worker (SW) is a difficult one, and it is widely acknowledged that the first year after graduation is crucial for social workers (Grant, Sheridan & Webb, 2014:9). With new graduates entering the field of professional practice every year, it is fundamentally important to assess their reflections and experiences to further strengthen the academic programmes that produced them as well as workplace systems that transform them from graduates to social workers. The integration of the NQSW into the workplace is crucial for the development of practitioner competence and experience within the workplace. In the context of this study and borrowing from Hunt, Tregurtha, Kuruvila, Lowe and Smith (2017:140), NQSWs need effective induction, supervision, and workload management techniques for them to seamlessly integrate and be work-ready. Undertaking a study to explore the reflections of NQSW in Sweden, Tham and Lynch (2019:401-408) highlight the need for workplace introduction and support systems for these new professionals so that they are inclusively integrated into the workflow mechanisms and are therefore seen as work-ready. Therefore, the current study focuses on a specific area of readiness, where the researcher sought to examine the experiences of NQSWs' readiness in providing SWS to families and children in Gauteng.

Researchers have argued that newly qualified professionals cannot completely understand their professions without being fully engaged in a workplace environment. Yet, the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 7 and 8, as well as the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) provide that once one graduates with a Bachelor and/or Honours Degree in social work, the graduate is work-ready. It is in this continuum that the study is located. As the study

sought to build on Jansen's (2017:1532-1536) observation that the full extent of being a professional is not possible to understand unless you are fully engaged in the professional conduct with all the responsibilities it entails by exploring the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to provide SWS within the context of the workplace in Gauteng.

The following key concepts are defined to ensure clarity and simplified interpretation:

- **Social Work:** The International Federation of Social Workers and International Associations of Schools of Social Work (2014) define social work as a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. The practice of social work is anchored on key principles such as social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work (The International Federation of Social Workers and International Associations of Schools of Social Work, 2014). In this study, social work is used to refer to a praxis-based profession and academic discipline that is informed by social science, humanities, and indigenous knowledge theories in its attempt to address life challenges and enhance the wellbeing of the individual, and community at large.

- **Newly Qualified Social Worker:** Literature commonly refers to NQSWs as social workers who have been working for two years or less, for the purpose of this study however, a NQSW is seen as a social worker who has been working for three years or less in the field of social work (Cloete, 2012; Janse van Rensburg, 2009; Pretorius, 2020). In other words, NQSWs refers to freshly hired graduates who grow into competent, confident, and skilled social workers through internal and external transition processes (Hunt et al., 2017: 150). In this study, NQSWs specifically refer to NQSWs providing services to families and children.

- **Social work service experience:** Social work service experience is described as a spectrum of services and initiatives offered by both private and government organisations to individuals, families, groups, and communities who require specific assistance (Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019). The University of Calgary's

Faculty of Social Work (2018) defines social services experience as either paid employment or volunteer work, organised activities, interventions, or other actions that reflect policies and programs responding to recognised social problems/needs or improving the well-being of those at risk.

- **Readiness:** Readiness is defined as an evaluation of an NQSWs' capacity for professional practice (Nathaniel, 2018:7). According to Nathaniel (2018:7), it is essential to keep in mind that the concept of 'readiness' is based on the expectations of both NQSWs and supervisors and is therefore subject to interpretation. In the context of this study, readiness denotes an assessment of the NQSWs' amplitude and aptitude in providing services to families and children in Gauteng. According to Parker (2017:235), readiness can be analysed and explained as a combination of covert and overt competencies, which are also referred to as foundational and functional competencies, respectively.

- **Family:** In this study, the word 'family' is used to refer to all the people living together in the same house. The operational definition is derived from Cliquet (2003:14) who observes that the family is generally regarded as a major social institution and a locus of much of a person's social activity. Historically, the nature of the family has changed over the years. However, in traditional South African society, the family was never regarded as man, woman, and child; rather, the Revised White Paper on Families (2021) defines the family as: "a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and goes beyond a particular physical residence" (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 2021). These groupings usually depend on the needs of society at any given time.

- **Child:** A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990). Further, according to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1990), the term children refers to all people under the age of eighteen years as defined by the laws of South Africa according to the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

For many years, scholars in the field of social work have debated the readiness of NQSWs for practice at social service organisations in both the public and private sectors (Grant et al., 2014; Howard, Johnston & Agllias 2015:17; Welch, Lerpiniere, & Young 2014:33). Despite the large number of social work graduates entering the field each year, South Africa also has high rates of NQSW burnout, 'brain drain', and job loss (Engelbrecht, 2006:129; Kheswa, 2019:6; Ntsoane, 2017:71). This study is anchored on dual assumptions. On one hand, once a student social worker exits tertiary education level, either at NQF Level 7 or 8, it is assumed that they are work ready. On the other hand, supervisors of NQSWs argue that they are not work-ready and therefore need practical experience, additional professional training as well as strict supervision (Wolfaardt, 2022:2; Mokoka, 2016:19; Pretorius 2020:18). Examining and assessing NQSWs' work readiness from their experiential perspective within their first three years of work after attaining their qualification, granted this study the opportunity to focus on the missing link so as to better understand the challenges they face or faced.

This study aims to collate, collect, and analyse the experiences of NQSW related to their work readiness to provide SWS to families and children in Gauteng. The lacuna which the study will attend to is the lack of information regarding work readiness of NQSW to provide services to families and children from their experiential perspective in South Africa. Based on the research findings, the study will offer recommendations to social workers, supervisors, hiring organisations and the SACSSP related to maintaining or improving the work readiness of NQSWs in providing services to families and children. This study will provide data and the much-needed synthesised information, from the research findings, about NQSWs' experience of their work readiness to provide services to families and children, competencies and needed support systems from and within a developing country as South Africa. Finally, findings of the study will raise awareness among the key stakeholders on the work readiness and competency challenges faced by NQSWs offering services to families and children during their initial years at work.

4

The overarching research question that this study attempted to answer was the following: "What are the experiences of newly qualified social workers providing SWS to families and children in Gauteng regarding their work readiness to provide these services?"

1.3   GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this study was to explore and describe NQSWs' experiences regarding their work readiness to provide SWS to families and children in Gauteng.

In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives had to be reached:

- To explore and describe NQSWs understanding of 'work readiness' regarding competencies required for service provision to families and children in Gauteng.
- To explore and describe challenges faced by NQSWs in providing services to families and children.
- To explore measures implemented to support NQSWs in providing services to families and children in Gauteng.
- Based on the research findings, to formulate recommendations to social workers, institutions, and organisations to maintain or improve NQSWs' readiness to provide services to families and children in Gauteng.

1.4   OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODS

Interpretivism as a research paradigm was used for this study as it requires that the researcher enters the world of the participants to better understand how they construct meaning (Nieuwenhuis, 2020a:67). As the experiences of NQSWS regarding their readiness to provide SWS to families and children were explored and described, a qualitative research approach was the most appropriate, as the researcher was concerned with understanding the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2020a:67). A qualitative approach was used to better explore and describe, from the viewpoint of participants, the phenomenon while multifaceted questions about the nature of the phenomena are being answered (Fouché, 2021:40). The study's purpose was dual in that it explored and described the experiences of NQSWs in providing SWS to families

5

and children in Gauteng and explored and described their readiness to provide these services. Exploratory research aims to preliminary investigate a relatively unknown phenomenon and generate new information (Mouton, 2001:103 in De Jager, 2014:472) and descriptive research aim to accurately describe a phenomenon (Durrheim, 2006:44 in De Jager, 2014:472).

The type of research that was conducted in this study is that of applied research. This type of research uses information gathered to expand on what is known about a phenomenon and to help practitioners and policymakers use this knowledge to make decisions and provide services more successfully (Hilton, Fawson, Sullivan & DeJong, 2019:8).

The research design that was utilised in the study is a case study and more specifically the sub-type instrumental case study design which is generally used in explorative and descriptive studies (Yin, 1994 in Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:90). Instrumental case study is put to use for a purpose other than to comprehend a specific circumstance, and it offers understanding of a problem (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:90). The research explored and described the work readiness of NQSWs in providing services to families and children, hence the reason for using a case study research design as it is a modern-day inquiry of a phenomenon that is in the context of the real-world (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:89).

The study population was NQSWs in the Gauteng Province, who are rendering SWS to children and families. This research made use of non-probability sampling, which can be described as a sampling method that does not use random selection of the research participants (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). It is mostly used in the qualitative approach where the specific features of individuals are relevant to select them as part of the sample (Flick, 2018:174).

For the purpose of this research, the researcher specifically used purposive sampling to select NQSWs who are rendering SWS to children and families in Gauteng Province (Maree & Pietersen, 2021:220; Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:34). Inclusion criteria and a letter of introduction were given to each of the purposively selected organisations employing NQSWs who identified possible participants in their organisation.

The participants were selected according to the following selection criteria:

- Participants had to be available and willing to participate in the research study.
- Participants had to be employed as a social worker with a maximum of three years' experience in rendering SWS to children and families.
- Participants had to provide SWS to families and children in Gauteng.
- Participants had to be registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions.
- Participants had to be able to converse in English.

Interviews were scheduled and conducted with participants who volunteered and who signed the informed consent form. The aim of a qualitative research interview is to see the world through the eyes of the participant who is seen as a valuable source of information (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:108). The aim of using interviews to collect data is always to obtain rich descriptive data that will help a researcher to understand the participants' construction of knowledge and social reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:108; Adams, 2015:493). Interviews continued until the point of data saturation was reached. In total, 7 participants participated in the study.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews which included a short guide of open-ended questions that were used to motivate the participants to share more information about their experience in readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Yates & Leggett 2016:226; DeJonckheere & Vaughn 2019:6). All research interviews were audio recorded through the use of an audio recording device. Permission was obtained in advance from the participants to record the interviews.

The method of data analysis was thematic analysis using an inductive and latent approach for coding as the researcher interpreted, explored, and described the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:2).

In order to ensure that qualitative research is of the appropriate standard, trustworthiness is vital. The researcher, therefore, ensured trustworthiness with consideration of the study's credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Anney, 2014:7-15; Nieuwenhuis, 2020c:144-146; Nowell et al., 2017:3).

The researcher pilot tested the proposed interview schedule with one participant who adhered to the required criteria as described above. This particular participant was included in the main investigation. A pilot test may assist the researcher to affirm, revise or sharpen the data collection tools by amending the order, structure, or wording of questions to accomplish the goals of the study (Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:41).

Ethical values including mutual respect and accountability promoting cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, are essential in collaborative work and were therefore essential to this research study (Resnik, 2020). Ethical considerations that guided this study included avoidance of harm, informed consent, voluntary participation, no deception of participants, and anonymity and confidentiality.

More detail concerning the research methods used in the study is reflected in Chapter 3, Section A.

1.5   CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The research report consists of four chapters.

Chapter 1: General Introduction
The first chapter focused on the contextualisation of the research study through an introduction, problem statement and rationale, goal and objectives, and research methods utilised in search of answering the research question.

Chapter 2: Literature Review
This chapter focuses on the mandate for social workers providing services to families and children, SWS offered to families and children, and NQSWs readiness to enter the workforce and provide services to families and children. Lastly, this chapter focused on the theoretical framework.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology, Empirical Findings, and Interpretation
This chapter outlines the research methods utilised, as well as the ethical considerations. In addition, the empirical findings are discussed and interpreted.

Chapter 4: Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The fourth and final chapter focuses on discussing the achievement of the goal and objectives of the study, as well as key findings of the research. Conclusions regarding data of the research study are, moreover, drawn and recommendations made.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This literature review focuses on NQSWs within the field of families and children and their readiness for the workplace in their transition from graduate to employee. The review aims to investigate SWS offered to families and children globally and within the South African context, and the mandate of these services.

NQSWs are expected to be ready for the workplace upon graduating. In reality, this does not happen seamlessly and requires sufficient attention in the review.

2.2   MANDATE FOR SWS PROVIDING SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

SWs work in accordance with national and international policies. This is essential in providing quality services to families and children. Munro (2010: 31) suggests that there is a need for a policy framework which acknowledges the intricacies of SW and its emotional and intellectual demands, and the complex and emotionally charged decisions SW have to make especially when working with children.

2.2.1 INTERNATIONAL POLICIES

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development was first proposed in March of 1995. The Declaration placed a strong focus on the elimination of poverty as a global ethical, social, political, and economic need (Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, 1995). It can thus be asserted that SWS globally should focus on these when providing services to children and families.

Procedures and protocols focussed specifically on child and family SW were developed internationally from the 2000s to reduce risks to children, families, and organisations. The shortcoming of these were however that they were not developed

to protect SWs when they are required to use their professional judgement when working with the complexities of this field (Welbourne, 2012:51). This poses a concern for NQSWs as they might be at risk due to the complex field they enter.

Best practices for SWs in child welfare were pioneered by the National Association of SW (NASW, 2012). Standards for SWs must accommodate evolving practices and policies outside of child protection while also reflecting and promoting good SW practice across the whole spectrum of child welfare services. The NASW Standards for SW Practice in Child Welfare are updated on a regular basis to match changing practice standards and to better represent the principles of the profession. These guidelines can be seen as a fundamental tool for SWs who work in the field of child welfare. The child welfare industry has undergone numerous significant practice and policy changes since the NASW Child Protection Standards were first established. Child welfare is a specialised field of practice that is impacted by and contributes to changes in policy, research, and practice models (NASW, 2012).

Although there are policies internationally governing SWS, two studies (Leeson, 2007; Morgan, 2011) found that children did not always have a good relationship with SWs who provided services to them, as they felt that they were not participants in these services. The lack of participation is linked to the bureaucracy of SWS as discussed in Section 2.3.1, and what practitioners believe they know of the needs of children and families. It could be asserted from the above that although policies and services were previously aimed at families and children, it is unclear if service users were actively involved previously in international policy making to focus on their actual needs.

2.2.2 NATIONAL/DOMESTIC POLICIES

In the colonial and apartheid state of South Africa family policies favoured one racial group over the others. These policies have however evolved in our post-apartheid and democratic society to include and provide services to all citizens of the country (Nicholas, 2022:313).

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) was created in accordance with the United Nations World Summit for Social Development, which took place in March 1995. At the

time, it was discovered that there was no national agreement in South Africa on a welfare policy framework. The White Paper for Social Welfare put forward the social development approach to welfare in South Africa, with one focus area on strengthening and promoting family life through family-oriented policies and programmes. The document outlined the need for preventative programmes to focus on high-risk groups vulnerable to social problems. These groups included children and youth at risk. Community development strategies also specifically mentioned the development of family-centred and community-based programmes. In order to increase human resource capacity which was one of the focuses of the White paper, SWs were to be employed to address the needs of communities and those at risk.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) includes a Bill of Rights that addresses children's rights. According to Section 28, every child has the right to appropriate alternative care, family care, or parental care. In addition, they have the right to social assistance, protection against abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and degradation, and the right to have their best interests taken into consideration in all decisions that have an impact on them.

Expanding preventative programmes will reduce the demand for early intervention, statutory, and aftercare services, according to the DSD's long-term national strategic plan (DSD National Strategic Plan, 2013:7). The White Paper on Families (Republic of South Africa, Department of Social Development, 2021) also guides SWS as it places an emphasis on promoting family well-being, supporting families by empowering them through physical, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, and intellectual care and support. The White Paper on Families specifies SWS as a cornerstone of the implementation of the document's strategic priorities.

The Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 mandates SW scope of practice within South Africa. SWs practising in South Africa must also adhere to the principles outlined in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 when working with children and their families. The principles set out by the act include social integration, social participation, empowerment, universal access, self-reliance, appropriateness, and accessibility. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 can thus be viewed as the main mandate SWs should adhere to when working with children and their families to ensure their rights during service

delivery, while considering other relevant policies. Although these policies outline the SW scope of practice, it should be considered that a lack of policy implementation remains in the country, which has dire consequences on families (Strydom, Schiller, Orme, 2020:385).

Although there are mandates many South African families experience instability due to social issues including poverty, gender-based violence, sexual abuse, child abuse, neglect, drug abuse, and criminality, among other afflictions (RSA, 2021). The onus however is still on families as they are primarily responsible for providing children with care, security, and stability (Nicholas, 2022:313). Families might thus feel isolated from service providers such as SWs due to the complex challenges they face.

When rendering services to families and children it is important for SWs to work in accordance with the mandates as discussed in this section. It is thus important for NQSWs to be familiar with these mandates in order to provide quality services to families and children.

2.3   SERVICES OFFERED TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN BY SWs

As evident in the following section, throughout international and national history SWS play a crucial role in SWs provide a range of services to families and children in need of assistance.

2.3.1 INTERNATIONALLY

Child and family welfare work as named globally is a broad field and has been a key field practice for SWs throughout the years (Challis & Ferlie, 1988; Bome, 2004; Healy & Meager, 2007:322). Families formed the essence of SWS from the earliest practices of SW. Family preservation services formally originated in California in the 1970s with a programme called the Home-builders programme which spread across the United States. Family-centred service is a philosophy and approach to providing services that places an emphasis on the collaboration between parents and service providers, allowing families to participate in the provision of services to their children. Since families include children, the family context must be considered when providing SWS

(Nhedz & Makofane, 2015:354), as this will ensure that there is collaboration in order to provide services that meets the needs of both families and children.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, and promote the development of a peaceful, prosperous society by 2030, were accepted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The Sustainable SDGs are an appeal to create a future where no one is left behind. The SDGs cannot be achieved if children's rights are not upheld. More than a hundred Member States have reaffirmed their commitment to children's rights in the context of attaining the SDGs. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) collaborates with governments, partners, and other UN agencies to ensure that the objectives are met (UNICEF, 2021). SWs are thus crucial in ensuring that families and children throughout the world receive adequate services as in line with the SDGs.

Rogowski (2013:60) indicates that in the United Kingdom there is a 'preoccupation with risk' when it comes to services to children and families, as protection and safeguarding of children led to bureaucracy of SWS. It is further mentioned that there is often only a brief one-off encounter with children and families focussed on assessment, the paperwork then must be completed as quickly as possible which is often the end of the intervention. The risks these SW deal with are often also out of their control and have to be controlled by the appropriate bodies such as the NASW.

Welbourne (2012:1) suggests that SWs working with children and families must be able to balance their work in order to support families with an emphasis on child protection services. With the demands of child protective services, this often takes preference over SWs roles to provide preventative services internationally. Another significant consideration for working with children and families is the notion to investigate cases in which things went wrong to discover important things in improving or developing practice (Welbourne, 2012:15). There is thus a need internationally to reconsider SWS and risk assessment.

2.3.2 NATIONALLY

SWS differ from country to country due to different policies and legislation. In South Africa, a shift took place in social welfare services which was informed by the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), and social services developed from a corrective approach to a developmentally oriented approach due to the political and socio-economic climate. SWs were thus no longer rendering services to correct a child or family's situation, but rather started to focus on preventative services (Ziyambi, 2020:20).

South African legislation requires SWs to focus on four levels of intervention when working with children and families, namely preventative services, early intervention, statutory services, and aftercare services (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015:355). Preventative services focus on preventing social issues within families which can adversely affect children and traumatise them. When preventative services are not successful, early intervention services are provided which entails identifying and addressing problems before they cause severe trauma to children. If this fails, SWs provide statutory and aftercare services including treatment, rehabilitation and reunification to families and children to remedy the trauma children experienced (Ziyambi, 2020:24:25).

SWs employed at the DSD are tasked with addressing all service levels in child welfare, including preventive, early intervention, statutory, and aftercare services. SWs in government agencies work together with non-profit organisations to deliver statutory services across the nation with funding from the DSD (Strydom et al., 2020:384). Non-government organisations (NGOs) are however continuously under constraints such as being under-resourced and overwhelmed with a high prevalence of child abuse and neglect which they have to address (Van Niekerk & Matthias, 2019).

Nicholas (2022:318) highlights that although we need families to build society, we require children to sustain and develop society. This emphasises the importance of SWs providing quality services to children, with the assistance of legislation to act in the best interest of children. SW as a profession has always focussed on meeting human needs and developing resources to ensure positive change in the lives of their

service users (International Federation of Social Workers, 1992:7). Children in turn should be educated on their rights and responsibilities as this will assist them to protect themselves against abuse (Nicholas, 2022:321), SWs thus have an important role to play in the education of children's rights and responsibilities and should advocate for them.

