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**Examining recipients' experiences with the social grant in Polokwane, South
Africa**

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the Lord God Almighty, whose guidance and strength have carried me through this challenging period of my studies.

I also dedicate this work to my beloved family, the Khongelas. To my mother, Lerato Makhongela, thank you for always being my unwavering cheerleader. To my father, Johannes Makhongela, I am grateful for your wisdom and constant encouragement. To my siblings, Moloko, Lemogang, Maghezi, Seitapo, and Msesenyane Makhongela, your love and support have given me the strength to keep pushing forward.

I pray that this work becomes a stepping stone for those who follow us and that it serves as a reminder that anything is possible through perseverance and faith.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW	2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	6
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	6
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	7
1.6.1 Approach and design.....	7
1.6.3 Population and sampling.....	8
1.6.4 Data analysis.....	9
1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS	9
1.8 ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	9
1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	10
1.10 PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH	10
1.11 CONCLUSION	11
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON SOCIAL WELFARE IN SOUTH AFRICA	12
2.1 INTRODUCTION	12
2.2 WHAT IS A SOCIAL GRANT?	12
2.3 WHAT IS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION?.....	14
2.3.1 Definition of Public Administration.....	14
2.3.2 Definition of public administration	14
2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	14
2.4.1 Separating politics from administration	15
2.4.2 Principles of administration	15
2.4.3 Public Administration as Political Science and Management.....	16
2.4.4 Public Administration as Public Administration	17
2.4.5 The emergence of governance	17
2.5 SOCIAL WELFARE.....	17
2.5.1 Aims and objectives of social welfare	18
2.5.1.1 Eradication of poverty	18
2.5.1.2 Socio-economic rights of children.....	18

2.5.1.3	Mitigating the socioeconomic impact of HIV/Aids on children and poor households	19
2.5.1.4	Rebuilding communities and families.....	19
2.6	CONCEPTUALISING SOCIAL WELFARE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ...	19
2.6.1	Social welfare and Public Administration	20
2.6.2	What is Social Welfare Administration?	20
2.6.3	The integral lens on social welfare administration.....	20
2.6.4	The POSDCoRB lens on social welfare administration.....	21
2.7	SOCIAL GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY SASSA.....	22
2.7.1	Covid-19 social relief grant	22
2.7.2	Care dependency grant.....	22
2.7.3	Child support grant.....	23
2.7.4	Foster child grant.....	23
2.7.5	Disability grant	23
2.7.6	Older persons' grant.....	24
2.7.7	War veterans' grant	24
2.7.8	Grant-in-aid.....	25
2.7.9	Eligibility criteria for a grant-in-aid.....	25
2.8	COLLABORATIONS	25
2.8.1	Non-governmental organisations	26
2.8.2	Post office	26
2.8.3	CHALLENGES OF THE GRANT-IN-AID SYSTEM	26
2.8.3.1	Corruption	27
2.8.3.2	Long queues.....	27
2.8.3.3	Administrative capacity.....	27
2.8.3.4	Manual processes	28
2.8.3.5	Mistreatment of elderly citizens.....	28
2.8.3.6	Lack of information	28
2.8.3.7	Confusion in the eligibility criteria.....	29
2.9	LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK GOVERNING SOCIAL WELFARE IN SOUTH AFRICA	29
2.9.1	The Constitution of South Africa	29
2.9.2	Non-profit Organisations Act No. 71 of 1997.....	30

2.9.3	White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997.....	30
2.9.4	Social Assistance Act No. 13 of 2004.....	30
2.9.5	South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Act No.9 of 2004	31
2.9.6	Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005	31
2.9.7	The Older Persons Act No. 13 of 2006	31
2.9.8	White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2015	32
2.9.9	National Development Plan 2030	32
2.9.10	Labour Relations and Basic Conditions of Employment Act	32
2.9.11	CONCLUSION	32
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY		34
3.1	INTRODUCTION	34
3.2	WHAT IS A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY?	35
3.2.1	Research approach.....	35
3.2.2	Research paradigm.....	37
3.2.3	Research design.....	40
3.3	DATA COLLECTION	41
3.3.1	Population and sampling.....	44
3.4	DATA ANALYSIS	45
3.4.1	PROCESS OF CONDUCTING A THEMATIC ANALYSIS	47
3.4.1.1	Step one: Getting familiar with the data.....	47
3.4.1.2	Step two: Coding data	47
3.4.1.3	Step 3: Identification of themes.....	48
3.4.1.4	Step four: Review themes.....	48
3.4.1.5	Step five: Definition and naming of themes.....	48
3.4.1.6	Step 6: Write up	49
3.5	CONCLUSION	49
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS		50
4.1	INTRODUCTION	50
4.2	DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE	50
4.3	CONCLUSION	64
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		65
5.1	INTRODUCTION	65
5.2	FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	65

5.2.1	Finding 1: Demographics	65
5.2.2	Finding 2: Key experiences of the recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality.....	66
5.2.3	Finding 3: Grant accessibility	66
5.2.4	Finding 4: Financial adequacy of the grant	67
5.2.5	Finding 5: Grant approval time	67
5.2.6	Finding 6: Impact of the grant on the daily life	67
5.2.7	Finding 7: Application and receipt challenges.....	68
5.3	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	68
5.4	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	70
5.5	FUTURE RESEARCH	70
5.6	CONCLUSION	70
	LIST OF REFERENCES	72
	APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT	90
	APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AND COLLECT DATA..	92
	APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE GRANT IN AID RECIPIENTS IN POLOKWANE	95
	APPENDIX D: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE.....	97

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Population and sampling.....	45
Table 4.1: Demographics.....	51

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Steps involved in thematic analysis.....	49
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDG	Care Dependency Grant
CSG	Child Support Grant
DG	Disability Grant
DSD	Department of Social Department
FCG	Foster Child Grant
JOCOD	Johannesburg Council for the Disabled
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OPG	Older Persons Grant
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SASSA	South African Social Service Agency
SRD	Covid-Social Relief of Distress Grant
RSA	Republic of South Africa

Abstract

South Africa allocates a substantial portion of its social expenditure to grants, with nearly 18 million grants disbursed monthly. These include the care dependency grant, COVID-19 social relief of distress grant, child support grant, disability grant, foster child grants, grant for older persons, war veteran's grant, and grant-in-aid (Patel *et al.* 2023). Despite this extensive welfare system, poverty remains widespread, with nearly half the population living in absolute poverty. Additionally, grant recipients frequently express dissatisfaction with the amounts received and ongoing issues of corruption, maladministration, and inefficiencies in the approval, payment, and appeals processes (World Bank 2020).

This study examines the management of social welfare grants in South Africa and explores recipients' experiences, focusing on the Grant-in-aid as a case study in Polokwane. Adopting a qualitative approach, data was collected through interviews with 15 participants aged 18 to 60. Of these, five were between 18 and 25 years old, six were between 26 and 60, and four were aged 61 and above. The sample consisted of 12 females and three males.

Thematic analysis revealed key insights into grant accessibility, financial adequacy, approval time, and the impact on recipients' daily lives. While the grant improved recipients' quality of life by providing essential support, many found the financial assistance insufficient due to low disbursement amounts and inconsistent processing times. The study recommended digitisation, public policy adjustments and enhanced administrative support as tools to improve the experience of grant-in-aid recipients. The study concludes that although the grant-in-aid has a predominantly positive effect, its limitations hinder its ability to fully address recipients' financial challenge.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Republic of South Africa (RSA), according to Goldblatt (2005: 239), has the most comprehensive public welfare system amongst all developing nations. However, before the pre-apartheid era, RSA's social welfare system was characterised by inequality, discrimination, and racial segregation. All welfare policies at the time prioritised the socioeconomic needs of the minority population at the exclusion and expense of the majority (Van Der Byl 2004: 3). However, post-1994, the democratic government set out to transform and extend all social welfare benefits to cater for all who reside and live within the country. This was done by introducing several public welfare programmes such as housing subsidies, unemployment insurance, cash assistance, medical insurance, and social grants. To support these initiatives, the *Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004* (Act 13 of 2004) was enacted. This piece of legislation intends to provide citizens and residents of the country with public social assistance and mechanisms for rendering such social assistance.

A significant portion of RSA's social expenditure is allocated to social grants. In other words, each month, almost 18 million grants are paid out (Patel *et al.* 2023). These grants include the care dependency grant, COVID-19 social relief of distress grant, child support grant, disability grant, foster child grant, grant for older persons, war veteran's grant as well as the grant-in-aid (Patel *et al.* 2023). Despite this number of grants, the country still grapples with poverty, with approximately half of the population living in absolute poverty (World Bank 2020). Furthermore, there is continued disgruntlement among the recipients on the amounts received and criticism of the continued corruption and maladministration in the social welfare system (World Bank 2020). In addition to the aforementioned, there are backlogs in the payment, approvals, and appeals of grants. This raises questions about the management of social welfare grants in South Africa and how recipients perceive them.

Using the grant-in-aid as the case study, in a quest to unpack the management of social welfare grants, this research examined the experiences of the recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, RSA. The dissertation presents its discussion coherently across five distinct chapters to ensure logical progression and thematic alignment. Chapter one introduces the research problem, objectives, and questions, while Chapter two provides a critical review of relevant literature to situate

the study within its broader theoretical and empirical context. Chapter three details the research methodology, including design, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures. Chapter four presents and analyses the research findings, drawing connections between empirical data and the study's objectives. Finally, Chapter five synthesises the conclusions and offers evidence-based recommendations.

1.2 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

According to an article published by the Department of Statistics South Africa (2019), RSA is an unequal nation, coming first place among 164 nations. Chatterjee *et al.* (2020: 3) observe that a disproportionately small segment of the population holds control over slightly more than 80% of the nation's wealth. In an attempt to reduce and narrow the inequality gap, the South African government makes use of several tools such as social spending and affirmative action (International Monetary Fund 2020). The government has increased social spending through the administration of social grants. A social grant is money given to a citizen who is struggling to meet their basic needs. The grant is paid out on a monthly basis for either a certain amount of time or an extended amount of time (South African Social Security Agency 2022). Grants are important for the RSA society as they not only improve the standards of living of the citizens but also ensure that wealth is redistributed to narrow the inequality gap (Kelly 2017).

Additionally, social grants increase school attendance while reducing poverty and child malnutrition (Patel 2023). Rossouw (2017) earlier-on indicated that without social grants many poor households would not be able to survive. This is due to the fact that about 47 percent of RSA's population depends on some form of social grant as their primary source of income. Furthermore, in an article recently published by Business Tech (2023) it was revealed that the South African government spends just over R66 billion on social grants. The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) distributes eight different social grants that provide financial support to eligible individuals. These include the care dependency grant, covid-19 social relief of

distress grant, child support grant, disability grant, foster child grants, grant for older persons, war veteran's grant and the grant-in-aid (South African Social Security Agency 2022). Given that the study concentrated on the nature and scope of the grant-in-aid social grant, the subsequent section will conceptualise the grant-in-aid.

Ainsworth (1959: 367) in his article titled: "The Role of Grants-in-Aid in Public Finance" defined a grant-in-aid as an effort by the government to finance social services. Baker (2005: 10) in her article, "Grant-in-aid Programs on the Sunshine Coast" also believed that grants-in-aid are funds provided to communities by the government. Zikhali (2021: 1786) and Tomlison and Mashaw (1972: 606) further stated that a grant-in-aid is not only meant to assist frail individuals meet their day-to-day needs, but it also ensures that the government fulfils its constitutional obligations. This study defines a grant-in-aid as an amount of money paid to already existing recipients of social grants who cannot take care of themselves (South African Social Security Agency 2022). According to the South African Government (2023) one of the objectives of the grant-in-aid is to educate all South African families about efficient and effective ways of taking care of their frail family members. This view was introduced earlier on by Mlambo (2021) and Chawula (2021) who indicated that only individuals who are recipients of the disability, old persons', or war veterans' grant qualify for a grant-in-aid.

The provision of the grant-in-aid in South Africa is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) in sections 24 right through to 29 makes provision for all the socioeconomic rights of citizens, including applicable social assistance. The Constitution, as indicated in the aforementioned sections, asserts that it is the responsibility of the government to fulfil and actualise the rights of all individuals (Kelly 2017). The Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004 (Act 13 of 2004) on the other hand, permits the government to render social assistance to all eligible persons within the Republic. The Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004 (Act 13 of 2004) furthermore serves as a guideline for the provision and administration of social grants (Kelly 2017).

As previously stated, the grant-in-aid is awarded to individuals who already receive a disability, older persons, or a war veteran's grant and require fulltime care. It is a tool employed for the state to alleviate poverty in South African society. It should be noted that the grant-in-aid is an additional payment to the central social grant that an individual already receives (Megannon, 2022:3). All eligible recipients currently receive an amount of R500 per month, with this figure set to increase by R10 from October 2023, bringing the total to R510 (South African Social Security Agency 2022). The grant-in-aid exists to assist frail individuals with purchasing nutritious food, covering medical expenses, and remunerating their caregivers (Chawula 2021). Despite these well-intended provisions, the administration of the grant-in-aid faces significant challenges and persistent criticism. For example, individuals without internet access encounter barriers when applying for the grant, while many beneficiaries struggle to collect their payments due to high transportation costs and lengthy queues at South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) offices (Megannon 2022:4, 13).

A theoretical framework serves as an outline for research. It provides a foundation of defining how to approach the project (Grant & Osanloo 2014: 13). According to Martinez (2022), the empowerment theory attempts to empower communities and individuals to obtain political and personal power to improve their lives. Haddad and Toney-Butler (2022) added that the theory is centred around an individual's ability to envision their life goals and achieve them. There are two basic assumptions of the empowerment theory. The first key assumption noted by Haddad and Toney-Butler (2022) is that the empowerment theory perceives that every person has the ability and potential to be empowered. Similarly, Zimmerman (2000: 43, 44) found that through empowerment, institutions can master their own lives. The second key assumption of the empowerment theory is that communities and institutions only become empowered as a result of individuals who work together towards a shared goal (Haddad & Toney-Butler 2022). Perkins and Zimmerman (1995: 571) supported this view as they asserted that the participation of a group of people can result in the better and quicker achievement of goals, gain, and better access to resources. With the brief, definition, and key assumptions given, the study made use of the empowerment theory as it assisted in understanding how the grant-in-aid administered by SASSA empowers and influences the perceptions of its beneficiaries.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The *Constitution* of South Africa in section 27 (1) (c) provides for the right of access to appropriate social assistance for impoverished individuals and families. The *Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004* (Act 13 of 2004) establishes the legal foundation for the delivery of social assistance to all qualifying citizens within RSA. Luthuli *et al.* (2022: 2) stated that in South Africa, social grants alleviate poverty, and improve the overall state of household health, nutrition as well as education. Despite half of South Africans receiving some form of a social grant from the government, backlogs in grant payment, approvals, and appeals persist (Abrahams 2023). An article recently published by The Star for instance, indicated that the recipients of the temporary disability grant would have to start waiting for more than six months to renew their grants (Githahu 2022). This is a result of the country's unviable and limited tax base. Moreover, the absence of medical professionals to evaluate grant recipients also contributed significantly (Githahu 2022).