A child-centred perspective commits the SW to investigate the child's experiences and places the child at the core of the family and community resources system (Toros, Tiko & Saia, 2013; Andiema, 2016). Schoeman (2019:3) asserts that when working with children, it is often more effective to work with the family and subsystems of the child, as this can lead to growth and development within the child and their systems. In line with the Social Services Professions Act 110 of 1978, SWs strive for improving social functioning of people. SW within the South African developmental welfare system are catalysts for children, their families, and communities. Families are however still often seemingly unaware of the SW scope of practice and how to seek assistance from SWs in order to assist them with psychosocial support and counselling (Nicholas, 2022:331,333). NQSW thus also have a role to play in raising awareness and educating the community regarding services available to them, to ensure that children and families in need are able to make use of SWS.

2.4 THE TRANSITION OF NEWLY QUALIFIED SWs FROM HEIs TO THE WORKPLACE

The term NQSW is widely referred to and understood as the 12- to 18 and 24-month interval between graduating and entering practice (Cloete, 2012; Janse van Rensburg, 2009; Pretorius, 2020; Tham & Lynch, 2014; Wolfaardt, 2022;). This period is referred to as the 'transitional period', as NQSWs enters the workforce while undergoing a transitional internal and external process to become a competent, confident, and expert SW (Tham & Lynch, 2014:706). Janse van Rensburg (2009:2) concurs that a NQSW is a SW who has worked in the field for less than two years.

The success of the transition of NQSWs from HEIs to the workplace depends on certain key elements such as their own confidence in their ability to perform their new workplace requirements, as well as the quality of their induction, supervision, and

support (Hunt et al., 2017:139). Moorhead, Bell, Jones-Mutton, Boetto, and Bailey (2019) refers to NQSWs in their first year of practice, as developing professionals. The final training necessary for the intricate activities required of SWs should thus be done in the workplace or organisation they enter through a collaborative approach (Tham & Lynch, 2019:408). Findings by Jansen (2017) supports this with emphasis placed on induction and workplace support, it can be asserted that this influences the confidence of the NQSW to perform the duties expected of them.

2.4.1 READINESS FOR WORK

'Readiness' is defined as an evaluation of an NQSWs ability to practice professionally (Nathaniel, 2018:4). In the South African context, there are three important stakeholders involved in the NQSWs practice. The initial stakeholder is considered the tertiary institution during the formal education process, whereas the next stakeholder is the SW organisation that employs the NQSW (Wolfaardt 2022:158; Mokoka, 2016:79) and finally, the NQSW themself. The concept of work 'readiness' is based on the expectations of both NQSWs and supervisors and is therefore subject to negotiation (Nathaniel 2018:7). The three stakeholders including the tertiary institution, employer, and NQSW thus all play an intricate part in the NQSWs readiness for practice.

During their tertiary studies, SW students are expected to have gained certain key competencies and capacities. While studying they are expected to develop characteristics such as emotional intelligence, critical thinking, practical knowledge, report writing, administration (Parker 2017:2). Parker (2017: 235) further observes that readiness can be defined as foundational and functional competencies. Parker (2017: ii) also identifies "emotional intelligence; anti-discriminatory supervisory practices; professional relationships; and ethical practices and legal knowledge" as key competencies for both supervisors and NQSWs. In essence, it is the knowledge, values, and skills that the supervisor brings to the supervisor-supervisee relationship that determine the competence of the latter.

Studies found that NQSWs' opinion on whether they are competent to work in a specific field was influenced by their placement experience while studying for their degree and

17

their interactions during this period with qualified SWs (McSweeney & Williams, 2019:360-361). Manthorpe, Moriarty, Stevens, Hussein, and Sharpe (2014:109) found a direct link between whether NQSWs felt that their degree prepared them for their current position and if they felt ready for practice. It was also found that NQSWs who received induction, had supportive managers, supervisors, and colleagues, the ability to translate values into practice, their workload, and working conditions significantly influenced their job satisfaction and feeling ready to practice. It can thus be asserted that support and supervision are essential in assisting NQSWs feeling equipped for their new role in the workplace.

Within the South African context there are no regulatory induction or support programmes for NQSWs, and a general lack of induction and orientation programmes for SWs entering the field are perceived (Department of Social Development, 2015:9). This in term implies that NQSWs in South Africa could perceive their new workplace environment as daunting depending on whether there is adequate support and continuous professional development programmes. The SACSSP is currently in the process of developing induction standards for a National Job Readiness Induction programme with a focus on enhancing and facilitating the employability of NQSWs and unemployed SWs (SACSSP, 2021). The government however has a program that is solely dedicated to the orientation of new employees. This program attempts to assist new practitioners to align themselves with the core duties and objectives of the DSD, thus excluding those NQSWs working within NGOs (SACSSP, 2019).

2.4.2 CHALLENGES DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF NQSWS ENTERING THE WORKPLACE

According to a Swedish study of twelve NQSWs by Tham and Lynch (2019:401-408), transitioning from HEIs to the workplace is often a challenging process as it entails both organisational and individual components. NQSWs in this study often felt isolated and had to manage their work on their own. NQSWs mentioned a lack of practical skills such as handling aggressive or difficult service users which had a direct link to their feelings of 'readiness for practice'. Those who had the opportunity to "shadow" experienced colleagues felt better equipped to do their job, placing an emphasis on the need of NQSWs to pay close attention to the practice of colleagues; however, this

in turn poses difficulties for organisations with high caseloads. Supervision was also an important factor influencing the transition of NQSWs, as well as organisations that do not have good structures and policies in place. It is thus evident that NQSWs are faced with complex challenges within their transitional phase within the workplace.

Wolfaardt (2022:20) emphasises the difficulty of transitioning from HEIs into the workplace as NQSWs are quickly exposed to demands such as high caseloads, the question of whether to implement procedures, steps and theories learnt during their studies, or delivering time-efficient services to one service user in order to move on to helping the next. The study by Tham and Lynch (2019:404) also highlighted the lack of support and induction programmes for NQSWs who enter the workplace. In the study most participants did not receive a formal induction into the workplace. It is not only the NQSW who seemingly are faced with challenges in this transitional period. Employers of NQSWs also frequently face obstacles caused by an organisational requirement for the newly qualified and appointed SW to begin successfully working with high caseloads as soon as possible (Allcock,2019:1).

As per previous findings, some social work skills can only be gained from practical experience (Healy et al., 2009; McFadden, 2013; Radey & Stanley, 2018; Tham & Lynch, 2019, 2021). The NQSWs thus has to enter into the workplace first to learn practical skills. This would require experienced colleagues and supervisors assistance and CPD in the workplace.

For the NQSW, the volume and complexity of work are likely to present the biggest obstacles (Carpenter, Shardlow, Patsios & Wood, 2015:154). Welbourne (2012:17) asserts that SW often in hindsight lose sight of their service users as individuals, in this case children and their family members, as they must accommodate bureaucratic needs such as administrative tasks. This in turn influences their relationship with their service user, as they tend to not have regular personal contacts with their child service users. The organisational requirements for NQSWs will thus have a direct impact on the children and families they work with. Since student SWs are usually not exposed to high caseloads and other organisational issues, it could be ascertained that it could create an inner conflict when they enter the workplace and are not able to provide the quality of service, they strive for using their values and skills obtained at HEIs.

In South Africa SWs are exposed to poor working conditions, low salaries, and a lack of resources which often leads to higher caseloads for NQSWs. The work environment NQSWs enter into, especially some non-governmental organisations, do not have the basic resources for SWs to be able to provide quality services (Calitz, Roux & Strydom, 2014; Joseph, 2017; Kheswa, 2019; Wolfaardt, 2022). Whether NQSWs are prepared for the challenges when they enter this field requires further investigation, as NQSWs expectations upon entering the field should be managed to be more realistic (Beddoe, Ballantyne, Maidment, Hay & Walker, 2020; Nunev, 2014; Wolfaardt, 2022). It should thus be considered whether NQSWs are ready to face the bureaucratic challenges and lack of resources SWs in general are seemingly faced with.

2.4.3 EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS THE NEW WORKPLACE HAS ON NQSWS

Gallop (2018:43) describes the first year of practice for NQSWs as 'stressful'. This time period in which NQSWs find themselves could thus be viewed as the cornerstone of how they perceive their careers, and decisions NQSW makes regarding leaving the profession early on during their careers.

A study by Jack & Donnellan (2010:308) on early careers of NQSWs in the childcare sector in England found that although NQSWs had grown in confidence and enjoyed "some aspects of their first year in post-qualification practice", they often experienced entering practice as "extremely challenging and even traumatic". They found their new careers to be emotionally demanding and stressful, having a negative impact on their personal lives. Some NQSWs experienced difficulty sleeping and required additional emotional support in their relationships during this period. They also felt that although their supervisors had an open-door policy, there was not adequate time for their supervision needs which in turn had adverse emotional and psychological effects on them. The participants managers recognised the high emotional demands the NQSWs were facing, but struggled to provide the protection and support they required due to their own feelings of inadequate support in their roles. Grant et al. (2017) and Walker (2014) concur that NQSWs do not have the opportunity in supervision to reflect on feelings and experiences, as the focus is mostly on case discussion during supervision.

A supportive environment for the NQSW is emphasised, as Joubert (2019:710) suggests that support enables SWs to link theory and practice which is required to adequately fulfil their new role. Since working with children and families is a demanding field as mentioned by Welbourne (2012:31), SWs should engage in meaningful relationships with children and families in order to support them. This may be time consuming and emotionally demanding, but in the long-term may be less emotionally demanding and more rewarding than the way of working distinguished by a task-oriented approach that is shaped by organisational demands. Wilbourne (2012:93) further provides a direct link between the quality of services SWs provide and their state of mind which is related to the quality of support from supervision, their managers, and peers. It is thus essential especially for NQSWs to have a supportive environment that will enable them to provide services that not only meets the needs of their service users but is also beneficial to their own emotional wellbeing. SWs should thus also rethink their way of working in order to be able to essentially counter the emotional and psychological toll on them within the field.

Tang and Li (2021) conducted a study on burnout of 1,638 NQSWs in China in their first year of employment. The results of this study indicated that burnout substantially correlated with stress that NQSWs experienced in terms of decreasing personal accomplishment, depersonalisation, and emotional exhaustion. These findings correlated with other studies that suggested stress in the workplace in NQSWs could lead to poor mental health and impaired cognitive abilities, as well as burnout (Calitz et al., 2014; Wolfaardt, 2022) As NQSWs are exposed to stress within their working environment, this often has a negative impact on their professional identity development (Pretorius, 2020; Joseph, 2017). It can be asserted that this would have a direct impact on the quality of services NQSWs provide.

2.4.4 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NQSWS

According to Grant et al. (2017:502) NQSWs have a need for continuing professional development (CPD) when they enter into the workplace. Moriarty and Manthorpe (2014) suggested that SW education should be viewed as a developmental process, and that the SW qualification should not be seen as the end product. This thus also places an emphasis on the importance of CPD. It is also suggested that NQSWs

should take responsibility to seek CPD activities, and a collaborative approach between NQSWs and their supervisors and employers is required to ensure that educational needs of NQSWs are met (Wolfaardt, 2022).

2.5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE EXPERIENCES OF NQSWS IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

According to Joubert (2021:698) the first major study on the effectiveness of SW education and the general readiness of NQSWs to practice took place in the UK (Marsh and Triseiotis, 1996). This study focussed on the opinions of NQSWs and their first-line managers, and the findings were that the majority of NQSWs in the UK at the time felt prepared to practice. In 2002 a similar study by Pithouse and Scourfield (2002) focusing on NQSWs in Wales who completed their Diploma in SW. The findings were that in the opinion of supervisors and senior managers of these NQSWs their SWs had adequate training for practice. Through this study the question however arises of what preparedness and readiness for practice means for different NQSWs and their organisations. These studies were however not focussed specifically on SWs within the field of children and families.

Studies on the preparedness of NQSWs' to provide services to families and children reflect a two-fold experience. An important reason reflects NQSWs not feeling adequately prepared to apply what they have learnt in the class, to the practice realities. A study by De Jager (2014) on the reflections of NQSWs, found that NQSWs did not feel equipped for statutory work upon graduating, and that they had difficulty applying theory to practice as their roles consisted mostly of providing child protection services.

A second reality is that while NQSWs entered the workplace with enthusiasm and confidence, the realities of the job and the organisational circumstances in which it was performed eventually caused levels of frustration and discontent to rise which was evident from a study in Scotland regarding NQSWs' readiness for practice (Hunt et al., 2017:154). The workplace these NQSWs enter has shown to have a direct link to their experiences in terms of employer support, supervision, and ongoing continuous professional development opportunities (Hunt et al., 2017:154). This sharp fall in

NQSWs' well-being looked to be the result of their employers' failure to adequately acknowledge the individual within the emerging profession. As a result of this, NQSWs were found to be poorly equipped to provide services to families and children (Grant et al., 2016: 506).

SWs within the Child Protection field are reported to often be faced with hostility and resistance from families they work with as they view these SWs as a threat due to not being able to ensure safety and protection to their children (Vetfuti, Goliath & Perumal, 2019:2). It can be asserted that the provision of services to families and children also poses a risk for NQSWs. This then poses the question again of whether these NQSWs are adequately and realistically prepared for the complex field they enter.

The notion of a harsh collision with reality that accompany newly qualified students into the working environment, referred to as a 'baptism of fire' and 'hitting the ground running' is recurring metaphors from the studies mentioned above (Bates, Parker, Keen, Rutter, Brown, & Zsigo, 2010:152; Newberry, 2014:42). It is thus critical that SW students already start to develop a realistic perspective of their future profession prior to entering practice, regardless of which field they will enter, and to seek assistance from seasoned colleagues and managers.

In the South African context, it is highlighted by Vetfuti et al. (2019:3) that the support function of supervision to SWs is lacking. The support function of supervision facilitates decision-making and provides practical assistance and a sensitive ear if a SW is in distress. If there is support, it may allow for reflective practice by the SW and assist them with emotional difficulties and building resilience. It has been questioned whether it is fair and workable for supervisors to be answerable for the professional development of new graduates, safeguarding children, and the administrative chores expected by their organisation given the focus on supervision for assisting NQSWs (Allcock, 2019). The amount of help required to accomplish all three of these tasks, as well as if additional strategies could be used by organisations is mostly unexplored in literature (Welbourne, 2021), seemingly nationally and internationally. If NQSWs receive adequate supervision that supports them and builds resilience, it would possibly counter the emotional and psychological effect their role has on them.

2.6   KNOWLEDGE GAP WITHIN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Although various studies have been conducted related to NQSW's challenges in different fields, there is a lack of research pertaining to the challenges NQSWs face within the field of services to families and children in South Africa. A study with SWs within the field of families and children found that these SWs felt ill equipped when providing services to families and children, with one participant reporting that they felt 'confused' when working in family preservation (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015:368). SWs in general reported struggling to manage high caseloads, and that the focus of their services was mostly on crisis management. Another challenge reported was a lack of supportive services and inter-organisational cooperation, and that SWs within the field felt that they had burn-out (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015:368; Dlangamandla, 2010:90; Strydom, 2010:196,199). When interrogating literature and previous studies it became clear that SWs working with families and children are faced with various challenges, however these studies provided, do not specifically focus on NQSWs.

A challenge that leaves the NQSW in no man's land is the discrepancy between what the supervisors at hiring organisations observe about NQSW's work readiness and competencies, and institutions and the NQF exit profile (Wolfaardt, 2022:22-24). In essence, in terms of expectations related to work readiness, literature seems to suggest that there is a discrepancy between the NQF exit profile and the employment entry profile within the South African context (Wolfaardt, 2022:22; Mokoka, 2016:79).

Wolfaardt (2022: i) submits that "readiness is a concept that is interpreted differently amongst various entities, and thus, it is impossible to satisfy all individuals' expectations as to what constitutes an NQSW that is ready for practice." This raises another dimension that this study seeks to explore. While studies have shown both the perspectives and experiences of supervisors (on behalf of the organisations) and NQF expectations (related to the education process) what remains missing, is the voice of the NQSWs. In essence, this problematises the interpretation, use, and acceptance of the parameters that define and characterise the concept of work readiness as it relates to NQSWs and their preparedness to offer SWS to families and children.

24

The findings from this study are envisaged to inform continuous curriculum re-alignment, supervision processes at the workplace, CPD, and SW profession regulation within South Africa. While studies have been undertaken that have focussed on the readiness of NQSWs from either a supervisory or curriculum perspective (South African Council for Social Service Professions 2020; 2021; Spolander, Sanfacon, Brown, Engelbrecht, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2019:650; Engelbrecht & Ncube, 2021; Engelbrecht, Ornellas, Strydom, Slabbert, Zimba, Khosa & Cornelissen-Nordien, 2021:557; Wolfaardt, 2022). A study that locates NQSWs in respect of their work readiness to dispense SWS to families and children is needed not only within the South African context but also internationally.

As discussed in Section 2.5, a study by Vetfuti et. al. (2019) on the supervisory experiences of SWs in child protection services found that SWs were exposed to high caseloads and mental exhaustion, often resulting in burnout. This study however did not focus on NQSWs. It should thus be interrogated if the participants were NQSWs, if the results would have been different, as evidence from various authors suggests that findings might be similar (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015:368; Dlangamandla, 2010:90; Strydom, 2010:196,199). From these previous studies it was evident that NQSWs do not feel ready for the workplace, and a collaborative effort is required from HEIs and organisations to assist them in becoming ready for the workplace.

2.7   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theory of Collaborative Advantage (TCA) will be applied as the theoretical framework of this study. As defined by Wood and Gray (1991:11) collaboration is a procedure that involves a collection of independent stakeholders interested in a topic or issue in an interactive discourse, with the purpose of sharing knowledge and taking coordinated action.

Collaboration makes it possible for one to achieve visions as there is a wide range of available resources and expertise from other people and not limited to only one's own resources and expertise (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:3). When partnership takes place between public organisations and between non-profit organisations, this is when collaborative advantage is achieved (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:3). TCA is derived from

practitioner's research on issues that are of concern to them, in which action is needed. This theory is based on management of collaboration, and it is a practice-based theory (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:1). TCA, a work-in-progress that was introduced in 1989, was developed because of a study that included a range of collaborations which ranged from dyads to international networks that addressed numerous areas such as health, education, drug abuse, economic growth, community planning, poverty alleviation and many other topics (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:1).

According to the concept of collaborative advantage, synergy can be attained by collaborating the resources and skills of several organisations. The combination of the resources of various organisations, enables organisations to do things that none of them could do independently. Therefore, in theory, collaboration offers organisations the chance to continuously vary and develop their portfolio and thus realise whatever goals they may have (Huxham & Vangen, 2006:3). The significant interest and investment in collaboration assumes that collaboration improves people's and organisations' capacity to achieve health and health system goals (Lasker, Weiss & Miller, 2001:183).

Access to resources, shared risk, efficiency, and learning are a few common elements for collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:5-7). When it comes to resources, organisations frequently work together if they cannot accomplish their goals using only their own resources. This necessitates combining various resources, such as expertise (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:5). Collaborations between businesses from the public and non-profit sectors are frequently projected to require the sharing of resources, skills, contacts, and information. For instance, to address youth criminal justice issues, cooperation between the police, legal professionals, probation services, schools, and neighbourhood and youth groups is the norm (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:5).

A common set of norms and procedures is proposed to govern interactions and stakeholders sharing a topic of interest is of importance when working collaboratively (Gray & Purdy, 2018:1). By examining it from the perspectives of all the stakeholders, teamwork aims to develop a richer, more complete understanding of the issue/problem than any of them could do alone (Gray & Purdy, 2018:2). Moreover, collaboration is

also described by various authors as a method that enables persons and organisations to reach goals through the combination of human and material resources (Kanter 1994; Lasker, Weiss & Miller, 1997; Mayo 1997; Wandersman, Goodman, and Butterfoss 1997; Zuckerman, Kaluzny, and Ricketts 1995 in Lasker et al., 2001:183).

Linking this theory to the context of the proposed research study, the collaboration required would be between NQSW with supervisors and other experienced SW colleagues to enhance NQSWs readiness for practice. CPD is necessary for NQSWs in order to obtain skills that they might not have learnt during their studies. Supervisors and experienced colleagues have knowledge and skills they can teach NQSWs, collaborative advantage will thus be achieved. Moreover, these collaborations go beyond supervisors and experienced SWs and extend to other professionals who provide services to families and children, such as services within the court and related legal professionals, police, and schools. When following a collaborative approach, NQSWs are better equipped to achieve their tasks which links clearly to theory. Collaborative advantage enables independent individuals and organisations to pool their human and material resources to achieve goals that they are unable to achieve on their own (Kanter 1994; Lasker et al. 1997; Mayo 1997; Wandersman, Goodman, and Butterfoss 1997; Zuckerman, Kaluzny, and Ricketts 1995 in Lasker et al., 2001:183).The collaboration between NQSWs, supervisors and experienced SWs will assist in reaching organisational goals and therefore fulfil the developmental needs of NQSWs who are required to provide services to families and children. Working collaboratively will also ensure that services to families and children are enhanced.