Patel *et al.* (2023) further observed that, among all the social grants, the grant-in-aid appears to present the greatest challenges for recipients in Polokwane. These difficulties largely stem from beneficiaries' limited knowledge and understanding of the grant's eligibility requirements. In addition, SASSA's apparent reluctance to collaborate with non-governmental organisations in communities such as Ga-Thoka has contributed to delayed disbursements and a lack of timely communication regarding grant expirations. These issues are further exacerbated by logistical challenges, as many recipients are forced to stand in long queues for extended periods without access to reliable transport to and from SASSA pay points. This has resulted in elderly people being defrauded of their grant-in-aid in the Polokwane central business district by fraudsters who had claimed to work for SASSA (Marumo 2023).

In addition to the above, there also exists a potential gap in literature, whereby, with all the literature on social grants, less interest is placed on the grant-in-aid. This can be attributed to how numerous scholars in the disciplines of both Social Welfare and Public Administration have, more often than not, extensively written on all other social grants but the grant-in-aid (Kelly 2017). For instance, in a Google Scholar search, between 2013 and 2023, over 18 700 articles have been published on child support grants, disability grants, and war veteran's grants (Ojukwu-Ogba & Lubisi, N., 2020, Bhorat, & Köhler, T., 2020: Kgaphola, 2022). While those articles on the Grant-in-aid

published during this same period are less than 16 000 (Zikhali 2021) and none focusing on Polokwane Local Municipality. Thus, to respond to the challenge in the Polokwane Local Municipality, this study intended to investigate the experiences of recipient's social grants in the Municipality with a specific focus on the grant-in-aid. This was realised by focusing on the following question: What are the experiences of recipients of the grant-in-aid in the Polokwane Local Municipality's geographical area of responsibility.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The key objective of the study has been the following: To examine the experiences of recipients with the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, South Africa.

To achieve this objective, the study focused on the following sub-objectives:

1. To analyse the grant-in-aid social grant and conceptualise social welfare within the discipline of Public Administration
2. To examine the recipient's perspectives on the grant-in-aid social grant in Polokwane Local Municipality.
3. To identify the measures that the Polokwane Local Municipality can adopt to enhance the social grant's effectiveness and address the recipient's needs more effectively.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key research question of this study has been the following: What are the recipient's perceptions concerning the grant-in-aid in the Polokwane Local Municipality?

In order to achieve the answer to this question, the study focused on the following research questions:

1. What does the grant-in-aid social grant consist of and where in the discipline of Public Administration is it located?
2. What are the recipient's perspectives on the grant-in-aid social grant in the Polokwane Local Municipality?
3. What measures can the Polokwane Local Municipality adopt to enhance the social grant's effectiveness and address the recipient's needs more effectively?

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Abu-Taieh *et al.* (2020) defined research methodology as a path by which researchers

conduct research. It consists of the research approach, design, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, and data analysis. The subsequent sections briefly detail more information on them. It is important to note that what is discussed below is a summary and every section will be detailed in chapter three of the dissertation.

1.6.1 Approach and design

There are three principal research approaches that can be employed: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. A qualitative research approach is characterised by the collection and interpretation of non-numerical data, relying on words rather than numerical values to develop an in-depth understanding of social phenomena (Bryman 2016:31). In contrast, a quantitative research approach focuses on the measurement and quantification of data, enabling statistical analysis and generalisation of findings (Bryman 2016:31). While these approaches reflect different underlying philosophical assumptions and methodological traditions, they are not inherently opposing; rather, when used appropriately, they can complement one another. A mixed methods approach purposefully combines qualitative and quantitative strategies within a single study to draw on the strengths of both and offset their respective limitations (Bryman 2016:473).

For this study, a qualitative research approach is adopted for two key reasons. Firstly, qualitative research allows for methodological flexibility and openness to emergent insights rather than imposing predetermined categories or hypotheses (Bryman, 2016:473). Secondly, it provides rich, meaningful insights into the lived experiences of people in real-world contexts (Stolle 2022). In this study, the qualitative approach enables grant-in-aid recipients to articulate their authentic experiences with the grant and helps to identify potential policy gaps and administrative oversights

Each research approach aligns with specific research designs suited to its aims and nature of data. As Bryman (2016:38) explains, research designs guide how data is collected and analysed to address the research questions coherently. Common qualitative designs include cross-sectional, longitudinal, and case study designs. This study adopts a case study design, which entails a detailed and contextually grounded

examination of a real-life phenomenon (Boyd, 2021). By employing a case study design focused on the Polokwane Local Municipality, the study generates a comprehensive understanding of the grant-in-aid recipients' experiences. This approach allows for a nuanced portrayal of the perceptions held by a representative sample of recipients within the municipality's communities.

1.6.2 Data collection

In-person, face-to-face interviews with recipients of the grant-in-aid from the Polokwane Local Municipality were used as a primary data collection method. According to Kumar (2014), interviews are time-consuming and quite expensive. However, they assisted the researcher in having a deeper and broader understanding. In this context, a better understanding of the lived experiences of individuals, who receive the grant-in-aid was realised. The study made use of a qualitative research document analysis of secondary sources information such as official documents, public policy documents and annual plans like the Integrated Development Plan, Indigent Social Assistance Policy Regulatory documents, and the Constitution. Other pieces of legislation that govern social welfare in RSA were also considered.

1.6.3 Population and sampling

The study made use of a selected number of non-profit organisations, orphanages, and old age homes based in the Polokwane Local Municipality's geographical area of responsibility. The target research population of the study included individuals who receive a social grant from the RSA government. However, only the beneficiaries of the disability grant, older persons grant, and the war veteran's grant were considered as the unit of analysis. This is because these are the only people according to the South African legislation permitted to receive the grant-in-aid. The population parameter was limited to 5 individuals per group of the recipients of the grant-in-aid.

Sampling refers to the procedure of selecting a subgroup population for a research project (Turner 2020: 8). For the purposes of sampling the study made use of a non-probability sampling technique, with a focus on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling strategy used to find specific individuals with study-relevant traits (Turner 2020: 10). Making use of a purposive sampling strategy ensured that

only the recipients of the grant-in-aid were interviewed as they are the most relevant individuals to provide insight on the nature and extent of the social grant (Nikolopoulou 2022). Furthermore, the sample size was limited to only 15 participants to obtain more fruitful and in-depth interviews.