2.8   CONCLUSION

In this chapter literature was reviewed with the focus on the readiness of NQSWs to provide services to families and children. The challenges as reported in previous studies NQSWs are faced with in the workplace was explored, as well as the emotional and psychological impact this has on the NQSW. As evident throughout this chapter NQSWs entering the workplace are often faced with challenges they were possibly not prepared for. Furthermore, the mandate for SWs working with children and families was discussed in order to gain a better understanding of what governs the SW scope of practice on a national and international level, and what services SWs provide to children and families on a national and international level. Through this it became

evident that NQSWs are required to be conversant with national and international policies in order to ensure they provide quality services to families and children. Lastly this chapter reviewed previous studies on the readiness of NQSWs to provide services to families and children, and where the knowledge gap is in terms of the study. There is seemingly a lack of research focussing on the challenges NQSWs are faced with when providing services specifically to children and families. The theory of collaborative advantage will be utilised as the theoretical framework for this study to identify and propose how collaboration from stakeholders including HEIs, organisations and NQSWs themselves can be improved in order to ensure that future NQSWs will be equipped for practice in the field when working with children and families.

The following chapter will include the research methods utilised in this study, as well as the ethical considerations. In addition, the empirical findings will be discussed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, EMPIRICAL FINDINGS, AND INTERPRETATION

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to explore and describe NQSWs experiences regarding their readiness to provide services to children and families. The research methodology used for the study, the empirical data, and interpretation thereof is included in this chapter. The research methodology is described in Section A, and the research findings and interpretation are described in Section B.

SECTION A: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology implemented in this study will be discussed in this section.

3.2   RESEARCH APPROACH

This study was guided by interpretivism as a research paradigm. The researcher was required through this paradigm to enter the world of the participants to understand how they construct meaning of their perceptions and experiences. The researcher entered into the world of the participants (NQSWs) to gain an understanding of how they construct meaning to the phenomenon of readiness of NQSWs providing services to families and children (Nieuwenhuis, 2020a:67). This was done through social constructs such as language including text, consciousness, and shared meanings (Nieuwenhuis, 2020a:67).

The interpretivist paradigm was used to explore the experiences of NQSWs providing SWS to families and children, by means of conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants. The researcher was able to better comprehend the phenomena and the significance that the participants attributed to it through the transcription of the interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2020a:67).

© University of Pretoria

A qualitative research approach was utilised as it explored and described the viewpoints of participants while answering multifaceted questions regarding the readiness of NQSWs providing services to families and children (Fouché, 2021:40). The study was aimed at understanding the experiences of NQSWs readiness in providing SWS to families and children, and a qualitative research approach was subsequently the most appropriate (Fouché, 2021:42).

Exploratory and descriptive research was conducted with the dual purpose of exploring and describing the experiences of NQSWs in providing SWS to families and children in Gauteng, and exploring and describing their readiness to provide these services and support systems (Durrheim, 2006:44 in De Jager, 2014:472; Mouton, 2001:103 in De Jager, 2014:472).

3.3   TYPE OF RESEARCH

Applied research was conducted in this study, as information was gathered to expand on information regarding the phenomenon, and to assist practitioners and policymakers to use this knowledge when making decisions and to improve future service delivery (Hilton, Fawson, Sullivan & DeJong, 2019:8).

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

An instrumental case study design was implemented in this study, which is generally used in explorative and descriptive studies (Yin, 1994 in Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:90). The instrumental case study design offered the researcher an understanding of the phenomenon of experiences and readiness of NQSWs to provide services to children and families in Gauteng (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:90). An advantage of utilising this research design for the study was that the researcher and the participants collaborated and shared experiences which assisted the researcher in gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Crabtree & Miller, 1999 in Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:90). The researcher and participants (NQSWs) worked together to explore and describe the research phenomenon according to the theory of collaborative advantage (Vangen & Huxham, 2013:1).

3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

This study followed specific research methods in accordance with a qualitative case study design, including identifying and recruiting a study population and sampling the population, whereafter data was collected and analysed. A pilot study was undertaken to test the data collection instrument prior to embarking on the main data collection (Creswell, 2014:296; Singh, 2015:133,134).

3.5.1 Study population and sampling

This section will address the research study population and sampling methods applied in this study.

3.5.1.1 Study Population

A study population is considered a group of individuals with common experiences and attributes that a researcher has shown interest in (Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:34). The study population consisted of NQSWs in Gauteng who works with children and families. The researcher purposely selected NQSWs in Gauteng because social workers are accessible in most Gauteng Province schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, senior centres, NGOs, and numerous public and private organisations.

3.5.1.2 Sampling techniques

Sampling refers to the participants from the research study population, who was engaged and recruited by means of the prescribed procedures of recruiting suitable participants, to take part in the research study through interviews to obtain data (Wagner, Kawulich, Garner, 2012:274) Participants were identified and recruited in line with the research goal and research question as suggested by Leavy (2017:148).

Non-probability sampling was utilised, which can be described as a sampling method that does not use random selection of the research participants (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). It is mostly used in the qualitative approach where the specific features of individuals are relevant to select them as part of the sample (Flick, 2018:174). The

advantages of non-probability sampling are that it is suitable when time (both for final results and when the measuring instrument needs to be tested through a pilot study) and financial resources are limited (Maree & Pietersen, 2020:19).

Purposive sampling was utilised as there was a specific purpose of the research study, which was to gain insight into the experiences of NQSWs' readiness in providing SWS to children and families in Gauteng Province (Maree & Pietersen, 2020:220; Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:34).

Firstly, the researcher contacted Jacaranda and Louis Botha Children's Homes Management and requested assistance to recruit participants through an introduction letter and advertisement. They were provided with the following inclusion criteria:
- Be available and willing to participate in the research study.
- Have been employed as a social worker with a maximum of three years' experience in rendering SWS to children and families.
- Provide SWS to families and children in Gauteng.
- Be registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions.
- Participants must be able to converse in English.

In a qualitative study the sample size is not determined in advance because the researcher collects data until the principle of data saturation is reached, which implies that the sample is complete when no new data is obtained and the themes and categories are saturated (Koch et al 2014:136; Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:92; Creswell 2014: 239). Data saturation was reached after 5 participants were interviewed, however the researcher continued interviewing a further two participants to ensure data saturation. A total of 7 interviews including the pilot study were conducted .

3.5.2 Data collection

Data collection is described as a process of gathering information with the purpose of answering the research question of the study (Wagner et al. 2012:269). Data collection is the core and fundamental aspect in research study, and it interrelates with the research design. According to Räsänen and Nyce (2013:3), collection is the act of acquiring information, while data is the unprocessed version of information that has not

been interpreted by the researcher. For this study, interviews were used as a data collection method. The purpose of conducting interviews was to gather rich descriptive data that would assist the researcher to comprehend how the participants constructed their knowledge and sense of social reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:108; Adams, 2015:493).

The researcher approached the organisational gatekeepers, the managers or social work supervisors, to obtain permission to conduct the research at their organisation and to obtain assistance with the selection of NQSW who are providing services to families and children in Gauteng, to constitute the research study sample. The gatekeepers were provided with an informative letter stating the nature and intention of the research study. Gatekeepers are referred to in the literature as being important contacts that have the authority to grant access into an organisation (Tracy 2013:72). After the gatekeepers identified potential participants the second step of sampling began. The management received permission from potential participants and provided the researcher with information regarding these potential participants affiliated with them. The researcher contacted the possible participants and appointments were made for interviews with the NQSWs who were willing to take part in the study. Participants thus voluntarily took part in the study and those who took part signed the consent form (Strydom & Delport, 2011b:394). The researcher attempted to include NQSWs in different sectors including private, NGO and government.

Data was collected from the volunteered, willing and consenting participants , i.e. NQSWs providing services to families and children in Gauteng. The NQSW was informed about the nature, aims and procedures of the research study. The researcher made arrangements with the research participants, through the provided contact details (telephonic or email) to meet and inform them about the nature and purpose of the study and facilitate a formal research data collection through interviews. They were provided with consent forms for completion and signature, and a copy of the infographic with the details of the research study, as well as the background of the research questions that they will be asked about.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2020b:108) and Adams (2015:492), there are three types of interviews used in qualitative research: open-ended (also known as unstructured),

semi-structured, and structured. As semi-structured interviews are often utilised in research projects to corroborate data emerging from other data sources, the researcher utilised them in the proposed study (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:108). The researcher's aim was to use open-ended questions followed by further probing and clarification during interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2020b:108). Data was collected in a single interview with the NQSW who is rendering SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:38). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with a guide of open-ended questions which was utilised to motivate the participants to share more information about their experience in readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Yates & Leggett 2016:226; DeJonckheere & Vaughn 2019:6). All research interviews were recorded through the use of an audio recording device, whereafter the researcher transcribed the research interviews.

3.5.3 Data analysis

Schurinck, Fouche' and De Vos (2011:397) characterise the process of transferring data into conclusions as qualitative data analysis. This is achieved by refining the majority of the raw data, recognising patterns and themes, and creating a framework to convey the main idea of the data findings (Yates & Leggett 2016:227; Korstjens & Moser 2018:15).

Maree (2020:42-43) states that researchers in the interpretive paradigm mostly prefer to plan an inductive data analysis, which involves words and themes that are allowed to emerge from the data itself, and the use of criteria from the literature to assist with the planning of the data analysis, since the data generation or construction instruments should be constructed accordingly. Selecting the appropriate format for data presentation, such as tables, graphs, or direct quotes, is another crucial component of data analysis (Maree, 2020:43). The method of data analysis that was utilised was thematic analysis with an inductive and latent approach for coding. The researcher interpreted the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:2).

The researcher applied the following steps in the thematic analysis to analyse data (Nowell et al., 2017:4-11; Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017:13-25):

Step 1: Familiarising yourself with your data

The researcher firstly familiarised herself with the recorded data and the notes written during the interviews in the course of the data collection process (Nowell et al., 2017:5). Thereafter the researcher transcribed the interviews and repeatedly read through them, and relistened to the recorded interviews several times in order to gain in-depth understanding of the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Terry et al., 2017:13). By understanding the dataset, the researcher was able to develop codes for generating themes and link the dataset with literature to the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Terry et al., 2017:13). In order to provide an audit trail and confirmation of data analysis and interpretation for validity and adequacy the data collected through interviews were recorded and archived (Nowell et al., 2017:5).

Step 2: Generating initial codes

After becoming acquainted with the dataset, the researcher was able to use it to produce viable initial codes and engage in a theorising exercise that calls for the triangulation, refinement, and revision of codes as the dataset is revised (Terry et al., 2017:17; Nowell et al., 2017:5). A list of initial codes to identify the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province was formulated, whereafter appropriate themes to answer the research question was formulated (Terry et al., 2017:18).

Step 3: Generating themes

This phase is characterised by sorting the code list into relevant themes and clustering and combining these codes into meaningful patterns of themes (Nowell et al., 2017:8; Terry et al., 2017:18). The researcher formulated possible themes by identifying similar features and relationships across the dataset from the generated codes (Terry et al., 2017:18). Themes was identified by bringing together all the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Nowell et al., 2017:8).

Step 4: Reviewing themes

During this phase, the researcher refined and reviewed the code dataset extracts that generated for each theme to consider whether they appear to follow a logical comprehensive pattern (Nowell et al., 2017:9). The validity of each theme was considered to determine whether the themes reflect the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children and in Gauteng Province, through triangulation from the dataset recorded interviews (Nowell et al., 2017:9). Themes were reviewed with assistance from the research supervisor, and in the end six themes, twenty two sub-themes, and fifteen categories were identified.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

Once the researcher formulated appropriate themes that answered the research question, she began the interpretative aspect that represents the experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Nowell et al., 2017:10; Terry et al., 2017:22). Short descriptions of each theme assisted the researcher to determine whether each theme answers the research question and whether there was enough details for each theme (Terry et al., 2017:22). Themes were defined and named with continuous communication between the researcher and her supervisor

Step 6: Producing the report

The final stage of thematic analysis involves the comprehensive establishment of appropriate themes and subthemes, thus equipping the researcher to write a research report (Nowell et al., 2017:10). This step however started consecutively with data analysis as there is no clear separation between analysis and creating the report. Short direct quotes from the raw data collected were included to foster an understanding of specific experiences of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province (Nowell, 2017:11). The researcher constructed valid arguments for choosing themes by referring back to the literature and theoretical framework (Nowell et al., 2017:11; Terry et al., 2017:25).

3.5.4 Data quality

Data quality ensures the validity and trustworthiness of the dataset. Data verification is a procedure that involves evaluating whether the research's findings obtained are accurate (Creswell, 2014:251). In verifying the data quality of qualitative research, the researcher focussed on developing thick descriptions and interpretations about the NQSWs' readiness in rending SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province, applying the concept of trustworthiness or rigor (Korstjens & Moser 2018:121; Sousa 2014:211). The following served as standards and actions that to enhance the trustworthiness of the data:

- Credibility is defined as the degree of trustworthiness that may be attributed to the research findings (Korstjens and Moser, 2018:121). Credibility determines if the study's conclusions accurately reflect the participants' initial opinions and are based on reliable information derived from their initial data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). The researcher ensured credibility through the data collection process in the NQSWs' field of work to observe their readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province. (Anney, 2014:9; Nieuwenhuis, 2020c:144). Nowell et al. (2017:3) states that peer debriefing provides an opportunity for external check on the research process, which may therefore increase credibility of the research study. The researcher engaged in frequent debriefing sessions with her research supervisor as well as other students engaging in the research study of NQSWs' readiness to render SWS to families and children in Gauteng Province. The researcher also read and reread data, analysed, theorised, and revised the concepts accordingly, until the final theory provided depth of the insight (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122).
- Transferability refers to the generalisation and aspect of application of the research study, to the degree which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other participants (Anney, 2014:12; Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122; Nowell et al., 2017:3). According to Bitsch (2005) researchers facilitate transferability judgment of a potential user through detailed description and purposive sampling (Anney, 2014:12). The researcher ensured transferability by providing a thick description of the research methodology.

- Dependability/Audibility as described by Korstjens and Moser (2018), pertains to the consistency of the findings over time and encompasses the element of consistency, wherein the researcher was obliged to verify if the analytic method adheres to the established criteria of study design. According to Nowell et al. (2017:3), to achieve dependability, researchers can ensure that the study process is logical, traceable, and thoroughly documented. By using an audit trail, the researcher aims to show reliability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). In order to help with data organisation, correlation, and cross-referencing as well as make the reporting of the research process simpler, the researcher used audit trails of keeping field notes, transcripts, raw data recordings, and a reflective notebook (Nowell et al., 2017:3).

- Confirmability is concerned with establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data and are neutral, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached and that it is not only presented according to the researcher's preferences and perspectives, but well balanced (Korstjens & Moser 2018:122; Nowell et al., 2017:3). To ensure confirmability of the research study and prevent bias, the researcher used triangulation to support her views through the relevant theoretical framework and literature from previous research studies, and aligned the findings with the research question, goal, design, and data analysi (Trainor & Graue 2014:271).

3.5.5 Pilot study

Data collection is a crucial step in which the researcher must first evaluate the data collection tool to determine if the structure is acceptable, whether questions are clear and whether they will provide the necessary data (Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:41; Strydom, 2021a:387). Pilot testing is considered the rehearsal of the interview process and the interview guide with a small number of test participants before conducting the main study. Pilot study enables the researcher to determine if there are any adjustments to be made to the interview guide (Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:41; Strydom, 2021a:387). Pilot testing offers the researcher the chance to identify practical problems and ethical solutions that might impede the primary research endeavour (Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:41). By altering the questions' order, structure, or phrasing

38

in order to accomplish the study's objectives, a pilot test can help the researcher confirm, improve, or refine the data collecting instruments (Makofane & Shirindi, 2018:41). Before embarking on the main research data collection process, the researcher performed a pilot test by interviewing one recruited NQSW who meets the inclusion criteria to participate in the pilot study. Thereafter the researcher made minor adjustments to the interview guide to improve data collection in the main research study. The data collected from the pilot test interview was however rich and relevant and was therefore included in the main research study findings.

3.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical values including mutual respect and accountability promoting cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, are essential in collaborative work and are therefore essential to this intended research (Resnik, 2020). Permission from organisations employing NQSWs was sought for the intended study (See Addendum B). Ethical clearance was also obtained from the University of Pretoria Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee (See Addendum A). Organisations and participants in this study were required to sign the informed consent and release forms (See Addendum C).

This study was guided by the following ethical considerations:

3.6.1 Avoidance of harm

The avoidance of harm principle consists of the researcher's moral intention to prevent and avoid or minimise all forms of accidental or intentional harm, risk of harm, or inconvenience to research participants (Motloba, 2019:40; Sobočan, Bertotti & Strom-Gottfried, 2019:5). The researcher actively followed the principles of harmlessness throughout the research project, including minimising unnecessary stress on participants (Creswell, 2009:94; Neuman, 2014:147-148). At the inception of the proposed study, the researcher briefed the participants to make sure they are fully aware of the proposed research goals, aims and the potential impact it might have on them. At the completion of the proposed study, the researcher prepared for the debriefing of participants and organised for support services by Ms. Nikita Smit, to the participants who may have suffered harm due to sharing their private details about their

39

employment situation which may have resulted in discomfort (Strydom & Roestenburg 2021: 283).

3.6.2 Informed consent

All participation in this study was voluntary, and participants were not compelled to participate in the research study. All relevant information regarding the research process was included in an informed consent form (See Addendum C). During the data collection process, informed consent forms were signed prior to commencement. The researcher ensured that all participants understood the implications of consent and that they have the right to withdraw and /or withdraw their consent at any time (Sobočan et al., 2019:5). Participants were also made aware that research data is stored in the University of Pretoria's online database for five years.

3.6.3 Voluntary participation

Participation in this study was completely voluntary, and the participants had full understanding of what they are volunteering for (Babbie, 2017:64). The researcher also ensured that participants were not coerced into partaking in the study.

3.6.4 No deception of participants

Closely related to informed consent is the concept of deception in research. Participants who agreed to participate in this study, were informed of all aspects related to the study (Neuman, 2014:151). Interviews were audio recorded using the researcher's cell phone as a recording device, and permission was obtained from the participants for this purpose. The researcher also ensured transparency through clarifying to participants their role, the purpose of the research, and sharing of findings (Babbie, 2017:70).

3.6.5 Anonymity and confidentiality

While confidentiality refers to sharing information without disclosing or sharing names in the public domain, anonymity refers to not using participant names (Neuman,

2014:154-155). The researcher collected the data and therefore knew the names of the participants, which influences anonymity, yet the researcher did not attach names to information in the final report and used pseudonyms (Babbie, 2017:67). With assistance from the University of Pretoria, all documentation collected from the interviews will be kept in a safekeeping cabinet for five years post-study, which will include audio recordings taken during the interview process.

Section B, which summarises and discusses the research findings and their interpretation based on the theoretical framework and literature, will be discussed in the following section.

SECTION B: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The research findings are divided into two sections:

Section B1: Biographic profile of participants

Section B2: Empirical data and interpretation

3.7　　　　SECTION B1: BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

A total number of 7 participants, i.e., NQSWs working with children and families in Gauteng participated in this study. The biographical information of the participants includes pseudonyms, age, gender, the organisations they are employed at, employment sector, the year they graduated, and the duration of time they have been rendering services to children and families in Gauteng. The profile of participants follows in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Participants profile

Participant	Age	Gender	Organisation	Employment Sector	Year Graduated	Period rendering services
Participant 1	28	Female	Jacaranda Children's Home	NPO	2021	2 years, 4 months

Participant 2	22	Female	Fact assessment & Therapy Centre	Private-Internship	2022	5 months
Participant 3	22	Female	CMR Silverpark	NGO	2022	9 months
Participant 4	27	Female	CMR Cullinan	NGO	2020	2 years, 8 months
Participant 5	34	Female	SAVF Pretoria North	NGO	2021	1 year, 2 months
Participant 6	24	Female	RATA	NPO	2021	2 years
Participant 7	44	Female	SAVF Pretoria North	NGO	2019	2 years, 8 months

Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity. The ages of the seven participants ranged between 22-44 years, and all of the participants identified as female. With regards to graduating, one participant graduated in 2019, one in 2020, three in 2021, and two in 2022. Out of the participants the longest period rendering services to children and families in Gauteng was 2 years and 8 months, and the shortest was 5 months.