1.6.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is the systematic process of examining, cleaning, transforming, and interpreting collected data to identify meaningful patterns, relationships, or trends that address the research questions or hypotheses (Creswell 2018). It can, however, be deduced that data analysis is to remove insignificant information to identify critical data for the research (Shai 2017: 32, 33). For this study, a thematic data analysis technique was used. Thematic analysis as a qualitative data analysis tool is used in many contexts as it aids in understanding the rationale across the data set (Kiger & Varpio 2017: 1). Large amounts of information must be divided into understandable themes, patterns, trends, and correlations in order to do a data analysis. Additionally, it offers pertinent, factual information that enables the researcher to reach insightful conclusions.

1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Like most postgraduate research studies, this study was subject to certain limitations and delimitations, which were carefully managed to enhance credibility and trustworthiness. Firstly, the study was confined to a single municipality Polokwane Local Municipality limiting the generalisability of the findings to other municipalities in South Africa. To address this, purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants had relevant expertise, thereby providing rich, context-specific insights, while clear contextual boundaries were delineated to avoid overgeneralisation. Secondly, given the reliance on face-to-face interviews, there was a risk that participants might provide incomplete or inaccurate information; this was mitigated through data triangulation, cross-verification with document analysis, and follow-up questions to clarify responses, complemented by detailed field notes. Access to certain internal regulatory documents was also constrained due to limited availability of municipal management and confidentiality considerations; to manage this, the researcher consulted alternative publicly available documents and used participant insights to address data gaps, acknowledging these constraints in the interpretation

of findings. Lastly, the study's scope of secondary sources was restricted; however, an exhaustive search strategy drawing on multiple academic databases and grey literature was employed to ensure that relevant and credible material was incorporated. By explicitly recognising these limitations and detailing the strategies employed to mitigate their impact, the study upholds methodological rigour and transparency, aligning with established standards for qualitative research trustworthiness (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

1.8 ETHICAL IMPLICATION

Voluntary participation in the research by data-collection respondents is significant. Therefore, participants needed to fill out a consent form (Dudovskiy 2011). In this study, the participants were permitted to discontinue their participation at any point. Another ethical implication that was upheld was the issue of deception. The ethical implications of deceit are another. As a result, to ensure that the participation realised voluntary, the participants were made aware of the research objectives. Thirdly, the approval to conduct the empirical data collection within the Municipality was acquired from Polokwane Local Municipality's municipal council (that is in charge of all of the municipality's administrative operations). The Economic and Management Sciences Department at the University of Pretoria's Committee for Research Ethics was also consulted to ensure that the study adheres to the broader code of ethics of the university. Lastly, to honour the privacy of the data-collection phase of the research participants, and uphold the value of trustworthiness, codes and symbols were used when referring to participants to conceal their identities.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

From the above, it is quite evident that most of the literature that has been published on social grants in South Africa has only been centred around the child support grant, disability grants, older persons grant, and war veterans' grant (Kelly 2017). However, scholars of social welfare have not made much mention of the grant-in-aid. This study, therefore, created knowledge in this area of study and further contributed to the subject discipline of Public Administration. Furthermore, individuals and institutions who continuously support the recipients of the grant-in-aid, will greatly benefit. The research findings will assist SASSA to improve and strengthen its administrative process of social grants.

Most importantly, though, the study will also help the Department of Social Development to find more efficient and effective mechanisms that will ensure both the recipients and potential recipients of the grant-in-aid to have adequate knowledge.

1.10 PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

In chapter one of this dissertation the concept of social welfare with a main focus on the grant-in-aid was introduced. The chapter makes provision for the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, research methodology, significance of the study, framework, and some concluding remarks.

Chapter two demonstrated the relationship between public administration and social welfare, locate social welfare in the discipline of Public Administration, and further review literature on social welfare with a specific focus on the grant-in-aid social grant.

In chapter three, the qualitative research methodology along with the design, data collection methods, population, and sampling techniques as well as data analysis techniques were introduced and discussed.

In chapter four, the recipients' experiences with the grant-in-aid social grant in the Polokwane Local Municipality, the findings, and discussion as they relate to the study's main aim will be discussed.

Chapter five provides the conclusions and recommendations that the Polokwane Local Municipality can take note of, consider and hopefully introduce to facilitate an improved implementation of the grant-in-aid to the area's recipients.

1.11 CONCLUSION

Chapter one of the dissertation provided the introduction and background of the study. The problem statement highlighted a notable gap in existing scholarship: while extensive literature exists on social grants in general, there appears to be limited academic focus on the grant-in-aid specifically. The chapter proceeded to outline the research objectives and questions guiding the study. Additionally, it presented the research methodology, along with a discussion of the study's limitations and delimitations. The chapter concluded by examining the significance of the study and introducing the preliminary conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON SOCIAL WELFARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of chapter two is to demonstrate the relationship between public administration and social welfare and further review the literature on social welfare with a focus on the grant-in-aid. This chapter will be structured as follows; section one unpacks the concept of social grants. Section two briefly discusses the various grants available in South Africa that is placing focus on the COVID-19 social relief of distress grant, care dependency grant, child support grant, foster child grant, disability grant, older persons grant, and war veterans grant, and further concludes by extensively unpacking the grant-in-aid as the central grant and distinguishing between public administration (spelt with “PA” as well as “pa”). The fourth section details the different paradigms of the public administration subject discipline. In section five, the concept of social welfare, along with its objectives, is discussed and expanded upon. Section six of the chapter locates social welfare in Public Administration, focusing on the two distinctive lenses used to view social welfare administration. The chapter in section seven then provides some concluding remarks.

2.2 WHAT IS A SOCIAL GRANT?

Social grants are a crucial tool for the South African social assistance system. They assist in alleviating poverty and addressing inequality. The government has expanded its non-contributory social assistance system through temporary increases in social grants, including Disability Grants (Vanleeuw *et al.* 2022). These grants are particularly important for vulnerable groups, such as TB patients and their households, especially during challenging times like the covid-19 pandemic (Vanleeuw *et al.* 2022). South Africa is distinguished among developing countries for providing a generous set of cash transfers, including social grants targeted at individuals with disabilities (Kelly 2017). Research indicates that social grants and remittances are substantial income sources for many South Africans; however, a considerable portion of the population still faces food insecurity (Waidler & Devereux

2019). Studies have demonstrated that social grants in South Africa significantly impact poverty alleviation and household welfare (Zwane *et al.* 2022). The country's social protection programs, including social grants, have been crucial in addressing inequality, poverty, and improving household welfare since the democratic transition (Zwane *et al.* 2022).

Moreover, social grants have been acknowledged for their role in alleviating the socio-economic impact of challenges like HIV/Aids in South Africa (Booyesen & Berg, 2005). These grants have been instrumental in addressing poverty and inequality in the post-apartheid period (Posel & Rogan 2012). Additionally, social grants have been associated with improved market participation for smallholder producers and have been identified as a means of enhancing the welfare of poor households (Sinyolo *et al.* 2017).

According to the Department of Statistics South Africa (2019), South Africa is the most unequal nation globally, coming first among 164 nations. African News (2024) further added that the minority owns most of the nation's overall resources. To reduce and narrow the inequality gap, tools like targeted government transfers, affirmative action to diversify wealth ownership, entrepreneurship, and increased social spending (International Monetary Fund 2020). The government has increased social spending through the administration of social grants. The South African social welfare system makes provision for social grants. This is because through social grants the government addresses both financial security and standards of living (South African Government 2023).