Figure 3.1 Participants Employment Sector

Participants Employment Sector

NGO — 57%
NPO — 29%
Private — 14%
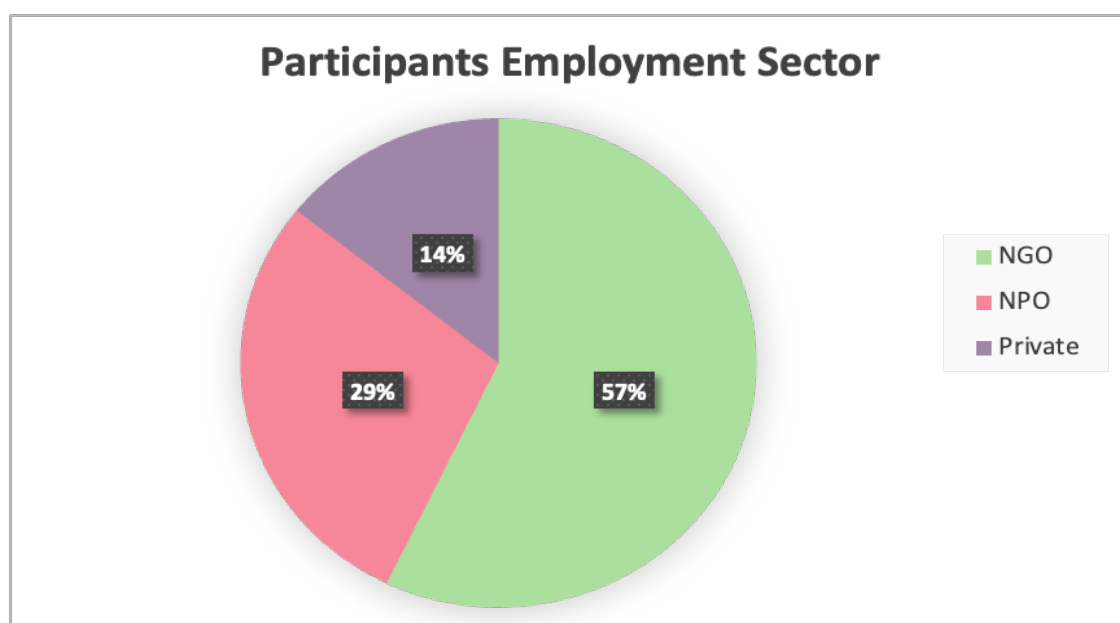
As evident from Figure 3.1, more than half of the participants were employed in the NGO sector, 29% in the NPO sector, and 14% in the Private Sector.

The following section will focus on the research findings of the study and interpretation thereof.

3.8   SECTION B2: EMPIRICAL DATA AND INTERPRETATION

Section B2 represents the themes, sub-themes, and categories that were derived from the data in the semi-structured interviews. Each section will contain narrative accounts, using direct verbatim quotes from participants to validate the authenticity of the data. The themes will be controlled with literature, where possible, and interpreted from the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, where appropriate.

To ensure the data's authenticity, each section will include narrative summaries based on participant quotations. The themes will be directed by the literature wherever possible, and when appropriate, will also be interpreted in light of the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. The themes, sub-themes, and categories are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Themes, sub-themes, and categories

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
Theme 1: Roles of NQSWs	**Sub-theme 1.1:** Micro-level services	
	Sub-theme 1.2: Mezzo-level services	
Theme 2: NQSW experiences in the field of children and families	**Sub-theme 2.1:** Positive experiences	**Category 2.1.1:** Meaningful connections **Category 2.1.2:** Experiencing growth **Category 2.1.3:** Positive work environment

	Sub-theme 2.2: Challenges experienced by NQSWs	Category 2.2.1: Organisational challenges Category 2.2.2: Relationships with external stakeholders Category 2.2.3: Challenging Service users Category 2.2.4: Social Work Education Category 2.2.5: Risk to SWs in the field Category 2.2.6: Emotional aftermath of difficult cases Category 2.2.7: Coping with challenges
Theme 3: Perceived readiness of NQSW	**Sub-theme 3.1:** NQSWs perception of their readiness for the workplace	
	Sub-theme 3.2: NQSWs experiences on requirements for readiness for the workplace	**Category 3.2.1:** Skills required **Category 3.2.2:** Insufficient knowledge regarding legislation **Category 3.2.3:** Workplace learning **Category 3.2.4:** Age does matter
	Sub-theme 3.3: Organisations perception NQSW's readiness in the workplace	
	Sub-theme 3.4: Omissions or gaps in NQSW's knowledge	
Theme 4: Support to NQSW in the workplace	**Sub-theme 4.1:** Support from Colleagues	
	Sub-theme 4.2: Support from Supervisors	
Theme 5: Recommendations for enhancing readiness of NQSW	**Sub-theme 5.1:** Lifelong learning	
	Sub-theme 5.2: Enhancing the BSW degree	

	Sub-theme 5.3: Competencies	
	Sub-theme 5.4: Individualised supervision	
	Sub-theme 5.5: Protected caseloads	
	Sub-theme 5.6: Observing experienced colleagues	

Subsequently each theme will be discussed with its sub-themes and categories.

Theme 1: Roles of NQSWs

Social work practice is commonly divided into three levels of practice namely micro-, mezzo-, and macro-level services. As evident by the data, NQSWs are expected to provide a variety of services and fulfil numerous roles, within their scopes of practice as seen in the themes that follow. The services that are rendered by these NQSWs are mandated by the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978.

Sub-theme 1.1: Micro level services

The participants stated that they provide various micro-level services to children and families including biopsychosocial services, assessment, therapy, statutory services, referrals to other professionals, foster care supervision, reunification services and prevention services. Two of the seven participants are not involved in statutory work, as one is employed at a Children's home, and the other as an intern at a private organisation that provides therapy and assessments to families and children. The other five participants deliver statutory services to families and children at their prospective organisations. The following quotes are a representation of their services:

> **Participant 1:** *"…I am part of a social work team. We each have five houses, and it's basically our job to ensure that the kids' biopsychosocial needs are seen to."*

Participant 2: "So I'm employed at an internship level. So, we only really do assessments and therapy with children."

Participant 4: "I am the designated social worker for [name of organisation] area responsible for statutory work, foster care supervision, reunification services and prevention services."

Participant 5: "So, I represent children in court also, you know, with removals, parenting plans, contact, when parents are having conflict, and challenges with access and contact."

Micro-level SWS concentrate on assisting individuals, families, and small groups in addressing particular problems, enhancing general functioning, and improving well-being. It entails working directly with service users and through utilising different intervention techniques (Reiter, 2015:52). The families and children are thus participants of the services provided by the NQSWs. This is in line with the TCA (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:3) as the NQSW works with the children and families to enable them to grow as a system and empowers them to ultimately be independent of these services.

Sub-theme 2.2: Mezzo level services

Most of the participants are also involved in community projects that benefit children and families, and work with other stakeholders, service providers and organisations to provide training and services to children and families. One participant also mentioned that she is responsible for fundraising at her organisation.

Participant 2: "…we also do a lot of community work projects…."

Participant 6: "I'm expected to build networks really, with other stakeholders. That might include your health department, your SAPS, your local churches, your counsellors, and the general community members, obviously. I'm also expected to provide training on alternative care….I'm also, my final role will be facilitating child protection awareness campaigns in my community."

Participant 7: "...and I'm also responsible for the community service. Like you do campaigns, and I'm even supposed to raise funds for the organisations."

Mezzo level services entail interacting with wider communities, organisations, and groups (Reiter 2015:52). The main goals of mezzo-level interventions are to improve community well-being, solve systemic problems, and encourage cooperation amongst diverse stakeholders. TCA, as a theoretical underpinning of this study, encourages working collaboratively with stakeholders on a mezzo-level (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:3). The next theme to be discussed is the NQSWs experiences in the field of children and families.

Theme 2: NQSWs experiences in the field of children and families

The participants reported experiencing positive experiences as well as a variety of challenges when working with children and families. Their experiences differed depending on the type of organisation they are employed at, and the support they receive as NQSWs within their workplace.

Sub-theme 2.1: Positive experiences

All the participants were able to relay positive experiences they have had within their workplaces, and when working with children and families. The data revealed that the participants made meaningful connections with their service users, and experienced growth within client systems. The majority of participants also experienced their workplace positively as discussed in the following categories.

Category 2.1.1: Meaningful connections

Most participants mentioned the relationships that they build with service users are meaningful. The participants seemingly have meaningful relationships with the families and children they render services to. The views of these participants are indicated below:

> *Participant 1: "So you develop relationships, and we are encouraged to love and fight for our kids, and I don't think there's any other way to do the job."*
> *Participant 2: "I have experienced really positive relationships with children, where you really grow to love the little person, you are journeying with."*

47

> **Participant 6:** *"I would say that the fact that I'm focusing on children who are in need of care and protection, so safeguarding the life of that child, it brings meaning and satisfaction really."*

Meaningful connections also relate to children having an active role in the process of service delivery. Studies have shown that children often do not however feel that they are active participants in services provided to them and their families by SWs (Leeson, 2007; Morgan, 2011). Ofsted (2011:12) states that in the past there has been too much consideration by professionals on forming trusting relationships with adults, such as parents or caregivers, at the expense of the relationship with their child service users. Participant 1 referred to the children she provides services to as *"my children",* indicating a multifaceted connection with the children she provides services to. Subsequently another participant indicated that SWs start to love children they are on a therapeutic journey with. This essentially proves that some NQSWs realise the importance of forming meaningful relationships with the children they work with, which in turn is a positive experience for these SWs. As suggested by Welbourne (2012:31) SWs should engage in meaningful relationships with children and families in order to support them, as this is a rewarding way of working, not only for the children, but the NQSWs Most of the participants in this study seem to understand the importance of seeing their children as participants in services, which in itself is rewarding.

Category 2.1.2: Experiencing growth

The majority of participants linked their positive experiences to experiencing growth in the children and families they work. This relates to Category 2.1.1 as the relationship with their service users is seemingly a direct link to the growth of these service users. Parents work together with the NQSWs to provide their children with healthy environments, and families improving their circumstances were some of the positives that the participants experienced as evident by the following quotes:

> **Participant 1:** *"I think positive experiences are seeing the growth in the children."*

Participant 3: *"I think that positive experience is when you get the parents to a point…where they stop fighting, where they can put the children's best interests at heart, and actually move forward with the children's interest at heart."*

Participant 4: *"Positive experiences is when you've rendered a prevention service, and you can see the families growing and improving by themselves with your guidance."*

The White Paper on Families (Republic of South Africa, Department of Social Development, 2021) places emphasis on promoting family well-being, and supporting families by empowering them through biopsychosocial services. The goal of social work as a profession is to address human needs and provide resources to service users to ensure better quality of life (International Federation of Social Workers, 1992:7). In accordance with this, the participants' positive experiences can be linked to their mandates. The NQSWs in this study thus collaborate with their clients to enable them to achieve goals they would likely be unable to achieve on their own enabling them to be self-sufficient (Kanter 1994; Lasker et al. 1997; Mayo 1997; Wandersman, Goodman, and Butterfoss 1997; Zuckerman, Kaluzny, and Ricketts 1995 in Lasker et al., 2001:183). It can be ascertained that due to the participants meeting goals and working in accordance with their mandate, they experienced the results as positive.

Category 2.1.3: Positive work environment

Most of the participants mentioned that they work within a positive environment, and attributed support from both their supervisors and colleagues as positive experiences. The following quotations are an indicator thereof:

Participant 1: *"When I was hired, I was told you will be provided with the support because we know that we are hiring a new social worker, and with that came a large team, so where one can't the other one will."*

Participant 3: *"What's nice is she always supports you and then she will help you afterwards, but she first allows you to vent, and she's always there. So, I really have an excellent support system, even my colleagues, they are always there."*

49

> *Participant 6: "…and also my colleagues really, our office is a small office. We are not a lot. So, we are just one small intimate family. We support each other."*

The participants are seemingly more resilient when facing day to day challenges, as they are able to discuss their difficulties with colleagues. Overall, the positive experiences the participants reported reflect a workplace culture that values interpersonal relationships, support, and collaboration. Previous research suggests a clear connection between NQSWs' preparedness for practice and their perception of a positive work environment at their place of employment (Manthorpe et al., 2014:109). Support from peers and experienced colleagues are thus essential to NQSWs as this contributes to their readiness to practice.

Sub-theme 2.2: Challenges experienced by NQSWs

The participants agreed that there are certain challenges that NQSWs experience, some of which are similar to experienced SWs, however these challenges seem to have a greater impact on NQSWs. Due to their nature of practice, there were various challenges mentioned by the participants as apparent by the following categories.

Category 2.2.1: Organisational challenges

The participants relayed a variety of challenges they experience when rendering services to families and children, and in their workplaces. A high caseload was mentioned as a challenge by some of the participants, with one participant stating that their highest caseload at a certain time was 140 cases. The lack of resources at organisations was also mentioned, as the participants experience difficulty to effectively do their work due to a lack of stationary, printers, vehicles, and human resources.

> *Participant 1: "…I don't feel I was prepared to take on a caseload of 65 kids all at the same time."*
>
> *Participant 5: "…definitely a lack of resources to equip us to do our work effectively. We have to like sometimes, we have to clean our own offices because someone comes in once a week, and our clients, they're impoverished*

so the hygiene levels aren't high. We could even pick up an infection at work because we use the same bathroom as our clients. Just the basic things like stationery, load shedding. Like basic things, like the things we need to be effective live having a printer that works effectively or optimally."

NQSWs often have high caseloads, especially in NGOs and NPOs in South Africa, due to limited resources (Calitz, Roux & Strydom, 2014; Joseph, 2017; Kheswa, 2019; Wolfaardt, 2022). The majority of the participants in this study were also employed at NGO's and NPO's and the findings correlate with previous studies. A study by Huni and Chikadzi (2014) found that workplace resources and support networks are essential, because they provide SWs with what they need to do their tasks effectively. Resources enable SWs to serve service users in an effective and efficient manner. If SWs are not equipped with basic resources, they might become frustrated and subsequently be less productive as evident by the quotations above.

Category 2.2.2: Relationships with external stakeholders

NQSWs role includes working with various external stakeholders. The participants however relayed the frustration they experience at times when working with these external stakeholders including the SAPS and other organisations. Some participants stated that they regularly experience obstacles when working with the SAPS to safeguard children and families. The inability to assist children and families effectively, as well as the lack of resources of the SAPS was noted. Some participants also reported the inner conflict they experience due these challenges, as they are concerned that the SAPS not intervening timeously and effectively puts their service users, and themselves further at risk. A portion of the participants also reported that relationships with SWs at other organisations is at times challenging. The gap between the private sector and welfare sector was noted, as the participants experienced difficulty with referrals to other organisations, and following up on cases. This essentially has a negative impact on the families and children the NQSWs are expected to render services to.

Participant 5: *"Yes, it is a challenge because you'll find in most cases, if there's a crisis in our community with children, the police doesn't know how to handle it…they can do a Form 36."*

Participant 1: *"It's a very strained relationship."*

Participant 2: *"…when it comes to referring to welfare organisations. I think the communication between your private guys and your welfare guys isn't what is should be, and we have a lot of frustration because we don't do child protection or statutory work, and at the end of the day, 90% of the cases have to be given over and then we don't see results we want, or a year later we're still sitting with a case that we have reported everywhere regularly."*

When partnership takes place between public organisations and between non-profit organisations, collaborative advantage is achieved (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:3). The goal of partnerships is to achieve goals that individuals or individual agencies would not be able to achieve on their own, as one participant mentioned they do not achieve the desired results if cases are handed over to other organisations. When it comes to resources, organisations frequently work together if they cannot accomplish their goals using only their own resources as suggested by the participants. This necessitates combining various resources, such as expertise (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:5). Collaborations between businesses from the public and non-profit sectors are frequently proposed, as the sharing of resources, skills, contacts, and information according to the theory of collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen, 2013:5) is beneficial to stakeholders. This also relates to one of the participants' suggestions of working together with the SAPS. There is however a significant lack in literature regarding SWs and the SAPS working together to mitigate risks for both children and families, and SWs. As suggested by the participants, there is a lack of knowledge from the SAPS regarding legislation such as the Children's Act 38 of 2005, and this essentially puts children at risk. According to the participants in this study, achieving a collaborative working relationship with the SAPS will not only benefit them as NQSWs but also reduce risks families and children are faced with.

Category 2.2.3: Challenging service users

When working with children and families, most of the participants are faced with challenges such as conflict in families, a lack of insight from service users, and families not being honest with NQSWs. Some of the participants reported that their service users' has incorrect perception of SWS, especially statutory SWS due to the stigma that SWs will remove their children. The NQSWs experience difficulty getting families to work with them, as they seemingly see the SWs as a threat to their family systems. These challenges have a direct impact on their services as evident through the following quotes:

> *Participant 3: "I think that's my biggest challenge is children's court cases. It's such high conflict. You spend all your time just trying to calm the parents down and trying to get their focus straight that you forget sometimes to focus on the children, which is the main focus of why we are here."*
>
> *Participant 4: "I think the challenge is to develop insight with the clients, because you can try and explain something to them to the best of your ability but if they do not understand it, they also do not understand what your role is in their lives."*
>
> *Participant 5: "…it would be the perception that statutory social workers, they just remove children and break the bond of the family, which is the preconceived idea…"*

A study by Vetfuti et al. (2019) correlates with the participants' statements, where participants in their study were faced with hostility and resistance from families, who view the participants' as a threat. As mentioned, the families the participants work with sometimes lack insight into their need for the services provided by SWs. Unfortunately, the nature of social work often involves working with vulnerable groups to address complex issues, which can present challenges as evident by the participants' narratives. When it comes to working with reluctant or difficult service users, the NQSW is required at times to be assertive. Previous studies however found that NQSWs often do not feel confident in doing so (McSweeney & Williams, 2019). Some participants in the study felt that they had to go through a lot of effort to ensure service delivery, and trusting relationships with the children and families they work with. It was also

mentioned that ongoing education regarding SWS to children and families are required of them, to ensure families and children accept their services and work with them.

Category 2.2.4: Social Work Education

A fraction of the participants mentioned that they feel that their undergraduate education did not equip them for specific aspects of the workplace. One participant mentioned that she was not equipped in her undergraduate studies to effectively handle her high caseload, and that she was trained to work therapeutically with her service users. Another mentioned that she was not exposed to statutory SWS during her studies, whereas her employer required statutory services for her when she entered the workplace.

> **Participant 1:** *"Well, I always say that at [Name of HEI] we were taught to be therapists and weren't really taught to handle a caseload…So, what I'm trained for, it's not really what I'm doing."*
>
> **Participant 3:** *"...what I could say is in this environment, because the environment is…for someone that comes straight from university will be difficult, because we're not exposed to statutory work in university."*

Strydom, Spolander, Engelbrecht and Martin (2017) suggests that statutory work is one of the main social work sectors in South Africa, with a high demand for SWs. Subsequently a study by De Jager (2014) on the reflections of NQSWs, correlates with the participants' statements in this study, as NQSWs did not feel equipped for statutory work upon graduating, and they had difficulty applying theory to practice. Some of the participants suggested that the organisational challenges they are faced with further contribute to their views that the skills and knowledge, or the lack thereof created challenges for them when they entered practice. Effective collaboration between HEIs and organisations is thus essential to bridge this gap. International and local literature however suggests that it is idealistic of employers to expect NQSWs to be fully prepared for a specialised field (Engelbrecht, Ornellas, Strydom, Slabbert, Zimba, Khosa & Cornelissen-Nordien, 2021; McSweeney & Williams, 2019). The participants in this study also expressed their views that working with children and families is

54

essentially a specialised field that requires practical experience that they learnt after entering the workplace.

Category 2.2.5: Risk to SWs in the field

Most of the participants reported that they feel that their personal safety is at risk in their prospective workplaces and in the field, and most of them have experienced trauma due to the exposure of these risks. Some participants highlighted the poor treatment they receive at times from service users, and went as far as calling it abuse. Some employer organisations have security, however most employer organisations do not have any form of security, which contributed to the NQSWs feeling unsafe at their workplaces. One of the participants mentioned that she feels the SACSSP only protects the service user and not necessarily the service provider, and that NQSWs in essence have no way of protecting themselves against forms of abuse other than private lawsuits which they cannot afford.

> ***Participant 1:*** *"…we do have security and they do intervene, but they're not always allowed to…"*
>
> ***Participant 4:*** *"I think for me it's the verbal abuse from clients. I've also had an incident of physical assault from a client."*
>
> ***Participant 4:*** *"you know, I've always felt the clients have a council with which they can report us, and this council is very, very tough on social workers that are reported, but who is there to look out for the social workers that are being you know, verbally, physically, emotionally abused at times."*
>
> ***Participant 6:*** *"So like, they'll be busy sending you, you know what, offending texts and then calling you, or sometimes even sending people to call you. That is like in a way harassment or abuse or assault…our lives are at risk, if I may put it that way."*
>
> ***Participant 7:*** *"So it was traumatic for me that we are not, we are not safe as social workers…"*

Extensive international research revealed concerning findings regarding the safety risks of social workers. One quarter to one third of SWs report being assaulted at some time in their career, and approximately half to three quarters have been threatened with physical harm (MacDonald & Sirotich, 2005; Newhill, 1996; Regehr, Leslie, Howe,

& Chau, 2005; Rey, 1996). This concurs with the participants' statements, as most of the participants have been threatened with violence, and one has been physically attacked by a service user. The participants in this study relayed their feelings of frustration and concern for SWs safety in South Africa, linking this to the lack of resources at the organisations. It can be ascertained that if NQSWs are exposed to these risks on a regular basis it could have detrimental effects on them.

Category 2.2.6: Emotional aftermath of challenging cases

Most of the participants mentioned that working with children and families is emotionally challenging to them, and that despite being trained to respond to crisis situations, this work sometimes takes a toll on them. Some of the participants reported how the trauma their service users have experienced has had a traumatic influence on them as practitioners. One participant mentioned that she struggles to detach herself from work while at home, whereas another reported that the trauma SWs are exposed to often leads to mental health challenges. Another aspect of this is that there is not always time for NQSWs to debrief due to their high caseload, and challenging cases as evident by the following statements:

> *Participant 1:* *"Exactly, and I think sometimes because we're so trained to react when there's an emergency you don't actually realise how much it actually takes out of you.'*
>
> *Participant 7:* *"...one of my biggest challenges is to detach myself from work, which is not a good thing because when I go out of here, I should switch off and concentrate on my home life, but there will be this thing."*
>
> *Participant 5:* *"...because we face a lot of trauma in the communities, and if you don't have time exposure would be quite a shock. And that's why we have a lot of mental health challenges with social work professionals because we are not debriefing. There's just no time."*

Literature corresponds to the participants' feelings as reflected in the study, as stated that the daily exposure to service users and the emotionally taxing narratives of their multiple psychosocial issues sometimes catch NQSWs off-guard. The difficulties SWs are faced with potentially have a negative impact on SWs, with substantial

psychological effects especially in newly graduated professionals (Gilin & Kauffman, 2015; Greene, Mullins, Baggett & Cherry, 2017; Knight, 2010; Newell, 2019). Research shows that SWs' exposure to violence and trauma in the workplace has been linked to a variety of adverse outcomes, including burnout and trauma. (Regehr, LeBlanc, Bogo, Paterson, & Birze, 2015; Regehr, LeBlanc, Shlonsky, & Bogo, 2010). NQSWs thus have to be mindful of the potential symptoms of burnout and trauma, and ensure that they take care of their emotional well-being.

Category 2.2.7: Coping with challenges

The participants described a variety of methods they utilise to cope with their daily challenges. The majority of the participants noted that the support of their colleagues, debriefing with colleagues, and planning skills enables them to cope with their workplace challenges. Two participants mentioned the importance of self-care. The participants ability to cope with their challenges seemingly also has a direct link to their readiness to practice as evident in the following quotes:

> *Participant 1: "You build a bridge, and you get over it…the job is putting out fires and then slotting in the things you know you have to do where you can slot them in. I think it's a lot of support from a team we work with very beautifully together."*
>
> *Participant 2: "Other than that, I don't know I try to I guess everyone you try to think positively and focus on the good. I think that's what all social workers do. I try to do all the recommended things. I go to the gym. I'll eat healthy. I'll get my nine hours of sleep; I'll spend time with friends and family. I will do something fun…"*
>
> *Participant 3: "I make a to-do list and then I start from the beginning, and then as soon as I have something done, I tick it off, which helps. You immediately feel a bit lighter."*
>
> *Participant 6: "I think starting with the one of aggressive or yeah aggressive clients, I would say most of the time we get the escort from the SAPS. So, the networks that we're building, we make sure that they assist us where we need the assistance, especially the SAPS. Also, when it comes to the shortage of resources, we really try to utilise the limited resources effectively."*

57

Previous studies have highlighted the significance of providing students with education that enhances their readiness for the stresses and challenges in practice (Cortis & Meagher, 2012; Carello & Butler, 2015; Moorhead et al., 2019; Moriarty et al., 2011; Napoli & Bonifas, 2011; Nuttman-Shwartz, 2017; Tham & Lynch, 2019). The participants in this study value teamwork, as evident from the statements above. Most of the participants seem to have found this valuable in coping with the workplace challenges. They are self-reliant and take responsibility to cope with their day-to-day challenges. A combined effort between HEIs, employers and NQSWs themselves is evidently necessary for NQSWs to cope with their challenges.

Perceptions on the NQSWs readiness for the workplace will be discussed in the following theme.

Theme 3: NQSWs readiness for the workplace

The participants in this study were asked what their opinions on their readiness for the workplace is, as well as how to enhance NQSWs readiness for practice. Their accounts are discussed in the following sub-themes.

Sub-theme 3.1: NQSWs perception of their readiness for the workplace

Participants reflected mixed results regarding NQSWs perceptions on their readiness. Most of the participants mentioned that when they entered the workplace, they did not feel ready, however after a few months of practical experience they felt more prepared for practice. The participants' views on their readiness are also somewhat dependent on where they studied.

> **Participant 2:** *"You always do question it, especially if you're young. I think what do they call it, imposter syndrome? Creeps in a lot, especially when you're involved with very professional people and very professional environments. So, I do feel impostor syndrome sometimes, but it gets better. It's been getting better as the year has progressed."*

Participant 3: "*I think so. I shadowed January month, the colleague which I took over from she was here still for the whole month and that helps a lot. I think without her help and assistance it might be a different story.*

Participant 6: "*I think I was. I think, you know at [name of HEI] , the program is very well packaged, if I can put it that way, because we start our practical as soon as first year to do a practical. So, I got exposed to the field as soon as my first year. So, by fourth year I felt that I was ready to work. So, at that point I was ready.*"

As noted in previous studies (Grant et al., 2016; Hunt et al., 2017), this study yielded mixed responses. It is significant to see the different opinions on the suitability of NQSWs for practice. It is also important to note that certain participants reported that NQSWs' preparedness is dependent on the HEIs they studied at. From the participants' responses it was clear that after a few months in the workplace obtaining practical experience their opinions changed, from feeling not ready to ready for the workplace. A few months in practice thus made a significant difference in their readiness.

Sub-theme 3.2: NQSWs experiences on requirements for readiness for the workplace

Participants' statements regarding influences on their readiness for the workplace are discussed in the following categories.

Category 3.2.1: Skills required

The participants stated that there are several skills required of them which they relate to the ability to successfully do their jobs. It was noted that the participants mentioned that they possess most of these skills upon graduating, however they still did not feel ready for practice once they entered the workplace and realised what is required of them. The skills that were mentioned included professionalism, eagerness to learn, ambition, ethical practices, being approachable, the ability to establish rapport with service users, communication skills, computer literacy skills, planning, coordinating and planning skills, and report writing as observed in the following quotes:

59

Participant 2: *"I think I want to say ambition, professionalism. I think if you consider yourself a professional and you act professionally you are ready for the workplace and have just an openness to learning."*

Participant 3: *"And then, the usual ethical guidelines for you to follow to be professional. It's sometimes difficult to always be professional, but be approachable, be approachable, build a good relationship with your clients, otherwise you struggle with the process. if they don't trust you, they don't trust the process. I think clients need to trust you and you need to be professional, and even if they're angry at you, and shout at you to be professional, because it's not directed towards you usually directed towards the process or the system, it's never directed towards you. And that's also a skill I think young social workers need to learn is to just. don't let it go to your head."*

Participant 5: *"That would be communication skills, computer literacy skills, planning, coordinating report writing. Yeah, I think if you're competent in that you would be ready for the field."*

As evident from the participants' responses, social work skills include verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, decision-making, coordination, time management, organisational abilities, and critical thinking. These skills are all important for providing professional, effective services and completing necessary tasks (Wolfaardt, 2022:48). Research on professional growth in the fields of health and social care (Yelloly and Henkel, 1995; Eraut, 1994) have proposed that professional competence is developed both consciously and unconsciously. As per previous findings, some social work skills can only be gained from practical experience (Healy et al., 2009; McFadden, 2013; Radey & Stanley, 2018; Tham & Lynch, 2019, 2021). If on-the-job training is the primary means of developing professional learning, then workplace culture and quality have a significant impact on how NQSWs professional competence and capability are developed. The participants related their readiness to their skill. This emphasises the need for workplace learning, with a focus on a supportive environment in order for NQSWs to gain the skills required for the workplace.

Category 3.2.2: Knowledge regarding legislation

Most of the participants highlighted the importance for NQSWs to be familiar with relevant legislation and policies, with emphasis on the Children's Act 38 of 2005. The ability to integrate policy and legislation into practice was also mentioned:

> *Participant 1:* *"Definitely policy I think is a big part of it, and integration of policy doesn't help you can recite the act, but you don't know how to integrate the policy into practical. Yeah, I think policy is the biggest one."*
>
> *Participant 3:* *"You need to have the knowledge like a children's act. If you're in a child protection organisation, for example, you need to know the factual knowledge like the children's act, the different reports you need to write. So, you need to know that factual knowledge as well."*

NQSWs feel more prepared for certain aspects in the workplace over others (Grant et al., 2017:3), with legislation being one of the areas where the participants seemingly feel unprepared. The importance of knowledge on legislation is a crucial part of the participants' work with families and children. Social work knowledge essentially includes all theoretical components addressed during the social work degrees, such as, legislation, policies, guidelines to service delivery with different service users, theories, models, and perspectives (Wolfaardt, 2022:48). It is thus essential for NQSWs to familiarise themselves with relevant knowledge on legislation in order to be able to do what their employers expect of them effectively, and essentially provide a high standard of service to families and children.

Category 3.2.3: Workplace learning

Most of the participants related their readiness for the workplace to the training they received from their employers upon entering the workplace and learning from experienced colleagues. With regards to exposure to CPD activities, most participants reported that their organisations provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge they required within the workplace specifically related to services to families and children. One participant shadowed an experienced colleague for a month upon

entering the workplace, and as evident below this learning opportunity had a significant impact on her readiness to practice thereafter.

> *Participant 3: "I think so. I shadowed January month, the colleague which I took over from she was here still for the whole month and that helps a lot. I think without her help and assistance it might be a different story."*
>
> *Participant 2: "I think our biggest positive thing here, in [name of organisation], would be the training."*
>
> *Participant 4: "For instance, something that I struggled with at the beginning was time management. And they sent me for some time management skills, and I must say it helped."*
>
> *Participant 6: And again, the organisation also offers ongoing continuous professional training for us, which really helped us to keep abreast as to say what's happening in the field, especially with the Children's Act, since it's our area or field of specialty. So, we get those trainings, and we also get external trainings."*

Moriarty and Manthorpe (2014) suggested that social work education should be viewed as a developmental process, and that the social work qualification should not be seen as the end product. This thus also places an emphasis on the importance of CPD. Previous studies had contradictory findings as NQSWs were not always provided with training within the workplace and had to take responsibility to obtain training themselves (Govender, 2015:109). In Scotland, a model is followed where a senior or more experienced social worker will be paired with a NQSW to collaborate on cases and support the NQSW's professional development (Welch, Lerpiniere, & Young, 2014), similar to the notion of the opportunity to shadow an experienced colleague prior to taking over their caseload as noted in the current study which provides an opportunity in keeping with workplace learning. The organisations the participants in this study were employed at however provided them with CPD learning opportunities, and seemingly understands the value of workplace learning for NQSWs.

Category 3.2.4: Age does matter

A portion of the participants referred to their age linking to their perceived readiness for the workplace by colleagues and service users. One of the participants mentioned that external organisations and other professionals do not take her and her colleague seriously as they are in their early twenties. They were also faced with cultural challenges at times. The participant further stated that this causes her to experience "imposter syndrome", seemingly fostering feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy. From the expressions below it is clear that from the participants' views, other professionals measure NQSWs readiness according to their age.

> *Participant 2:* "*So I feel okay, I feel good about my readiness now, although sometimes with new cases, but I think that's normal. You always do question it, especially if you're young. I think what do they call it, imposter syndrome? creeps in a lot, especially when you're involved with very professional people and very professional environments. So, I do feel impostor syndrome sometimes, but it gets better. It's been getting better as the year has progressed.*"
>
> *Participant 3:* "*Usually, clients also think you are young, you don't know anything. So, it's sometimes difficult, and you shouldn't take it personally, but it is sometimes difficult.*"

Even though these participants felt ready for practice, their service users and colleagues seemed to have expected more mature persons to do the job. The participants were clear that their age does not influence their readiness to practice according to them, however the opinions of service users seem to differ. Previous research found that NQSWs experienced difficulties when establishing working relationships with service users, due to social and cultural norms, including that SWS should be rendered by an older person due to the complexity of the tasks involved (Huni & Chikadzi, 2014:469). NQSWs who hold these cultural attitudes and beliefs may face a cultural conundrum, which makes the transition from HEIs to the workplace challenging. It is also concerning that if the NQSWs competence is questioned due to the fact that they are young, it could have an adverse effect on their self-esteem and essentially their quality of services (Huni & Chikadzi, 2014:470).

Sub-theme 3.3: Organisations perception of NQSW's readiness in the workplace

Most of the participants agreed that organisations are willing to employ NQSWs and that they are aware that they might lack certain practical skills. These organisations are seemingly willing to teach the NQSWs they employ the necessary skills they lack, if these NQSWs are willing to learn in the workplace.

> *Participant 1:* *"I think it depends on who the leadership is. We got lucky that our CEO is a social worker, and she started here as a student. So, she has empathy for what we go through and how we see things, but every organisation is not the same."*
>
> *Participant 4:* *"My supervisor is quite positive about employing social workers that have just come from the university because her view of this is that she can teach them to be good social workers, and she can lay the basis with them."*

Organisations often expect NQSWs to be able to do the same tasks as experienced colleagues when they enter the workplace. This transitional period is often referred to as the "baptism of fire" (Bates, Immins, Parker, Keen, Rutter, Brown & Zsigo, 2010). as NQSWs are expected to "hit the ground running" (Carpenter, Shaedlow, Patsios & Wood, 2015:154). The participants in this study however relayed that the support and understanding from their supervisors, and the willingness to teach them to manage their daily tasks facilitated their readiness for practice. It was evident that most of their employers were aware that the NQSWs might lack skills and knowledge, however they were willing to teach them. One participant stated that her employer in fact prefers to appoint NQSWs, in order to teach them the skills and knowledge required to be good quality SWs. There are thus contradictions, with certain organisations having unrealistic expectations of NQSWs, and others seeing this as an opportunity to assist NQSWs to grow.

Sub-theme 3.4: Omissions or gaps in NQSW's knowledge

Most of the participants mentioned that they realised that there were certain gaps in their knowledge upon entering the workplace, such as legislation, especially the

Children's Act 38 of 2005. The participants mentioned that during their studies they received basic knowledge regarding legislation, however when they entered into practice, they realised that it was challenging to implement legislation in practice, and be conversant with the different forms of the acts.

> **Participant 2:** *"I think it's I want to say the processes and procedures especially when it comes to working in like child protection…"*
> **Participant 3:** *"The Children's Act. We don't know the Children's Act…"*
> **Participant 5:** *"...for someone that comes straight from university it will be difficult, because we're not exposed to statutory work in university."*

From the participants' statements it is clear that in general they did not experience a wide range of omissions or gaps in their knowledge, however they did highlight their limited knowledge regarding legislation. In keeping with a study by De Jager (2014) on the reflections of NQSWs, the NQSWs did not feel equipped for statutory work upon graduating. The lack of familiarity with practical details of statutory work procedures was a common challenge the participants noted. This also had significant implications for their ability to navigate their roles effectively. The NQSWs recommendations on filling the gaps in their knowledge will be discussed in Theme 6.

In the next theme the support the participants received in the workplace will be discussed.

Theme 4: Support to NQSWs in the workplace

The majority of the participants relayed to the researcher that most NQSWs receive support within the workplace according to their knowledge, with those who do not receive support being the exception. As in their own experiences, they received ongoing support from both their colleagues and supervisors. This seemingly had a positive influence on their readiness for practice.

Sub-theme 4.1: Support from Colleagues

According to most of the participants a contributing factor to their readiness for practice was the support they received on an ongoing basis from their experienced colleagues. Most of the participants in the study mentioned that working within a team of SWs provides them with a safety net where they seek assistance for difficult situations and experience peer debriefing. Networking with SWs from other organisations also seemingly assisted some of the participants to be able to complete the tasks expected of them.

> *Participant 1: "So, there's always insight and perspective and someone else's opinion, and it gives you a more well-rounded view of the situation."*
> *Participant 3: "So, it's always good to network, and that will also assist in readiness because then you're not alone."*
> *Participant 7: "They are there to give me the support, and even with the home visits, if they are here, they will say, maybe one of us… let's just go with you."*

Experienced social work colleagues have proven to be an important resource for support for NQSWs (Wolfaardt, 2022; Grant, 2017; Grant et al., 2014). As evident from the participants' views, they have a high regard for the support they receive from colleagues. They gain assistance and knowledge from colleagues in emotional, intellectual, organisational, and practical domains (Grant et al, 2017). Previous studies found that there are several potential benefits to learning from experienced colleagues in practice within the South African context, such as enhanced work performance and motivation for effective service delivery (Cloete, 2012). The support the participants received from colleagues has had a positive effect on their workplace readiness, emotional wellbeing and ability to cope with their challenges. As previously stated, support from colleagues might counter burnout in NQSWs.

Sub-theme 4.2: Support from Supervisors

All the participants stated that they receive adequate support from their supervisors. Most have supervision schedules and supervision on a regular basis, with the exception of one participant who mentioned that her supervisor is very busy, and she

tries to only contact her in an emergency. This participant however still noted that she feels supported by her supervisor. Most of the participants' supervisors and managers also have open door policies. If they have a crisis, they feel comfortable to consult with their managers or supervisors immediately. Some participants also mentioned that their reality is not shared by colleagues outside of their organisation, as they are aware of other NQSWs who do not receive adequate support from their supervisors, and whose supervisors are not readily available to them.

> **Participant 1:** *"I obviously just graduated, and I have a lot of friends who work in settings where there is no support. There is no open-door policy, there is no supervision, let alone additional supervision."*
>
> **Participant 3:** *"Very high support. I have an excellent supervisor and I think without that it would have been a different story."*
>
> **Participant 5:** *"I think, no, because our manager, she's very busy. That's why. Also, she knows that she can trust us, but so because we know that she's very busy, we try to not bother her. So, it's not adequate at this stage, as it should be. It's not as frequent as it should be, because I find myself making serious decisions without having consulted her, and then phoning her to say, I've got it under control. I will let you know if we have a crisis, but for now it's under control."*
>
> **Participant 7:** *"`She also allocates somebody within the office to say, just in case there's, maybe I'm absent, there's, you know, this person that you can always talk to, or even the, like the, the team as a whole, you can always knock at anybody's door if you need assistance…"*

In the South African context, it is highlighted by Goliath (2018:3) that the support function of supervision to SWs is lacking. The participants' view is however largely contradictory to the majority of studies. The support function of supervision facilitates decision-making and provides practical assistance and a sensitive ear if a social worker is in distress. If there is support, it may allow for reflective practice by the SWs and assist them with emotional difficulties and developing resilience. As suggested by Hunt et al. (2017), it is an ethical duty of employers and supervisors to make sure that NQSWs are supported during their transition from HEIs to the workplace. Findings by Jansen (2017) placed an emphasis on induction and workplace support to NQSWs. In

keeping with the statement by Participant 5, Walker (2014) suggests that due to organisational and time-constraints, supervisors often do not have time to meet NQSWs supportive and educational requirements. Grant et al. (2017) and Walker (2014) found that because case discussions take up most of the supervision time, NQSWs do not have the chance to reflect on their emotions and experiences. The fact most of the participants in this study perceive their supervisors as someone who is willing to assist them with challenges they face, seems to create a feeling of being secure within the workplace.