As previously indicated in this dissertation, social grants have made a huge impact in many South African households. Social grants have increased school attendance for children and reduced the number of people living in poverty (Patel 2023). Rossouw (2017) further indicated that without social grants, many poor households would not be able to survive. This is because 40 per cent South Africans depend on social grants as their income (Statistics South Africa 2024).

2.3 WHAT IS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION?

For many decades now, Public Administration has never had a universal definition. This is because the scope of the discipline is too great and debatable, and that it is far better to explain rather than define it (Kernaghan 2017). For the purposes of a working definition for this study, the subject Public Administration is defined as a discipline that studies the ways in which the national government sphere as well as the local government sphere located public sector (municipalities) serve the citizens and residents of RSA through the implementation and development of policies to ensure timeously service delivery (de Vries 2016: 6). It is, however, important to note that Public Administration is both an academic discipline and practice.

2.3.1 Definition of Public Administration

Public Administration (upper case) is an academic discipline such as taught in Module PAD322 at the North-West University, Potchefstroom. It primarily is associated with the administration of policies and programs and the behaviour and conduct of public servants and municipality officials. Both Thornhill (2014:18) and Van der Waldt (2017:184) agreed that the discipline of Public Administration investigates the functions, meaning, and structures of the public sector.

2.3.2 Definition of public administration

While Public Administration (PA) refers to an academic discipline, public administration (pa) refers to the practice. The practice of public administration is involved with the process of enforcing a government's rules and laws to realise the wishes and requirements of the citizens and residents (Uwizeyimana & Maphunye 2014: 2). This view is supported by Corson and Harris who added that public administration is responsible for the timeously delivery of public services to ensure social welfare (Nwanisobi & Christopher 2020: 58).

2.4 DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The evolution of the discipline of Public Administration occurred in six different paradigms. Henry (1975: 378) indicated that the use of the concept paradigm is most

appropriate for the development of the discipline as it conveys the ever-changing dynamics and identity of the discipline. Hanekom and Thornhill (1983: 41) stated that the development of the academic discipline and the practice did not occur at the same rate, nor did they exert the same amount of influence. Unlike the practice, the academic discipline is relatively new. The six paradigms involved in the discipline include Separating politics from administration, The principles of administration, Public Administration as Political Science and Management, Public Administration as Public Administration, and the emergence of governance (Henry 1975: 378).

2.4.1 Separating politics from administration

The first stage in the development of the discipline is the politics and administration dichotomy. This stage occurred from 1900 to 1926 (Henry 1975: 378). The so-called politics and administration dichotomy came to prominence in the 1800s through the publication of *The Study of Administration* by Woodrow Wilson, *Introduction to The Study of Public Administration* by Leonard White as well as Frank Goodnow's *Politics and Administration: A Study of Government*. This stage of the development of the discipline placed great emphasis on two important things. First, the locus (locality) of public administration i.e., government bureaucracy. Second, the idea that politics should not encroach on administration because the discipline can become an independent body of knowledge (Henry 1975: 378, 379).

2.4.2 Principles of administration

The second stage or paradigm is referred to as the principles of administration. For the purposes of this study, however, the latter will be used. Henry (1975: 379) indicated that the period of 1927- 1937 witnessed a heightened level of interest in both the discipline and practice. For instance, the number of universities that offered public administration as a course quadrupled (Basheka 2012: 41). This peak or heightened interest in public administration was a result of the American Rockefeller- family who dedicated their time and resources to the betterment of the public administration profession. This period also witnessed some of the most influential writings such as *Creative Experience* by Mary Parker and Henri Fayol's *Industrial and general management* (Basheka 2012:41). Basheka (2012: 42) further indicated

that during this period several authors considered public administration to be a fully-fledged scientific discipline. As a result, the scientific principles of administration were established as means with which to increase the efficiency of government. Among those who believed that public administration is a fully scientific discipline was Fredrick Taylor, who is considered to be the founding father of scientific management (Uwizeyimana & Maphunye 2014: 92). Frederick Taylor was not the only scholar who contributed greatly to the principles of administration, but William Willoughby and Leonard White did too. These scholars believed that scientific principles worked in any administrative setting and that public administration would be effective if administrators would be effective if they applied scientific principles in administration (Basheka 2012: 42). The highlight of this period, more specifically 1937, was when Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick promoted seven principles of administration inspired by Fayol. These are Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting or better known as POSDCORB (Basheka 2012: 42).

2.4.3 Public Administration as Political Science and Management

Although literature presents stage three, Public Administration as Political Science, and stage four, Public Administration separately this dissertation presents them in tandem as they both occurred between 1950 and 1970 (Henry 1975: 381). According to Uwizeyimana and Maphunye (2014: 3), stage three was a reaction against scientific management. During this time, Political Science, which was then considered as the mother discipline, did not separate itself from Public Administration nor did it support or encourage its growth and development. It is for this very reason that Henry (1975: 381) in his 1950's publication viewed Public Administration as being synonymous with Political Science.

Stage four, on the other hand, was marked by a rejection of administrative principles and the politics-administration dichotomy. As a result, the approach not only recognized the political environment in which administration operated, particularly in the public service sector, but also advocated for the separation of politics and public administration and management. However, considering that public administration operates in a political atmosphere, this was not as straightforward (Uwizeyimana & Maphunye 2014: 3,4).

2.4.4 Public Administration as Public Administration

The second last stage is the Public Administration as Public Administration which emerged from 1970 to the present day. According to Gupta (2020: 4), this stage involved distinguishing Public Administration from both politics and management. Henry (1975: 383) earlier on indicated that although stage five emphasizes public administration regaining its independence, it was also about ensuring that the discipline maintained a relationship with both politics and management and their activities.

2.4.5 The emergence of governance

Stage six lasted from 1990 till the present day. Stage six focuses on encouraging citizens to participate in public decision-making, improving administrative - and civil services, implementing judicial reform, and enhancing legislative oversight (Henry 1975: 383).

2.5 SOCIAL WELFARE

Social welfare can be traced back to ancient civilisation, when many societies and communities provided support and assistance to those who needed it (Hansan 2017). The modern concept of social welfare as a government system, however, dates back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Therefore, it is essential to take note of the fact that social welfare is not a foreign concept to the South African society. It first became quite prominent in the 17th century when the Dutch East India Company, through the Dutch Reformed Church, raised money in an attempt to help impoverished families and communities meet their basic needs. Although first prominent in the 17th century, social welfare as a system of government that officially began in 1806 when the British occupied the Cape Colony (Hansan 2017).

Social welfare has been defined by numerous scholars, however there is no uniform or standard definition of the concept. For instance, in his book, *Introduction to Social Welfare*, Walter Friedlander defined social welfare as a system of social services that assists poor families and communities to meet their basic standard of health, life, intrapersonal as well as their interpersonal skills. As these may aid them in developing their full capacities and living in harmony with those that are around them (Safdar 2020). On the other hand, *Oxford Reference* (2023) states that “social welfare” refers to the well-being of each individual member of society. For the purposes of this

study, social welfare is considered a coordinated effort to help those who are socially vulnerable or are experiencing personal or familial difficulties (National Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities 2015: 5).