The participants' recommendations on enhancing readiness for NQSWs will be reflected in the following theme.

Theme 5: Recommendations for enhancing readiness of NQSW

The participants provided a variety of suggestions and recommendations to enhance NQSWs readiness for the workplace. Although the participants suggested ways of enhancing the BSW degree, the onus seemingly lies on the NQSW to seek learning opportunities to enhance their readiness to practice upon entering the workplace, with assistance from experienced colleagues and supervisors as indicated in the following themes.

Sub-theme 5.1: Lifelong learning

Most of the participants highlighted the fact that they learnt a lot of the necessary knowledge and skills their employers require of them after entering the workplace. Some of the participants also mentioned that NQSWs should take responsibility for lifelong learning starting in their BSW degree and continuing throughout their professional career.

> **Participant 2:** *"I think the practical side readiness for me has come with just repetition. You know, the more I do something, the more confident I feel. So, yeah, I think my readiness has to do with experience."*
>
> **Participant 5:** *"So a year into it, now. Yes. If you had asked me last year, then I will not be but now I am. So, I've received lots of training in which to adequately*

equip me to represent children and to, you know, keep the voice of the child, and assist them adequately."

Participant 5: "Continuous professional development, that is imperative because things are constantly evolving around us. So, if we're not up to date with what is happening, we'll be left here, and we won't provide an adequate service."

Participant 6: "Okay, I think number one would be reading a lot. Obviously now you'll be specialising on something, read more resources or books in your field. Get supervision or guidance from people who have been in the field for some time, and again, I think, again, emotionally, and psychologically just be open for a challenge, just be open to say yes, I might encounter some challenges, but I'm going to come and I'm here to learn at the end of the day."

According to the SACSSP (2019:7) CPD activities expand SWs knowledge, attitudes, and skills which is crucial for NQSWs. SWs are urged to recognise and evaluate their own growth and development in unconventional ways (Oxford Reference, 2021). The onus thus lies on the NQSW to ensure they seek and make use of learning opportunities during the transitional period to enhance their readiness for the workplace, and throughout their careers.

Sub-theme 5.2: Enhancing the BSW degree

Most of the participants agreed that in their opinion their BSW degree did not fully equip them to work with children and families, and thus recommend that there is more focus on this in the BSW degree, as per the following quotations:

Participant 1: "I think, more integrated practical experience, I think practical experience from first year and not just shadowing but going in and doing volunteer work as part of the degree could really help because then you get to really experience people on the level…So, I think a more integrated idea of like the realistic view would would make someone ready."

Participant 3: "So, I think university needs to equip us especially statutory social workers. We have no statutory experience from university. When I walked in January, they talked about all the different forms and reports, them to like

explain everything. I knew the basics like Form 38, Form 36, Form 2, that was it. 159 that was Italian to me when I walked in January."

Participant 4: "to have this like client file to study it. To see what happened, to see what the processes are, what the input of the social worker is, what the input of the clients is, and the manager as well."

More practice experience during the undergraduate studies was recommended by some of the participants, as they felt that their studies did not include sufficient practice experience. Some participants also recommended integrating more information regarding statutory social work and how to practically utilise the Children's Act 38 of 2005 into the BSW degree. It was also suggested by some of the participants that the BSW degree should provide students with specialised knowledge, especially when it comes to statutory work. These recommendations correlate with recommendations in a previous study in order to better prepare NQSWs for the workplace (Wolfaardt, 2022), however, as stated in the discussion related to lifelong learning, there is uncertainty regarding how much training should be included before and after the BSW degree.

Sub-theme 5.3: Competencies required

The participants included several competencies they recommend to NQSWs entering into the workplace. These included basic social work skills, and being consistent with service users, emotional intelligence, and flexibility. The ability to implement policy and legislation was also emphasised, as NQSWs have to be conversant with relevant legislation. One participant also mentioned that NQSWs are seemingly expected to be competent drivers, as it is sometimes expected of them to do home visits and attend meetings, and that going to a driving school will assist in achieving this.

Participant 1: "I had a lecturer who always said you need to be the blue line. You're always straight and consistent, and you are just there whether they are there or not. And I think that's yeah, that was it for me." "So, I think firstly, an understanding of self and understanding when to react, but also, admin is a big, big part of it."

Participant 6: "So when you join a CPO and then they expect you to know the Children's Act, like almost everything." "…they expect you to join the organisation and know how to drive…"

Participant 7: "For me communication is very important, because if you can't communicate with a client, you cannot get what you're supposed to, so communication is very important and active listening."

SWs are required to be highly skilled and knowledgeable (Trevithick, 2012), as per the participants' statements NQSWs require a variety of skills in order to be able to provide quality services to children and families. It can be ascertained that the skills and knowledge required are both theoretical and practical skills and knowledge, as well as internal and reflexive skills including willingness to learn and personal motivation. Donnellan and Jack (2015:40) state that personal motivation is important in order to develop expertise. Willingness to learn is underpinned in this study, as the NQSW thus have to take responsibility themself to develop the competencies mentioned above.

Sub-theme 5.4: Individualised supervision

From the participants it was evident that NQSWs have a need for individualised supervision, as a way of enhancing readiness for the workplace. This could include addressing individual NQSWs learning or support needs, or facilitating more frequent supervision for NQSWs, depending on the need. Most of the participants recommended individualised supervision schedules for NQSWs, with one recommending that formal supervision take place at least twice a month. Furthermore, it was recommended by some of the participants that supervision should focus on the NQSWs emotional wellbeing and not only their workload.

Participant 1: "At least twice a month. I think more of like a check in than a full supervision."

Participant 2: "So, I think if you can amp up the supervision with your new social workers, just in the first bit, that really helps…"

Participant 6: "Okay, I think the supervision should be holistic. It should obviously focus on work and also it should also touch on the aspect we're talking

71

about, like the emotional aspect of the social worker. And as far as, you know, like their personal life because they're people."

Literature concurs with the recommended fortnightly supervision for NQSWs, during their first 6–12 months in employment (Engelbrecht & Ncube, 2021). The supportive function of supervision was highlighted as in Theme 5. The recommendation of support to NQSWs is frequently noted in literature (Vetfuti et al., 2019:3), especially within the South African context, as there is evidence that sufficient supervision prevents burnout.

Sub-theme 5.5: Protected caseloads

A selection of the participants recommended protecting caseloads for NQSWs as a way of enhancing their readiness for practice, as most of the participants mentioned that they did not have lower caseloads when they entered the workplace as compared to more experienced colleagues. Shadowing experienced colleagues and taking over their caseload when the NQSW is familiar with it was another suggestion.

> *Participant 3: "I think the caseload is an important thing. if it's possible to not have such a high caseload especially in a statutory post, because you sit your days in court, and you never know how long you'll be in the children's court. Sometimes a whole day goes by, if you're in the court four times a week, then you have no admin time, no reports time, no phone calls are returned. So, I think it's possible for an organisation to protect the caseload a bit, but sometimes it's not possible."*
>
> *Participant 5: "Maybe for the first month instead of just being thrown into social work so that I get to see the work with the social worker, maybe on a limited caseload of maybe 20."*

According to Hunt et al. (2017), employers and supervisors have an ethical duty to make sure that NQSWs are supported throughout this transitional phase by minimising the volume, complexity, and difficulty of their cases. Literature thus affirms the suggestions by the participants to start with a low caseload and ease into the work until they are familiar with it.

Sub-theme 5.6: Observing experienced colleagues.

Some of the participants recommended observing experienced colleagues as a way of enhancing the readiness of NQSWs. It was suggested that NQSWs "shadow" (a term used for observing) experienced colleagues. One of the participants stated that she shadowed an experienced colleague during her first month of employment and was able to gain invaluable knowledge and experience from this, and thus suggested that this enhanced her readiness for the workplace.

> **Participant 5:** *"I think it would be shadowing, to shadow a social worker, maybe for the first month instead of just being thrown into social work so that I get to see the work with the social worker."*

Wolfaardt (2022) and Cloete (2012) suggest that shadowing an experienced colleague is a less intimidating way of training NQSWs, and it allows them to gain practical experience in a controlled way. This mitigates the risks and assists the NQSW to gain self-esteem in order to provide quality services. This recommendation is important to take note of, especially in the field of children and families. Tham and Lynch (2019:404) highlighted the lack of support and induction programmes for NQSWs who enter the workplace.

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter consisted of a methodological overview of how the studies research methods were utilised and implemented in Section A. Section B consisted out of the data and interpretation thereof. Through utilising a thematic analysis themes were discussed in order to answer the research question through an inductive approach.

Chapter 4 will include the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study as derived from the previous chapters.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study was to explore and describe NQSWs experiences regarding their work readiness to provide SWS to families and children in Gauteng.

To meet this goal, the objectives of this study was:

- To explore and describe NQSWs understanding of "work readiness" regarding competencies required for service provision to families and children in Gauteng.
- To explore and describe challenges faced by NQSWs in providing services to families and children.
- To explore measures implemented to support NQSWs in providing services to families and children in Gauteng.
- Based on the research findings, to formulate recommendations to social workers, institutions, and organisations to maintain or improve NQSWs' readiness to provide services to families and children in Gauteng.

The study's objectives were reached through the implementation of a literature review, the use of relevant research methodology, and the analysis of empirical findings stemming from the study. The literature review provided a comprehensive exploration of existing literature on NQSWs readiness to provide SWS to families and children in Gauteng. The theoretical framework of this study was the theory of collaborative advantage. This assisted the researcher to gain an understanding of how the collaboration between NQSWs, supervisors and experienced social workers fulfil the developmental needs of NQSWs who are required to provide services to families and children. A qualitative research approach with a case study design was conducted to ensure that the participants' unique experiences are explored thoroughly. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were utilised to collect data on the NQSWs experiences regarding their work readiness. The use of thematic analysis enabled the researcher to develop themes and sub-themes, which revealed empirical

findings describing the experiences of NQSWs in Gauteng regarding their readiness for the workplace. Subsequently this assisted the researcher to formulate recommendations to prepare NQSWs for the workplace as derived from the NQSWs experiences.

The overarching research question that this study attempted to answer was the following: "*What are the experiences of newly qualified social workers providing SWS to families and children in Gauteng regarding their work readiness to provide these services?*"

The research question was answered by a variety of themes, sub-themes, and categories as presented in Chapter 3 (Section B2) that focused on the NQSWs experiences working with families and children, and the challenges they are faced with (Theme 3). Theme 4 explored the perceived readiness of the NQSWs to provide services to families and children, whereas Theme 5 investigated the support NQSWs received within the workplace to assist with their readiness. Lastly, Theme 6 included the NQSWs recommendations for enhancing readiness for the workplace, and when working with families and children. The collected data findings are discussed in Section 5.2.

The following limitations of the research study should be taken into consideration prior to interpreting the findings:

- The research study was conducted with a sample of NQSWs, rendering SWS to families and children in the Gauteng Province. As such, the study is only representative of a percentage of the social worker population.
- The study only focused on interviewing NQSWs working at certain organisations that render services to families and children in the Gauteng Province. The sample of this study is, thus, not representative of all NQSWs at all organisations across South Africa.
- It might be possible that some NQSWs chose to withhold information, due to the nature of the research methodology that was utilised during the data collection of this research study. If so, this would have had an impact on the research findings.

- Further, since the study sample was recruited by means of purposive sampling, it is possible that the empirical findings of the study are not representative of the explored phenomenon and/or biased as the study population could be too similar.

4.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

For each objective that was achieved throughout the course of the study, the main findings will be addressed in the following discussions.

4.2.1 Key findings regarding NQSWs understanding of 'work readiness' regarding competencies required for service provision to families and children in Gauteng.

NQSWs are expected to primarily provide services to families and children on a micro, and mezzo-level. Various positive and negative experiences by NQSWs in the field were found in this study. It was evident that NQSWs should be able to form collaborative relationships with families and children, and other stakeholders in order to ensure they are competent SWs. NQSWs understanding of their own readiness reflect that they did not feel ready to provide certain services to families and children upon graduating, and a lack of practical experience was highlighted. After a few months in practice however, their opinions on their readiness changed and they felt that they were ready. The participants' view on their readiness is also dependent on which HEIs they completed their studies at, as participants who studied at certain HEI's felt more competent than others.

There are a variety of competencies that NQSWs require for successfully achieving their work goals, as per the findings of this study. NQSWs require the following skills in order to be considered competent and work ready: professionalism; eagerness to learn; ambition; ethical practices; being approachable; good communication skills, computer literacy skills, planning, coordinating, and report writing skills. NQSWs also have to be conversant with legislation and policies related to families and children, and theories, models and perspectives related to families and children.

76

It was found that organisations in Gauteng generally reflect a positive attitude towards the hiring of NQSWs. Although they are aware that the NQSWs lack certain skills, competencies, and practical experience, they are willing to teach NQSWs to become competent SWs within the field of working with families and children. Unfortunately, it is evident throughout South African studies that organisations still often expect NQSWs to take on the same tasks and amount of work as experienced SWs.

4.2.2 Key findings regarding challenges faced by NQSWs in providing services to families and children.

NQSWs are faced with various challenges when providing services to families and children. The first and most common challenge is that of a high caseload, as the participants in this study are faced with caseloads of up to 140 cases at a time. This is concerning as the findings of this study showed that NQSWs are not yet adequately equipped to manage such high caseloads.

NQSWs are also faced with challenges such as a lack of resources at their workplace. This includes limitations regarding stationary, printers, transport, and human resources. The lack of these crucial resources is a common theme within South African literature. The NGO and NPO sector experience the most challenges regarding resources, compared to other organisations. The lack of resources has a detrimental effect on NQSWs productivity and emotional well-being at times, as there is a clear link between the challenges these NQSWs face, and burnout.

NQSWs experienced challenges in their working relationships, including challenges related to the lack of cooperation or ability to establish working relationships with external stakeholders. NQSWs relayed their frustrations when working with external stakeholders such as the SAPS. When providing services to families and children, NQSWs were often faced with the SAPS not providing timely services, and the lack of knowledge from the SAPS regarding the Children's Act 38 of 2005, and its relevant and related administrative forms. The NQSWs were frustrated as this puts their service users and themselves at risk. NQSWs also noted the working relationships between different organisations as a challenge. SWs from different organisations and different sectors often struggle to work together, and NQSWs felt that there are poor working

77

relationships between colleagues. This in turn has a negative effect on the families and children that the SWs are expected to render services to.

NQSWs found the families and children they work with challenging, as they are often faced with hostility and resistance from families. This is seemingly due to the stigma related to SWs. Many families view SWs as a threat, creating difficulty for NQSWs who are inexperienced to deal with the related challenges. Young NQSWs are also faced with challenges such as service users and colleagues' disbelief that they are competent in their work, due to their young age. Another challenge that was derived from the study is the gap in their knowledge and skills for adequately performing their tasks when entering the workplace. The participants related this to their BSW degree that did not equip them enough for a specialised field such as statutory work. This correlates to various studies in the past that found that NQSWs do not feel equipped to provide statutory services upon graduating. The participants however mentioned that practical experience while working in the field equipped them to work within this field.

NQSWs often experience direct and indirect trauma while working with families and children. Since NQSWs are still developing skills and competencies, they often find this emotional load difficult to deal with. Being exposed to direct and indirect trauma was found to be detrimental to the NQSWs as it has several adverse outcomes such as burnout, trauma and even stress disorders, which leads to impaired ability to provide services to families and children.

4.2.3 Key findings regarding measures implemented to support NQSWs in providing services to families and children in Gauteng.

The participants in this study mostly experienced their colleagues and supervisors as supportive. Experienced social work colleagues are proven to be an important resource for support for NQSWs according to various studies. NQSWs rely heavily on the support of colleagues and obtain knowledge and skills from them. There is a notion in some countries to pair NQSWs and experienced SWs to collaborate their work, which support the NQSWs professional development. This is advantageous to both the NQSW and the organisation, as it could lead to enhanced work performance.

Supervisors of NQSWs implement supervision to support NQSWs to provide services to families and children in Gauteng. In the study, most of the participants received regular supervision, and experienced support from their supervisors. Most of these supervisors also have an open-door policy where the NQSWs are able to consult as the need arises. Their supervisors also took an interest in training them when they entered the workplace. These supervisors seem to take their ethical duty to support the transitioning of NQSWs from university to the workplace seriously. Unfortunately, this is not a reality for all NQSWs in South Africa, as literature suggests that due to time constraints supervisors often are not able to meet NQSWs supportive and educational requirements. This study confirms that organisations are willing to employ NQSWs and train them in the field through supervision, peer supervision and CPD activities. NQSWs however have to be eager to learn and also create their own learning opportunities. Previous studies had contradictory findings as NQSWs were not always provided with training within the workplace and had to take responsibility to obtain training themselves.

4.2.3 Key findings regarding recommendations to social workers, institutions, and organisations to maintain or improve NQSWs' readiness to provide services to families and children in Gauteng.

NQSWs learn many of the skills and knowledge their employers require from them after entering the workplace, as certain skills can only be learnt through working within the field. It was recommended that NQSWs take responsibility to ensure lifelong learning starting in their BSW degree and continuing throughout their professional career.

Some participants in this study relayed their concern regarding their view that the BSW degree did not fully equip them to render effective services to families and children. It was subsequently recommended that there is more focus on statutory work and related training, within the BSW degree. This essentially also includes knowledge regarding legislation and aspects of implementation and application within a practice setting. NQSWs entering into the workplace are required to be competent in several areas including basic social work skills, being consistent with service users, emotional

intelligence, and flexibility was noted. Another significant recommendation is that SW students are exposed to more practical learning experiences in the BSW degree. HEIs should also place more emphasis on the realities of the SW profession, in order to mitigate possible challenges NQSWs could face during the transitional period.

A recommendation to supervisors of NQSWs who provide services to families and children was to individualise supervision for NQSWs. Formal supervision that takes place fortnightly for the first 6-12 months will ensure that the NQSWs supervisory needs are adequately met. The support function of supervision was emphasised, as supervisors should support NQSWs on an emotional level as well, and not only focus on their functional tasks, such as discussing their caseload. There is an emphasis on protected caseloads for NQSWs, and it was thus recommended that organisations minimise the volume, complexity, and difficulty of their cases. Another recommendation to organisations to improve NQSWs readiness for working with families and children, is to let NQSWs initially shadow experienced colleagues as part of their induction programme. This is not only a valuable learning opportunity but also builds the NQSWs confidence to take over a caseload, and mitigates risks, which will ultimately lead to improved services to families and children. Internships during the transitional period is also recommended to enhance the NQSWs readiness to work with families and children.

It was found that NQSWs have to take responsibility for their own growth in order to improve and maintain their readiness for practice. NQSWs are urged to recognise and evaluate their own growth and development in both conventional and unconventional ways and seek and make use of learning opportunities during the transitional period to enhance their readiness for the workplace, and throughout their careers with CPD activities. They should also take responsibility to engage in meaningful supervision. NQSWs entering the field should establish collaborative relationships with other professionals and organisations, this will not only improve their readiness for practice due to the possible learning opportunities but alleviate some of the challenges they could be faced with, such as a lack of resources.
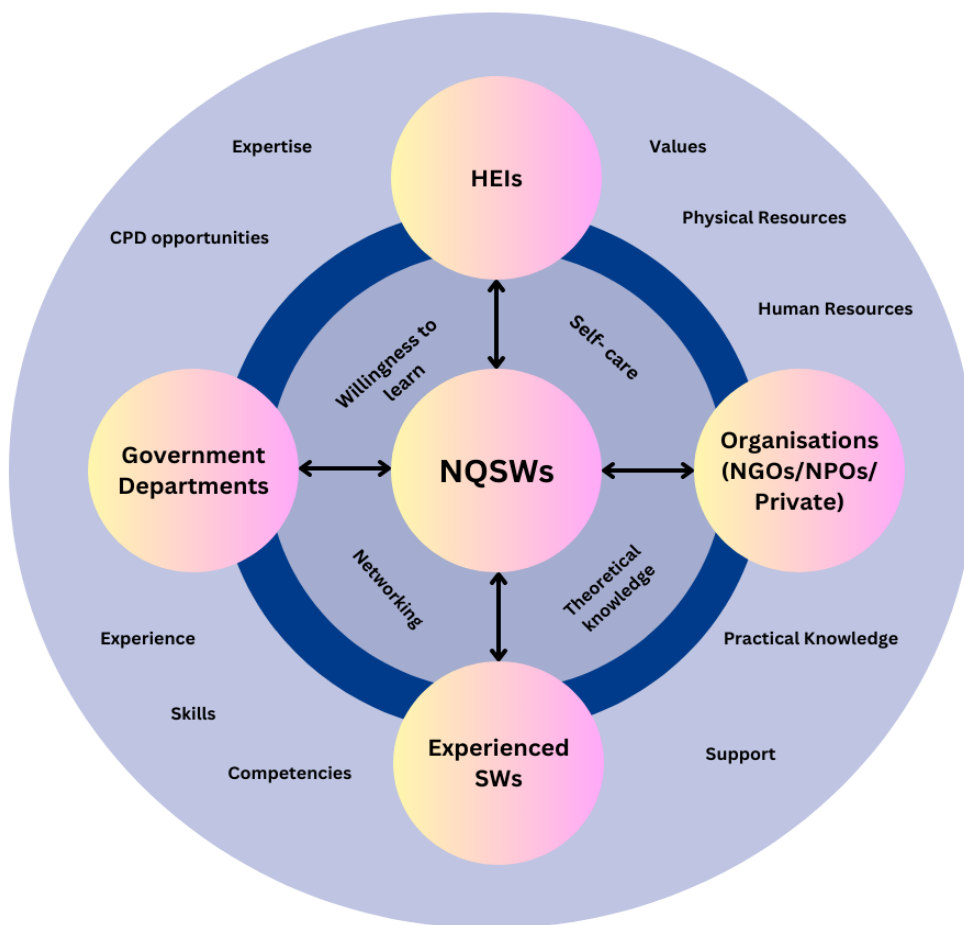
Figure 4.1: Interconnectedness of Collaborations for enhancing readiness of NQSWs

Figure 4.1 illustrates the interconnectedness of the HEIs, welfare organisations, government departments, experienced social workers, and NQSWs. NQSWs can be seen as central to the process, where it is suggested that HEIs, organisations, government departments and experienced social workers work together and pool their resources in order to ensure that NQSWs are ready for the workplace, and essentially mitigate challenges, such as a lack of resources. NQSWs should however also take responsibility to seek theoretical knowledge, and be willing to learn. Furthermore, NQSWs should engage in networking with experienced SWs, organisations, government departments and HEIs, and ensure that they practise self-care in order to enhance their readiness for the workplace.

As evident from the illustration above, a collaborative approach is required between HEIs, organisations, experienced SWs and NQSWs to ensure NQSWs readiness for the workplace. NQSW should thus take responsibility to seek learning opportunities during the transitional period upon entering the workplace, throughout their careers. In order to mitigate the challenges the NQSWs are faced with as mentioned in Section 4.2.2, previous studies have highlighted the significance of providing students with an education that enhances their readiness for the challenges in practice. A combined effort between universities, employers and NQSWs themselves is evidently necessary for NQSWs to cope with their challenges. This relates to the theoretical framework of this study, TCA. Collaborative advantage will thus be achieved if HEIs, organisations, experienced SWs and NQSWs implement the findings and recommendations of this study, with the focus on ultimately improving NQSWs services to families and children in Gauteng.

The conclusions drawn from these findings will be discussed in the following section.

4.3   CONCLUSIONS

Most of the participants in this study did not feel ready for service provision to families and children when they graduated, due to their multiple complex roles within the field of working with families and children. A lack of practical experience and knowledge regarding policy, legislation, and statutory services contributed to their experience of lack of readiness for the workplace.

Upon entering the workplace, the participants found a multitude of challenges including high caseloads, a lack of resources, a lack of knowledge and skills, and challenges when working with external stakeholders such as the SAPS and other organisations. NQSWs also experienced the complex problems of families and children to be challenging to manage. NQSWs are regularly faced with various risks when working with families and children and are concerned regarding the effect of these risks on their personal safety.

The challenges the NQSWs are faced with can contribute to burnout and other emotional difficulties. The participants however experienced that they receive

adequate support from both their supervisors and colleagues, and this enables them to provide efficient services to families and children in Gauteng. Organisations are seemingly implementing measures to support NQSWs which enhances their readiness for work.

A collaborative approach is recommended between the different sectors and stakeholders, in mitigating risks, and maintaining and improving NQSWs readiness for practice through lifelong learning, enhancing the BSW degree, the provision of adequate supervision, and access to internships and induction programmes for NQSWs. This will not only equip NQSWs to be ready for the workplace, but will also ensure competent and adequate service provision to families and children. Most of the participants highlighted the fact that they acquired the majority of their knowledge and skills as required by their employers, after entering the workplace. Certain skills and competencies can only be taught in the workplace, which therefore places the onus on not only the HEIs but also on relevant organisations and NQSWs themselves, to ensure that the NQSWs are ready for the workplace.

Based on the key findings and conclusions recommendations for the future social work practice, policy and legislation, and research will be included in the following section.

4.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for HEIs, organisations and supervisors, NQSWs, and future research will be discussed below.

4.4.1 Recommendations for HEIs

- Statutory services and policy and legislation regarding families and children, including the Children's Act 38 of 2005 should be incorporated more intensively into the BSW degree, with a specific focus on the application and integration of theory in practice.
- SW students should be exposed to practical experience early on during their studies.

- There should be more emphasis on the realities and challenges of the SW profession within the BSW degree, in order to mitigate possible challenges NQSWs could face during the transitional period and provide students with realistic expectations of the field.
- HEIs should empower students with knowledge regarding self-care, preventing burnout, and resilience in the workplace.

4.4.2 Recommendations for Organisations and Supervisors

- When employing NQSWs there should be formal orientation and induction programmes in place to ensure the transition from HEIs to the workplace.
- Organisations should consider providing internships for NQSWs to assist them in transitioning from graduates to NQSWs.
- It is recommended that NQSWs receive formal supervision fortnightly for a minimum of 6 months when entering the workplace.
- Supervisors should place an emphasis on the supportive function of supervision to prevent burnout in NQSWs.
- Experienced SWs should support NQSWs and provide them with informal learning opportunities.
- Organisations and supervisors should provide NQSWs with formal and informal CPD activities to enhance their readiness to practice.
- Organisations should strive to build partnerships between the different sectors and organisations in order to promote collaborative partnerships.

4.4.3 Recommendations for NQSWs

- NQSWs should familiarise themselves with relevant literature, policies and legislation related to working with families and children.
- NQSWs should seek learning opportunities in the workplace from experienced colleagues and supervisors and take responsibility for improving their readiness to provide services to families and children.
- NQSWs should engage in ongoing psychoeducation regarding SWS to families and children to ensure that service users are familiar with SWS.

- NQSWs should take responsibility to engage in- and seek networks with other professionals, organisations and stakeholders such as the SAPS.
- NQSWs should seek to build a support system and engage in self-care in order to combat burnout.

4.4.4 Recommendations for future research

- Future research should be conducted on the prevalence of burnout amongst NQSWs in South Africa.
- This study focussed on NQSWs in Gauteng, future research could be conducted regarding NQSWs experiences regarding their work readiness to provide SWS to families and children in the whole South Africa.

REFERENCES

Adams, W. C. 2015. Conducting Semi-Structured Interview. In: Newcomer, K. E., Harry, H. P. & Wholey, J. S. *Handbook of practical program evaluation.* 4th ed. Washington: A Wiley Imprint.

Adler, E.S. & Clark, R. 2015. *An invitation to social research: how it's done*. 5th ed. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Allcock, A. 2019. ESSS Outline: Newly qualified social workers, supervision and child protection. Iriss. doi: https://doi.org/10.31583/esss.20190408

Andiema, NC. 2016. Effect of child-centred methods on teaching and learning of science activities in pre-schools in Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice,* 7:27. Doi: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1115813.pdf

Anney, V.N. 2014. Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5(2):272-281.

Babbie, E.R. 2017. *The basics of social research*. 7th ed. Boston: Cengage Learning.

Bates, N., Immins, T., Parker, J., Keen, S., Rutter, L., Brown, K., Zsigo, S. 2010. 'Baptism of Fire': The First Year in the Life of a Newly Qualified Social Worker. *Social Work Education*, 29(2):152–170. doi: 10.1080/02615470902856697.

Beddoe, L., Hay, K., Maidment, J., Ballantyne, N. & Walker, S. 2018. Readiness to practice social work in Aotearoa New Zealand: perceptions of students and educators. *Social Work Education*, 37(8):955–967. doi: 10.1080/02615479.2018.1497152.

Bitsch, V. 2005. Qualitative Research: A Grounded Theory Example and Evaluation Criteria. *Journal of Agribusiness*, 23(1): 75-91.

Briar-Lawson, K. & Naccarato, T. 2021. *Family Services.* Doi: https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.145

Calitz, T., Roux, A. & Strydom, H. 2014. Factors that affect social workers' job satisfaction, stress and burnout. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 50(2):153-169.

Carello, J., & Butler, L. 2015. Practicing What We Teach: Trauma-Informed Educational Practice. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work,* 35(1): 262 - 278.

Carpenter, J., Shardlow, S.M., Patsios, D. & Wood, M. 2015. Developing the confidence and competence of newly qualified child and family social workers in England: Outcomes of a national programme. *British Journal of Social Work,* 45(1):153-176.

Challis, D. & Ferlie, E. 1988. Changing Patterns of Fieldwork Organisation: I. The Headquarters View. *British Journal of Social Work, 16(2): 181-202.*

Children's Act 38 of 2005. (Published in the *Government Gazette*, (28944). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Cloete, V. 2012. *The features and use of mentoring as an activity in supervision of newly qualified social workers.* Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch University (Dissertation-Masters).http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/20321

Cliquet, R. 2003. Major trends affecting families in the new millennium: Western Europe and North America in major trends affecting families: *A background document prepared by the programme on the family.* New York: United Nations.

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. 1996. https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5de4.html Accessed on: 06/06/2023.

Cortis, N., & Meagher, G. (2012). Social Work Education as Preparation for Practice: Evidence from a Survey of the New South Wales Community Sector. *Australian Social Work, 65*: 295 - 310.

Cox, K., & Steiner, S. (2013). *Self-care in social work: A guide for practitioners, supervisors, and administrators*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Creswell, J. 2009. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications. doi: 10.1080/14675980902922143

Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. 2018. *Research Design*: *Qualitative, Quantitative & Mixed Methods Approach*. 5th edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. 2014. Research designs: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. 4th ed. London: SAGE.

De Jager, M. 2014. How Prepared Are Social Work Practitioners For Beginners' Practice? Reflections Of Newly Qualified Bsw Graduates. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, *49*(4). doi: https://doi.org/10.15270/49-4-39

DeJonckheere, M. & Vaughn, L. M. 2019. Structured interviewing in primary care research: a balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health,* 7(2):1-8.

Department of Social Development. 2006. *Integrated Service Delivery Model towards improved social services*. RP31. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Social Development. 2012. *White Paper on Families in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Social Development. 2013. *National Strategic Plan.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Social Development. 2015. Revitalising the Social Work Profession in South Africa.

Department of Social Development. 2021. *Revised White Paper on Families in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Social Development. 2021. *Revised White Paper on Families in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Welfare. 1997. *White paper for social welfare.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Dlangamandla, V.P. 2010. *The experiences of social workers regarding the implementation of a developmental social welfare approach within the Department of Social Development Gauteng Province.* Pretoria. University of Pretoria. (Dissertation - MSW). doi: 10.1080/03124070701519686

Engelbrecht, L. K., Ornellas, A., Strydom, M., Slabbert, I., Zimba, Z., Khosa, P., & Cornelissen-Nordien, T. 2021. Authentication of an academic culture in a Social Work programme offered at a South African university: A value-driven approach towards a decolonised curriculum. *International Social Work*, 64(4):556–570. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872819842934

Engelbrecht, L.K. & Ncube, M. 2021. Supervision of newly qualified social workers, In: K. O'Donoghue & L.K. Engelbrecht (Eds.). Routledge International Handbook of Social Work Supervision. New York: Routledge.

Engelbrecht, L.K. 2006. Plumbing the brain drain of South African social workers migrating to the UK: Challenges for social service providers. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 42(2):127-146.

Engelbrecht, L.K. 2019. Towards authentic supervision of social workers in South Africa. The Clinical Supervisor, 38(2):301-325.

Eraut, M., 1994. *Developing professional knowledge and competence.* London: Psychology Press.

Fain, J. A. 2017. *Reading, understanding, and applying Nursing Research.* 5th ed. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company.

Flick, U. 2018. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. 6th ed. London: SAGE.

Fouché, C.B. 2021. Introduction to the research process. In: Fouché, C.B. (Ed।)., Strydom, H. & Roestenburg, W.J.H. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* 5th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Gallop, C.J. 2018. Lost and finding: experiences of newly graduated critical social workers. *Critical Social Work,* 19(1):43-63.

Gilin, B., & Kauffman, S. (2015). Strategies for Teaching About Trauma to Graduate Social Work Students. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 35*:378-396.

Goliath, J. 2018. *Management functions of frontline social workers supervising social auxiliary workers*. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University. (Mini-dissertation – MSW) doi: http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/103357

Govender,B. 2015. *The development of guidelines for social workers involved in early childhood development within the Department of Social Development.* Western Cape. University of the Western Cape. (Thesis – PhD). http://hdl.handle.net/11394/4972

Grant, S., Sheridan, L., & Webb, S. A. (2017). Newly Qualified Social Workers' Readiness for Practice in Scotland. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 47(2): 487–506. doi: http://www.jstor.org/stable/26363672

Grant, S., Sheridan, L., & Webb, S.A. 2014. *Readiness for practice of newly qualified social workers: evaluation study for the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).* Glasgow: Caledonian University.

Gray, B. & Purdy, J. 2018. *Collaborating for our future: Multistakeholder partnerships for solving complex problems*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Greene, D.S., Mullins, M.H., Baggett, P., & Cherry, D.J. 2017. Self-Care for Helping Professionals: Students' Perceived Stress, Coping Self-Efficacy, and Subjective Experiences. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, 22(1):1-16.

Healy, K. & Meager, G. 2007. Social Workers' Preparation for Child Protection: Revisiting the Question of Specialisation. *Australian Social Work, 60(3):321-335.* doi: 10.1080/03124070701519686

Hilton, T.D., Fawson, P.R., Sullivan, T.J. & DeJong, C.R. 2019. *Applied social research: A tool for the human services.* 10th ed. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Howard, A., Johnston, L. & Agllias, K. 2015. Ready or not: workplace perspectives on work readiness indicators in social work graduates. In: Beddoe,L. & Gair,S. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 17(2):7-22.

Huni, V. & Chikadzi, V. 2014. The Novice Voyage: Challenges Experienced by Social Workers in their First Year of Full Employment. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences.* 5(14):469-470. doi: 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n14p465

Hunt, S., Tregurtha, M., Kuruvila, A., Lowe, S. & Smith, K. 2017. Transition to professional social work practice: The first three years. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 19(2):139–154.

Hussein, S., Moriarty, J., Stevens, M., Sharpe, E., & Manthorpe, J. (2014). Organisational factors, job satisfaction and intention to leave among newly qualified social workers in England. *Social Work Education, 33*(3): 381–396. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2013.806467

Huxham, C. & Vangen, S. 2013. *Managing to collaborate: The theory and practice of collaborative advantage.* London, UK: Routledge.

International Federation of Social Workers and International Associations of Schools of Social Work. 2014. Global Definition of Social Work. https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/. Accessed: 17 February 2023.

Jack, G. & Donnellan,H. Social work with children. *Journal of Social Work, 15(2):*226 - 227. doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017314557

Janse van Rensburg, J. 2009. Occupational Stressors of Newly Qualified Social Workers in Non-Governmental Organisations: Experiences and Coping Strategies. Master of Social Work. University of Stellenbosch. https://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/2091 Accessed on: 10/02/2023.

Jansen, A., 2017. 'It's so complex!': understanding the challenges of child protection work as experienced by newly graduated professionals, *The British Journal of Social Work*, 48(6):1524–1540.

Joseph, D. 2017. Perceived contributing factors impeding job satisfaction of social workers in non-government organisations. Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch University. (Dissertation – MSW). http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/101103

Kheswa, J.G. 2019. Factors and effects of work-related stress and burnout on the well-being of social workers in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 45:1-10.

Knight, C. 2010. Indirect Trauma in the Field Practicum: Secondary Traumatic Stress, Vicarious Trauma, and Compassion Fatigue Among Social Work Students and Their Field Instructors. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work,* 15:31-52.

Koch, L. C., Niesz, T. & McCarthy, H. 2014. Understanding and reporting qualitative research: An analytical review and recommendations for submitting authors. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin,* 57(3):131-143.

Korstjens, I. & Moser, A. 2018. Series: Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice,* 24(1):9-18.

Lamanna, M.A.A., Czerwinski, R. & Ann, S. 2012. Marriages Families and Relationships: Making Choices in a Diverse Society. 11th ed. Belmont CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Lasker, R.D., Weiss, E.S. & Miller, R. 2001. Partnership synergy: a practical framework for studying and strengthening the collaborative advantage. *The Milbank Quarterly,* 79(2):179-205.

Leavy, P. 2017. *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based and community-based participatory research approaches.* 2nd ed. New York: Guilford Press.

Leeson, C. 2010. The Emotional Labour of Caring About Looked After Children. *Child and Family Social Work*, 15:483–491.

Lum, D. 2010. *Culturally Competent Practice: A Framework for Understanding*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Macdonald, G., & Sirotich, F. 2005. Violence in the social work workplace: The Canadian experience. *International Social Work*, *48*(6):772-781. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872805057087

Makofane, M.D.M. & Shirindi, M.L. 2018. The importance of data collection for qualitative research in social work. In: Shokane, A.L., Makhubele, J.C. & Blitz, L.V. (Eds). *Issues Around Aligning Theory, Research and Practice in Social Work Education* (Knowledge Pathing: Multi-, Inter- and Trans-Disciplining in Social Sciences Series Volume 1). Cape Town: AOSIS. doi: https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2018.BK76.02

Maree, K. (Ed.). 2020. *First steps in research.* 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Maree, K. & Pietersen, J. 2020. Surveys and the use of questionnaires. In: Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research.* 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Marsh, P. & Triseliotis, J. 1996. *Ready to Practise? Social Workers and Probation Officers: Their Training and First Year in Work.* Aldershot: Avebury/Ashgate Publishing.

McFadden, P. (2013). *Resilience and Burnout in child protection social work.* Ulster University. (Thesis-PhD). doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bct210

McFadden, P. (2018a). Two sides of one coin? Relationships build resilience or contribute to burnout in child protection social work: Shared perspectives from leavers and stayers in Northern Ireland. *International Social Work*, *1*(13):1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 0020872818788393

McSweeney, F. & Williams, D. 2019. Social care graduates' judgements of their readiness and preparedness for practice. *Social Work Education*, 38(3):359–376. doi: 10.1080/02615479.2018.1521792

Mokoka, L. 2016. *The Experience of social work supervision within the Department of Social Services Department in the Johannesburg Region.* Pretoria: UNISA. (Dissertation– MA). doi: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/43178357.pdf

Moorhead, B., Bell, K., Jones-Mutton, T., Boetto, H. & Bailey, R. 2019. Preparation for practice: embedding the development of professional identity within social work curriculum. *Social Work Education*, 38(8):983-995.

Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Stevens, M. & Hussein, S. 2011. Making the transition: comparing research on newly qualified social workers with other professions. *British Journal of Social Work,* 41(7):1340-1356.

Moriarty, J.A., & Manthorpe, J. 2014. Controversy in the Curriculum: What Do We Know About the Content of the Social Work Qualifying Curriculum in England? *Social Work Education,* 33:77 - 90.

Motloba, P. 2019. Non-maleficence – a disremembered moral obligation. *South African Dental Journal*, 74(1):40–42. doi: 10.17159/2519-0105/2019/v74no1a7

Munro, E. 2010a. *The Munro Review of Child Protection Part 1: A Systems Analysis*, London: Department for Education. www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/firstreport.shtml

Napoli, M., & Bonifas, R.P. 2011. From Theory Toward Empathic Self-Care: Creating a Mindful Classroom for Social Work Students. *Social Work Education,* 30:635 - 649.

Nathaniel, K. 2018. Readiness for practice in social work through a constructionist lens. *Field Educator*, 8(2):1-21.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW). 2023. *National Association of Social Workers.* https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Facts/TypesofSocialWork#:~:text=Social%20workers%20are%20found%20in,numerous%20public%20and%20private%20agencies Accessed on: 08/03/2023.