2.5.1 Aims and objectives of social welfare

The objectives of social welfare vary. According to the Department of Social Development (2021: 26), there are four key objectives namely, the eradication of poverty, realising and meeting the social and economic rights of children, mitigating the socio-economic impact of HIV/Aids on children and poor households, and rebuilding communities and families in the RSA.

2.5.1.1 Eradication of poverty

When an individual or community lacks the means of subsistence, they are said to be in a state of poverty (Chen 2023). The Statista Research Department (2022) revealed that close to 18.2 million people are living in a state of poverty in South Africa. This implies that over 123 000 South Africans are living below the poverty line, receiving an income of less than R35.91 a day. The state of poverty has resulted in higher levels of school dropouts among children. For instance, between 2021 and mid-2022 it was estimated that more than 750 000 school children dropped out of school. Some of the reasons for such high numbers can be attributed to teenage pregnancy and familial financial constraints (Makgatho 2023). Therefore, social welfare is important as it will assist in the eradication of poverty.

2.5.1.2 Socio-economic rights of children

Children are probably the most vulnerable individuals who are affected by poverty, this is because they are dependent on others, and they enter or avoid poverty by virtue of their family's circumstances (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan 1997: 55). Despite a child's reasonable or unreasonable family background, they ought to be protected both socially and economically. Hence, Section 28(1) (c) of the South African Constitution, 1996, makes provision for the social and economic rights of children. The section states that children have the right to social and health care services, nutrition, and shelter. The absence of these basic rights being fulfilled is a form of violation against any child. In an attempt to adequately cater to and fulfil the rights of children, social welfare services such as free education and feeding schemes have been put in place by the RSA government.

2.5.1.3 Mitigating the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on children and poor households

A study conducted by The Statista Research Department (2022) revealed that South Africa has the fourth highest rate of HIV/Aids infections in Africa. HIV/Aids continue to impoverish poor families as these families exhaust all their savings and assets in an attempt to purchase and get medical assistance for their sickly family members (International Labour Office 2005). Furthermore, children who come from these poor households end up without basic skills and education (International Labour Office 2005).

2.5.1.4 Rebuilding communities and families

Closely related to the third aim and objective of social welfare is rebuilding communities and families. The institution of the family is considered to be the most important for several reasons. First, the family creates stability and structure where individuals can develop, maintain order, and establish their roles. Second, families provide education and guidance (Mclaughlin 2019). Parents specifically play a vital role in leading and guiding their children in order to ensure that they become better people for tomorrow. Therefore, through social welfare programs families are brought together. For instance, the government makes use of the child support grant or the foster child grant. These grants aid families in taking care of and meeting basic day-to-day needs (Mclaughlin 2019).

2.6 CONCEPTUALISING SOCIAL WELFARE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

So far, the dissertation has provided background on both social welfare and public administration. It is quite evident in the above discussion that a relationship may exist between social welfare and the second paradigm of Public Administration, the principles of administration. The following section of the paper focuses on locating social welfare in the discipline.

2.6.1 Social welfare and Public Administration

The dissertation earlier-on indicated that social welfare refers to the well-being and welfare of each individual member of society (*Oxford Reference* 2023). Public administration regulates the public sector and the delivery of public services to ensure social welfare (Nwanisobi & Christopher 2020: 58). Social welfare is related to public administration through what is termed social welfare administration (Tashin [Sa]).

2.6.2 What is Social Welfare Administration?

According to Tashin ([Sa]), social welfare administration speaks to efficiently delivering resources and services to satisfy the needs of individuals, communities, and families to foster and facilitate social functioning and relationships. Furthermore, it should be noted that social welfare administration is important for several reasons. Firstly, it ensures that suitable social services are readily available for the poor. Secondly, social welfare administration is responsible for rendering public services to individuals in an equitable manner (Tashin [Sa]). Therefore, social welfare plays an integral role in public administration. There are two prominent lenses through which we can view the relationship between social welfare and public administration. These include the integral lens and POSDCoRB lens. Although the dissertation briefly introduces the integral view, the POSDCoRB lens is what the study has mostly been concerned with.

2.6.3 The integral lens on social welfare administration

According to Antony (2013: 33) the administrative wing of the government is overburdened and as a result, is unable to adequately solve and tackle problems centred around the timeous delivery of public services. The inability of the government to provide services has ushered in a host of social problems, thus expanding the scope of social welfare administration daily. With that said, the integral view of social welfare administration is premised around the subject of social welfare as well as the effective implementation which is the subject of the POSDCoRB lens (Antony 2013: 33). With the emergence of new social problems, there is a dire need for the government to come up with effective strategies for innovative solutions.

2.6.4 The POSDCoRB lens on social welfare administration

This lens on social welfare administration focuses on the functioning of the government. It is greatly related to the managerial view of Public Administration as

proposed by Henri Fayol. According to Antony (2013: 25), Fayol introduced the following five functions of administration:

- Planning is defined as the articulation of goals (Antony 2013: 25).
- Organising refers to coherence and coordination of attaining goals (Antony 2013: 25).
- Commanding speaks to leading people (Antony 2013: 25).
- Coordination refers to the unison of functions (Antony 2013: 25).
- Controlling refers to ensuring that set goals are achieved as set out in a plan of action (Antony 2013: 25).

In support of Henri Fayol's functions of administration, Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick promoted the following seven principles of administration (Basheka 2012: 42):

- Planning is a process that comprises making informed choices on the procedures that have to be followed to achieve a set goal (Higher Study 2022)
- Organising refers to the division of labour as well as the coordination of labour through the hierarchy of authority to achieve a set goal (Higher Study 2022).
- Staffing is the process of recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating not only current employees but also prospective employees (Higher Study 2022)
- Directing involves giving employees directions and orders to manage work efficiently and effectively (Higher Study 2022).
- Coordination is the interconnectedness and integration of different parts of the work.
- Reporting entails providing feedback on work undertaken (Higher Study 2022).
- Budgeting refers to the systems of accounting and controlling income and expenditure (Higher Study 2022).

2.7 SOCIAL GRANTS ADMINISTERED BY SASSA

The eight social grants administered by SASSA along with the necessary requirements for an individual to be considered a recipient of any social grant are expanded upon further below.

2.7.1 COVID-19 social relief grant

The Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRD) is a R350 temporary grant that was formed by the government during the pandemic. It is paid for a period of three months for asylum seekers, refugees, special permit holders, and South African

citizens who are unable to assist themselves financially (South African Social Security Agency 2022). For an individual to be considered for the SRD grant, they are to first and foremost reside in South Africa, be either a South African refugee, asylum seeker, a special permit holder, or even a citizen. Furthermore, the applicant for the Grant-in-aid must have a monthly income of less than R624 and be between the ages of 18 and 60. The individual should also be unemployed and not receiving any form of social assistance from the government, such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Lastly, the applicant should not be eligible or contribute towards the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) (South African Social Security Agency 2022).

2.7.2 Care dependency grant

While the SRD grant is temporary, the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) is a permanent grant awarded by SASSA. The Government of the Western Cape maintains (2023) that the CDG is an R2 080 grant awarded to caregivers of children who are under 18 years and living with mental or physical disabilities. The South African Government website (2023) explains that similar to the SRD, the CDG requires all potential recipients to be the caregiver, parent, or foster parent appointed by a court, not earn more than R446 400 annually if they are married, and not more than R223 200 if you are single. Moreover, the individual has to be a permanent South African resident or a citizen.

2.7.3 Child support grant

The third grant administered by SASSA as stated previously is the infamous Child Support Grant. The Child Support Grant (CSG) is a well-known government-issued grant. The CSG is an R750 monthly payment administered by SASSA to individuals who take care of children under the age of 18. The grant is intended for residents from impoverished households who are in dire need of financial assistance to take care of their children (South African Social Security Agency 2022). The primary caregiver should not earn more than R105 600 per year if married and not earn more than R52 800 per year if the individual is single (Department of Social Development 2023). Lastly, the caregiver must be a permanent South African resident or citizen.

2.7.4 Foster child grant

The fourth social grant that the South African government offers is the Foster Child Grant (FCG). The FCG is a R1 120, monthly grant paid to the foster parent of a minor. The grant intends to aid foster parents who may need financial assistance in taking care of their foster children. For the foster parent to be considered a beneficiary of the grant, they must live in South Africa, be a permanent resident citizen of South Africa, and the child or children must be legally placed in the individual's care (Department of Social Development 2023).

2.7.5 Disability grant

According to Legal Aid South Africa (2018), individuals who are unable to work owing to a mental or physical impairment get a Disability Grant (DG) from SASSA. The DG is a temporary and permanent grant worth R2 080 per month. In order for an individual to be considered for the grant, they ought to be a refugee or permanent resident of South Africa. Furthermore, the individual should be between the ages of 18 and 59 and possess proof of disability, such as a medical report or assessment (Department of Social Development 2023). The applicant should not be under the care of a state institution. If the applicant is an individual, they should not have assets that are worth more than R1 227 600, and they should not be earning more than R86 280 per month. In the event that an individual is married, they should not have assets that are worth more than R2 455 200 and should not earn more than R172 560 per year (Department of Social Development 2023).

2.7.6 Older persons' grant

The older person's grant, previously referred to as the old age grant, is a R 2 080 grant paid monthly to individuals who are 60 years and older. However, individuals who are older than 75 years receive a grant of R2 100 (South African Government 2023). The Department of Social Development (2023) stated that the purpose of the older person grant is to financially support elderly individuals who cannot work and make a living for themselves. In order for an elderly person to qualify for the grant they have to be a permanent resident, refugee, or a citizen of South Africa. Additionally, the applicant must not be living in any state institution and must not be receiving any other form of social assistance from the state. Furthermore, the individual should ensure that they

are not a recipient of any other form of social assistance from the state. Most importantly though, if the potential recipient is single, they should not earn more than R86 280 annually. On the other hand, though, if the individual is married, they should not be earning more than R172 560 (Haldane2022). Additionally, a single individual must not have assets that exceed R 1 277 600 whereas someone who is married must not have assets that amount to or exceed R 2 455 200 (South African Government 2023).

2.7.7 War veterans' grant

A war veteran is defined by the Department of Military Veterans (2023) as an individual who has served and fought in the World War One, World War Two, or the Korean War. In their service to the country, war veterans underwent many hardships and challenges. Some endured not only physical ailments but emotional and mental. Therefore, in an effort to honour war veterans, the government introduced the War Veterans Grant (WRD) (South African Government 2023). For a veteran to be eligible for the R 2 100 monthly grant payment they have to be a permanent resident or citizen of South Africa, not receiving a social grant, not receiving any form of care from a state institution and be older than 60 years. Additionally, should the individual be single they should not possess assets that exceed R 1 227 600 and not earn more than R 86 280 annually. If they are married, they should not have assets that are worth more than R 2 455 200 and they should not earn more than R172 560 per annum (South African Government 2023). The chapter in the dissertation has thus far highlighted on seven of the eight grants that are administered by SASSA. The eighth and final grant is the grant-in-aid. As previously stated, this chapter of the dissertation will focus solely on the grant-in-aid.

2.7.8 Grant-in-aid

A Grant-in-aid according to the South African Social Security Agency (2022) refers to an amount to be paid monthly to current social grant beneficiaries who are incapable of taking care of themselves and therefore require someone to take care of them on a full-time basis. Mlambo (2021) indicates that the primary objective of the grant-in-aid in South Africa is to provide financial support to households caring for frail family members, thereby enabling them to meet essential care-related needs. While the grant itself does not directly educate families, it empowers them to secure appropriate care, pay caregivers, and access services that can indirectly enhance their knowledge and

capacity to care for vulnerable members (Zikhali 2021:17856).

2.7.9 Eligibility criteria for a grant-in-aid

As previously indicated the grant-in-aid is an amount paid to the existing beneficiaries of either a disability grant, war veteran's grant, or grant for older persons. Due to the value of the Grant-in-aid being R510 monthly, it is imperative that the potential beneficiaries require full-time assistance and not receive care or a subsidy from any state institution (South African Social Security Agency Grants 2022). Furthermore, the beneficiary should be able to produce an assessment or medical report from a medical practitioner indicating their need for full-time care.

2.8 COLLABORATIONS

Over the years, SASSA has struggled to administer and take care of the beneficiaries. To adequately address this problem, the agency decided to collaborate with several stakeholders such as the South African Human Rights Commission (hereafter referred to as SAHRC) and Johannesburg Council for the Disabled (JOCOD):

2.8.1 Non-governmental organisations

Recipients of the grant-in-aid are marginalised individuals in the RSA society. According to Baloyi (2020: 41), these individuals require support to adequately participate in society. Therefore, non-governmental organisations such as Johannesburg Council for the Disabled (JOCOD) have decided to collaborate with the Department of Social Development and SASSA (Baloyi 2020: 41). JOCOD is a day protective workshop-facility for the elderly and people with disabilities. Furthermore, the facility ensures that the daily necessities of these individuals are met (Johannesburg Council for the Disabled [Sa]).

2.8.2 Post office

As indicated previously SASSA over the years has struggled to administer social grants on time. Therefore, to minimise the long queues, the Department of Social Development along with SASSA have collaborated with the South African Post Office to create a pay point for all the recipients of social grants, the grant-in-aid included (Damons 2025). The South African Post Office is the continent's leading provider of written correspondence, handling about six million mail items daily. Therefore, recipients are required to possess a SASSA Gold Card or Postbank card to successfully withdraw their money at a post office (Matshoba 2023).

2.8.3 CHALLENGES OF THE GRANT-IN-AID SYSTEM

According to SASSA's 2022/23 annual performance-plan it was revealed that between the years 2018 and 2022 the agency witnessed a dramatic increase in the amount of grant-in-aid that were paid out. For instance, in December 2018 the agency only paid out about 192 091 in grants. However, by December 2022, the agency was paying out over 278 973 in grants (South African Social Security Agency 2022). Thus indicating, that between 2018 and 2022 there was an increase of about 86 882 grants-in-aid that were administered. Although the number of grants being administered has increased dramatically there are several challenges in the grant-in- aid system. These challenges are outlined below.

2.8.3.1 Corruption

Corruption is defined as dishonest behaviour by those in positions of power for their own personal gain (Financial Crime Academy 2022). Some of the forms of corruption include bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, and fraud. SASSA's quest for automation has resulted in corruption, thus affecting the functioning and administration of grants. For instance, according to Masango (2022), in 2022 over 761 SASSA officials have been obtaining social grant money illegally for more than ten years. The Independent Online news further indicated that of the 761 cases only 37 of these cases have been placed under investigation (Maqhina 2022).