International Federation of Social Workers (IFSA). 1992. *International Federation of Social Workers.* doi: https://www.ifsw.org/wp-content/uploads/ifsw-cdn/assets/ifsw_105521-8.pdf

Neuman, W.L. 2014. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* 7th ed. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Newberry, A. 2014. Hitting the ground running: Neo-conservatism and first-year Canadian social workers. *Critical Social Work*, 15(1):42-55.

Newell, J.M. 2019. An Ecological Systems Framework for Professional Resilience in Social Work Practice. *Social work*. doi: 10.1093/sw/swz044

Newhill, C.E., 1996. Prevalence and risk factors for client violence toward social workers. *Families in Society*, 77(8):488-495. doi: https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.958

Nhedzi, F. & Makofane, M. 2015. The experiences of social workers in the provision of family preservation services. *Social Work*, 51(3):354-378. doi: https://doi.org/10.15270/51-3-453

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2020a. Introducing qualitative research. In: Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research.* 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2020b. Qualitative research designs and data-gathering techniques. In: Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research.* 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2020c. Analysing qualitative data. In: Maree, K. (Ed.). *First steps in research.* 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E. & Moules, N.J. 2017. Thematic analysis: striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1):1-13.

Ntsoane, D.R. 2017. *Occupational stress, burnout and work engagement of social workers in the Limpopo Province.* Potchefstroom: North West University. (Thesis – PhD). http://hdl.handle.net/10394/25614

Nunev, S. 2014. Supervision practical training problems with social work students. *Trakia Journal of Sciences*, 12:461-466.

Nuttman-Shwartz, O. 2017. Rethinking Professional Identity in a Globalized World. *Clinical Social Work Journal,* 45:1-9. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-016-0588-z

Oxford Reference. 2021. https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095635157#:~:te xt=(CPD) (kŏn-tin,and work experience and practice. Accessed on 4

Parker, L. 2017. *Essential professional competencies of social work supervisors in a non- profit welfare organisation.* Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch University. (Dissertation - PhD). http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/101062

Pithouse, A., & Scourfield, J. (2002). Ready for Practice? The DipSW in Wales: Views from the Workplace on Social Work Training. *Journal of Social Work*, 2: 7-27. doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/146801730200200102

Pretorius, T. 2020. *Compassion fatigue and self-care: voices of newly qualified social workers.* Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University. (Dissertation – MSW). http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/109235

Radey, M. & Schelbe, L. 2017. From Classroom to Caseload: Transition Experiences of Frontline Child Welfare Workers. *Child Welfare,* 95(2):71-89.

Rankin, P. & Engelbrecht, L.K. 2019. The context of management in social service organisations. Fundamental aspects of supervision, in L.K. Engelbrecht (Ed.). *Management and supervision of social workers*. 2nd ed. United Kingdom: Cengage Learning.

Rasanen, M. & Nyce, J. M. 2013. The raw is cooked: data in intelligence practice. *Science, Technology and Human Values,* 00(0):1-23.

Regehr C., LeBlanc V. R., Bogo M., Paterson J., & Birze A. 2015. Suicide risk assessments: Examining influences on clinicians' professional judgment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 85(4): 295.

Regehr, C. , LeBlanc, V. , Shlonsky, A. & Bogo, M. (2010). The Influence of Clinicians' Previous Trauma Exposure on Their Assessment of Child Abuse Risk. *The Journal of*

Nervous and Mental Disease, *198*(9):614-618. doi: 10.1097/NMD.0b013e3181ef349e.

Regehr, C., Leslie, B., Howe, P. and Chau, S., 2005. Stress, trauma and support in child welfare workers. *Advisor Journal*, *17*(2):24.

Reiter, M.D. 2015. *Substance abuse and the family.* New York: Routledge.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2011. The Presidency. National Planning Commission. National Development Plan. Vision for 2030. Executive Summary. https://www.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan-2030 Accessed on: 29/06/2023.

Resnik, D.B. 2020. *What is Ethics in Research & Why Is It Important?* https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/index.cfm Accessed on: 18/02/2023.

Rey, L. D. 1996. What Social Workers Need to Know about Client Violence. *Families in Society, 77*(1): 33-39. doi: https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.839

Roestenburg, W.J.H., Strydom, H. & Fouché, C.B. 2021. *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human services professions.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Rogowski, S. 2013. *Critical social work with children and families: theory, context and practice.* Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Schoeman, H. 2019. *A Gestalt intervention framework for play practitioners.* Gansbaai, South Africa: The Centre for Play Therapy and Training.

Schurink, W., Fouché, C. B., & De Vos, A. S. 2011. Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretations. In: De Vos, A.S, Strydom, H. Fouché, C.B. & Delport, L. (Eds.), *Research at Grass Roots. To the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions.* 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Singh, K. D. 2015. Creating your own qualitative research approach: Selecting, integrating and operationalizing philosophy, methodology and methods. *Vision,* 19(2):132-146.

Skhosana, R. M. 2020. The dilemma faced by NPOs in retaining social workers: a call to revisit the retention strategy. *Social Work Journals,* 56(2): 109-124.

Sobočan, A.M., Bertotti, T. & Strom-Gottfried, K. 2019. Ethical considerations in social work research. *European Journal of Social Work*, 22(5):805–818. doi: 10.1080/13691457.2018.1544117

Social Service Professions Act (previously Social and Associated Workers Act) 110 of 1978. (Published in the *Government Gazette*, (6631). Pretoria: Government Printer).

Sousa, D. 2014. Validation in qualitative research: General aspects and specificities of the descriptive phenomenological method. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 11(2):211-227.

South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). 2019. Policy on continuing professional development policy (CPD) for social workers and social auxiliary workers. Pretoria: SACSSP.

South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). 2020. Assessment tool for the quality assurance of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programme. Pretoria: SACSSP.

South African Council for Social Service Professions. 2021. Social work Readiness Programme. (November). http://www.sacssp.co.za/Registrations.

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). [s.a.]. Registered qualification: Bachelor of Social Work. doi: https://regqs.saqa.org.za/viewQualification.php?id=23994

Spolander, G., Engelbrecht, L., & Sanfaçon, A.P. 2016. Social work and macro-economic neoliberalism: Beyond the social justice rhetoric. *European Journal of Social Work*, 19(5): 634–649. doi: doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2015.1066761

Spolander, G., Sanfacon, A.P., Brown, M., & Engelbrecht, L. 2011. Social work education in Canada, England and South Africa: A critical examination of curricula and programmes. *International Social Work*, 54(6):817-831.

Strydom, H. & Delport, C.S.L. 2011b. Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. In De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.S.L. (Eds.). *Research at Grass Roots: for the social sciences and human service professions.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Strydom, H. 2021. Sampling techniques and pilot studies in quantitative research. In: Fouche, C.B. (Ed)., Strydom, H. & Roestenburg, W. J. H. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* 5th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Strydom, M. 2010. The implementation of family preservation services: perspectives of social workers at NGOs. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 46(2):192-208.

Strydom, M., Schiller, U., & Orme,J. 2020. The current landscape of child protection services in South Africa: a systematic review. *Social Work,* 56(4):383. doi:. https://doi.org/10.15270/56-4-881

Strydom, M., Spolander, G., Engelbrecht, L.K., & Martin, L. (2017). South African child and family welfare services: changing times or business as usual? *Social Work, 53*:145-164.

Tang, X., & Li, X. 2021. Role Stress, Burnout, and Workplace Support Among Newly Recruited Social Workers. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *31*(5): 529-540. doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731520984534

Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V. & Braun, V. 2017. Thematic analysis. In: Willig, C. & Stainton Rogers, W. (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research in Psychology*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/978152640555

Tham, P. & Lynch, D. 2014. Prepared for Practice? Graduating Social Work Students' Reflections on Their Education, Competence and Skills. *Social Work Education*, 33(6):704–717. doi: 10.1080/02615479.2014.881468

Tham, P. & Lynch, D. 2017. 'Lost in transition?' – Newly educated social workers' reflections on their first months in practice. *European Journal of Social Work*, 22(3):400–411. doi: 10.1080/13691457.2017.1364701

Toros, K, Tiko, A & Saia, K. 2013. Child-centred approach in the context of the assessment of children in need: Reflections of child protection workers in Estonia. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(6): 1015–1022. doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.03.011

Tracy, S. J. 2013. Qualitative Research Methods Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact. 1st ed. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Trainor, A.A. & Graue, E. 2014. Evaluating rigor in qualitative methodology and research dissemination. *Remedial and special education,* 35(5): 267-274.

Trevithick, P. 2009. Revisiting the Knowledge Base of Social Work: A Framework for Practice. *British Journal of Social Work.* 38(6)1212-1237. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcm026.

United Nations Children's Fund. 2021. *UNICEF Annual Report 2021: Protecting child rights in a time of crises.* https://www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-annual-report-2021 Accessed on: 06/06/2023.

United Nations. 1990. Convention on the Rights of the Child Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. Accessed on: 10/02/2023.

United Nations. 1995. *World Summit for Social Development: Copenhagen, Denmark, March 6–12.* Foreign Policy Bulletin 5, no. 6 (May 1995):39–41. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s1052703600005621

University of Calgary. 2018. What is relevant social work and human service experience? https://socialwork.ucalgary.ca/sitesearch?scope=site&m=dWN3c190aGVtZV9tYWluX21lbnU%3D&as_q=social+work+service+experience Accessed on: 11/02/2023.

Van Niekerk, J., & Matthias, C. 2019. Government and non-profit organisations: dysfunctional structures and relationships affecting child protection services. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, *55*(3), 239. doi: https://doi.org/10.15270/55-3-737

Vangen, S. & Huxham, C. 2006. Achieving collaborative advantage: understanding the challenge and making it happen. *Strategic Direction*, 22(2):3-5.

Vangen, S. & Huxham, C. 2013. Building and using the theory of collaborative advantage. In: Keast, R.,., Mandell, M. & Agranoff, R. (Eds.). *Network Theory in the Public Sector: Building New Theoretical Frameworks.* New York: Routledge.

Vetfuti, N., Goliath, V., & Perumal, N. 2019. Supervisory Experiences of Social Workers in Child Protection Services*. Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development,* 31(2):1-18. doi: https://doi.org/10.25159/2415-5829/4962

Wagner, C., Kawulich, B. & Garner, M. 2012. *Doing social research: A global context.* London, UK: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Walker, C. 2014. Reflections on the newly qualified social worker's journey: From university training to qualified practice. Cambridge: Anglia Ruskin University [Online]. (Thesis - PhD) Doi: dissertationhttps://arro.anglia.ac.uk/id/eprint/347147/1/Dr%20Clare%20Walker%20Final%20t hesis.pdf

Welbourne, P. 2012. *Social work with children and families: developing advanced practice*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis .

Welch, V., Lerpiniere, J. & Young, E. 2014. Scottish First-line Managers' Views of Newly Qualified Social Workers' Preparedness for Practice: Findings from an Online Delphi Study. [Report]. https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/68828/1/Welch_etal_CELCIS_2014_integrating_health_and_social_care_in_scotland_report_1.pdf

Wolfaardt, K.A. 2022. *Readiness for Practice of Newly Qualified Social Workers: Experiences of Supervisors at Social Service Organisations in the Western Cape, South Africa.* Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch. (Dissertation - MSW). doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcv146

Wood, D.J. & Gray, B. 1991. Toward a Comprehensive Theory of Collaboration. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science,* 27(2):139-162. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0021886391272001

Yates, J. & Leggett, T. 2016. Qualitative research: An introduction*. Radiologic Technology,* 88(2):225-231.

Yelloly, M., & Henkel, M. (1995). *Learning and teaching in social work : towards reflective practice.*

Zayimbi, T. 2020. *An explorative study of the experiences of social workers in providing therapeutic services to children in child and youth care centres in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.* KwaZulu-Natal. University of KwaZulu-Natal. (Dissertation - MSW). doi: https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/19141

Newly Qualified Social Workers' Preparedness for Practice: Findings from an Online Delphi Study. [Report].
https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/68828/1/Welch_etal_CELCIS_2014_integrating_health_and_social_care_in_scotland_report_1.pdf

Wolfaardt, K.A. 2022. Readiness for Practice of Newly Qualified Social Workers: Experiences of Supervisors at Social Service Organisations in the Western Cape, South Africa. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch. (Dissertation - MSW).

Wood, D.J. & Gray, B. 1991. Toward a Comprehensive Theory of Collaboration. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science,* 27(2):139-162. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0021886391272001

Yates, J. & Leggett, T. 2016. Qualitative research: An introduction. *Radiologic Technology,* 88(2):225-231.

Yelloly, M., & Henkel, M. (1995). Learning and teaching in social work : towards reflective practice.

Zayimbi, T. 2020. An explorative study of the experiences of social workers in providing therapeutic services to children in child and youth care centres in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal. University of KwaZulu-Natal. (Dissertation - MSW).

ADDENDA

ADDENDUM A ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

Faculty of Humanities
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotho

19 June 2023

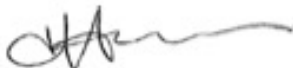Dear Mrs CL Muller

Project Title:	The Experiences of Newly Qualified Social Workers Readiness in Providing Services to Families and Children in Gauteng
Researcher:	Mrs CL Muller
Supervisor(s):	Mrs LC Jordaan
Department:	Social Work and Criminology
Reference number:	12004473 (HUM016/0523)
Degree:	Masters

I have pleasure in informing you that the above application was **approved** by the Research Ethics Committee on 19 June 2023. Please note that before research can commence all other approvals must have been received.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely,

Prof Karen Harris
Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof KL Harris (Chair); Mr A Bizos; Dr A-M de Beer; Dr A dos Santos; Dr P Gutura; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr D Krige; Prof D Maree; Mr A Mohamed; Dr I Noomé; Dr J Okeke; Dr C Puttergill; Prof D Reyburn; Prof M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Ms D Mokalapa

Room 7-27, Humanities Building, University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 4851 Fax +27 (0)12 420 4501 Email pghumanities@up.ac.za | www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-humanities

ADDENDUM B PERMISSION LETTER FROM ORGANISATION

Jakaranda Kinderhuis
BECAUSE WE CARE

tel | (012) 800 4700
www.jacarandachildren.co.za
1 Talitha Kumi St, East Lynne, Pretoria
NPO Reg: 183-619 NPO

Dear Clarissa & Leone'

With reference to your request regarding permission to conduct research. I/We would like to grant Clarissa Muller and Leone' Degenaar permission to conduct research and access to participants at Jacaranda & Louis Botha Children's Homes, pending the Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria's approval of the study.

We are looking forward to being part of the study.

Kind Regards

Grobler

Ms. C Grobler
Chief Executive Officer

Jakaranda
Kinderhuis • Children's Home
Privaatsak / Private Bag X11
Lynn East, 0039
Tel: (012) 800-4700
Faks/Fax: (012) 800-1443

Bank Details: ABSA Kolonnade - Cheque   **Branch Code:** 632005   **Account Number:** 1430140724
Management Board: Chairman: Ds. Danie van Rensburg, Deputy Chair: Mrs. L. Pretorius, Dr. R Opperman, Mrs. M. Edwards, Mrs. CA. Hood, Mr. PS Mostert, Mr. JG Nel, Mrs. W van Zyl
CEO: Mrs. C. Grobler Patron: Nadia Beukes

ADDENDUM C INFORMED CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM

Humanities 100.
—— 1919 - 2019 ——
Department of Social Work
& Criminology

Date: 10/05/2023

Researcher: Clarissa Lynette Muller
Cell nr: 0713302017
E-mail: clarissalmul@gmail.com

Informed consent form:
Newly qualified social workers as research participants

As social workers enter the field of practice, there is a transitional phase between what is learned during undergraduate studies and the specific organisational knowledge and skills required for practice readiness. This research study aims to describe and explore NQSWs' experiences regarding their readiness to provide social work services to families and children in Gauteng, to make recommendations to the universities and employers of NQSW's to support NQSWs in providing services to families and children in Gauteng. Your views and opinions are considered paramount for enhancing and addressing the continuing professional development needs of newly qualified social workers in South Africa and your participation is highly valued.

Title of the study: The experiences of newly qualified social workers' readiness in rendering social work services to children and children in Gauteng Province.

Goals of the study: The goal of this study is to describe and explore the NQSWs' experiences regarding their readiness to provide social work services to families and children in Gauteng.

Procedures: I understand that I will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview research process regarding the experiences of NQSW's readiness to render social work services to children and children in Gauteng Province. I recognise that my personal and professional opinion and views are required and do not necessarily reflect those of the organisation at which I am employed. I am aware that I will be advised of the day, time and realise that the procedure will take place on a Saturday, so as not to impact my work hours. I understand that the interview will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour of my time. The interactions/interview will be recorded, and I give the researcher full consent to do so.

Risks and discomforts: I take note that there are no foreseen risks and discomfort involved in participating in the study. However, I understand this research will remind me of the practical realities

and challenges in the field of social work practice and I understand that if I require debriefing as a result of the research, I will be provided access to this service at no cost to myself. If I require debriefing, I must inform the researcher at cell number 0713302017 or email clarissalmul@gmail.com. Debriefing can take place online or in person.

Benefits: I understand that the researcher will not offer me any incentives for being involved in the study.

Participant's rights: I am fully aware that participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation from the study at any time if I so wish, without negative consequences.

Confidentiality: Information shared in the interview will be treated as confidential. Aligned with POPIA, the researcher will not divulge information from the interview to anybody else and will undertake to prevent inadvertent disclosure of confidential information.

Dissemination of research results: I understand that the researcher will compile a mini dissertation to be submitted to the University of Pretoria as part of her Masters (Social Work) studies. I further note that the researcher will disseminate the research findings to the organisation where I am employed. I also take note that the research findings will be used for conference presentations and publications in accredited journals.

Storage of research data: I am fully aware that research data will be stored in a University of Pretoria online database for a minimum period of 15 years. I am also aware that the research data may be used for further research purposes.

By signing this letter of consent, I confirm that I have read and clearly understood the contents. I understand that I do not give up any legal rights by signing this letter of informed consent.

_____   _____   _____

Participant (Print name)   Participant's signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

Researcher (Print name)   Researcher's signature   Date

Faculty of Humanities
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotho

Page 2 of 2

108
© University of Pretoria

ADDENDUM D INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

<div align="center">

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

</div>

Title of this research: The experiences of Newly qualified social workers' readiness to render social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province.

Researcher: Clarissa Lynette Muller

Semi-structured Interview

The following information is relevant to the facilitation of the Semi-structured Interview:

- The research participants (newly qualified social workers) will receive an informed consent form to complete prior to the research process, which will contain all relevant information regarding the process;
- The duration of the semi-structured interview is scheduled to be 45 minutes;
- The interviews are to be scheduled during working hours as permitted by the Organisation.

Interview questions

All the recruited participants will be asked the following questions in the beginning of the interview, to attain their biographical information and to build rapport with them:

- What is your name? False names or code numbers will be used in the research report writing in order to maintain confidentiality.
- How old are you?
- Where are you working? Name of the organisation will not be revealed due to confidentiality.
    - How long have you been rendering social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province?
- How would you prefer to be addressed in terms of Gender?

The following questions will be asked to focus on the research topic:

1. When did you qualify as a social worker?

2. When did you start working at the current organisation?

3. Please describe your role as a social worker in the organisation (may use the name of the organisation).

4. Please share with me your positive experiences when rendering social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province

5. What are your negative experiences when rendering social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province

6. What are the challenges you are experiencing or have experienced while rendering social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province?

7. How do you cope with your day-to-day challenges in rendering social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province?

8. Do you feel/think you were/are ready to render social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province?
8.1. Discuss the general perception of the readiness for work of NQSWs in the organisation.
8.2. Do organisational views differ from views of the NQSWs?

8.3. What do you consider as 'readiness'?
8.4. What does readiness mean to you?
8.5. What are your experiences regarding your readiness to offer social work services to families and children in Gauteng?
8.6. What competencies do you deem necessary for you to be considered work ready?
8.7. What would you recommend to enhance your readiness for practice?

9. Based on your experiences of rendering social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province, what suggestions do you have in addressing some of the challenges that you have/are experiencing in rendering social work services to children and families in Gauteng Province?

10. Please share with me the nature of the support you are getting in your workplace regarding service delivery
10.1. Are NQSWs provided with entry-level work-related support (including additional supervision and protected caseloads)? Consider activities or structures that could

enhance general support in the workplace with a focus on the transition from graduate to social worker.

10.2. Is sufficient supervision provided on a regular basis?

10.3. Should supervision for NQSWs be specifically customised for the specific needs of this group? And if so, what are essential elements required for supervision with NQSWs?

11. Discuss omissions or gaps in knowledge of the NQSWs that are either expected and or required by the employer.