2.8.3.2 Long queues

Ebrahim (2023) indicated that the long SASSA queues can be attributed to glitches in the system. This becomes rather too strenuous and inconvenient as some of the beneficiaries of the grant-in-aid are elderly citizens and persons with disabilities. Due to these technical glitches, beneficiaries wait in the long queues while others even opt to stay over and sleep at payment sites as they do not have transportation- money to return to the payment sites (Ebrahim 2023). For instance, in April 2024 both elderly citizens and persons with disabilities in Limpopo Province's Polokwane were not able to receive grant payments on time as the amounts did not reflect in their accounts. As a result, beneficiaries of the grants resorted to queuing outside of SASSA payment points (Sekhwela 2023).

2.8.3.3 Administrative capacity

According to an article published by Masango (2022), beneficiaries of social grants in

South Africa continually struggle to receive their social grants monthly. Megannon (2022) stated that this is because of the SASSA's administrative capacity. The lack thereof has significantly affected the recipients of the grant-in-aid. This may too could be ascribed to the reality that a significant number of the recipients reside in rural areas and do not afford the luxury of traveling long distances to and from the SASSA pay points to receive no money (Masango 2022).

2.8.3.4 Manual processes

Automation as defined by Rouse (2024), refers to the creation and deployment of technology to make and distribute services and goods with little or no human involvement. The absence of automation has resulted in manual processes that are not only time consuming but are also inefficient. For example, some of SASSA's pay points even to this day do not have a system of recording applications (Mbonambi 2016: 2). One such case is that of a pay point in Mankweng, a township just outside Polokwane. Officials at the pay point still fill out applications manually, because of this there has been a decline in the number of applications and a loss of important data.

2.8.3.5 Mistreatment of elderly citizens

A study conducted by the Department of Statistics, South Africa, in 2022 revealed that South Africa's population consists of 9.2 per cent of elderly people, that is people above the age of 60 years (Department of Statistics South Africa 2023). The study further revealed that improved health and longevity of elderly citizens are some of the clear indicators of a successful government. A lack of public service delivery, work patterns and retirement plans are among some of the weaknesses of a government in taking care of its elderly citizens (Department of Statistics South Africa 2023). The lack of public service delivery and mistreatment of elderly citizens are prevalent at numerous SASSA pay points. Mbonambi (2016: 2) for instance, indicated that elderly citizens experience mistreatment from SASSA officials. Furthermore, they are subjected to long queues, and they are constantly being told that the systems are down.

2.8.3.6 Lack of information

The grant-in-aid social grant is a supplementary grant to a main grant that a beneficiary

receives (South African Social Security Agency Grants 2022). However, many individuals who are eligible for the grant have a hard time during the application and documentation process for their grant to be approved. Delany *et al.* (2016: 63) indicated that difficulty in completing the application form and supplying the correct documentation can be attributed to a lack of time and motivation but most importantly it is that the individuals are not furnished with the correct and enough reliable information.

2.8.3.7 Confusion in the eligibility criteria

Closely related to the lack of information is the confusion in the eligibility criteria of the Grant-in-Aid. Despite a wide outreach regarding the grant, there are still many individuals who are not certain about the eligibility criteria of the grant. For instance, one of the requirements according to SASSA is that an individual should require full-time care and not receive a subsidy from any state institution (South African Social Security Agency Grants 2022). However, when the grant is paid out it is not clear whether it is meant for the beneficiary or for the individual who will be providing full time care.

The chapter so far has contextualised social welfare in Public Administration, expanded on the grants administered by SASSA with a focus on the grant-in-aid system and introduced some of the challenges that the applicants and recipients of the Grant-in-aid may encounter. The following section of the chapter briefly expands on the legislative framework that governs social welfare in South Africa.

2.9 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK GOVERNING SOCIAL WELFARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.9.1 The Constitution of South Africa

An article published by Paralegal Advice (2016: 5) indicated that the South African Constitution, 1996, is a single document that describes the values, structure, authority, and power that the government has. The Constitution details the rights of all citizens and residents of the country. It is the law that governs all who live in the country (Paralegal Advice 2016: 4). Chapter two of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights stipulates and discusses the different kinds of right. Section 27 of the *Constitution* addresses the rights associated with food, social security as well as

health care. Section 27(1) (a) “states that every individual has the right to health care services as well as reproductive health care. Section 27 (1) (b) further stipulates that every person has the right to sufficient food and water. Additionally, section 27 (1) (c) indicates that every person has the right to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance” (South Africa 1996). SASSA is therefore, legislated to realise section 27 (1) (c) as social welfare is the right of every person in the country. Furthermore, section 28 of the Constitution guarantees the rights of children, including the right to basic nutrition, shelter, and healthcare.

2.9.2 Non-profit Organisations Act No. 71 of 1997

The Non-profit Organisations Act is another piece of legislation that offers a legal foundation for the provision of social support in South Africa (Government Communication and Information System 2017: 2). The Act seeks to enhance the legal framework for non-profit organisations, that provide essential social welfare services in collaboration with the government (Government Communication and Information System 2017: 2).

2.9.3 White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997

The White Paper for Social Welfare lays out the tenets, rules, regulations, and initiatives for South Africa's developing social welfare (Government Communication and Information System 2017: 1) The White Paper for Social Welfare, as stated by Lombard (2008: 155), advocates for a fair, just, and above all appropriate and participative social welfare system that meets all of South Africa's needs.

2.9.4 Social Assistance Act No. 13 of 2004

The second most important piece of legislation that governs the social welfare system in South Africa is the Social Assistance Act No.13 of 2004. According to the *Social Assistance Act of 2004* (Act 13 of 2005) the Act is mandate to first and foremost “provide for the administration of social assistance and payment of social grants. Second, make provision for social assistance and determine the qualification requirements. Third, ensure that minimum norms and standards are prescribed for

the delivery of social assistance. Fourth and finally, provide for the establishment of an inspectorate for social assistance”.

Chapter two of the *Social Assistance Act of 2004 (Act 13 of 2004)* makes provision for the eight social grants: these include the child support grant, care dependency grant, foster child grant, disability grant, older persons’ grant, war veterans’ grant and the grant-in-aid. In chapter three, the Act outlines the administration of the mentioned social grants.

2.9.5 South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Act No.9 of 2004

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) Act No.9 of 2004 establishes SASSA as the sole agent responsible for administering social assistance on behalf of the government’s *South African Social Security Agency Act of 2004 (Act 9 of 2004)*. The Act makes provision for the functions as well as the roles and responsibilities and governance structure of SASSA in delivering social security services as stipulated in the Social Assistance Act No.13 of 2004 *South African Social Security Agency Act of 2004 (Act 9 of 2004)*.

2.9.6 Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005

An article published by Daily Maverick points out the importance of children and young people in the South African society. According to the article, children and young people are South Africa’s greatest asset (Pongweni 2024). Sibanda and Lombard (2015: 333) indicated that the Act is an extensive piece of legislation designed to provide children with essential care, safety, and support to facilitate their optimal development.

2.9.7 The Older Persons’ Act No. 13 of 2006

According to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (2024), the Older Persons Act seeks to preserve, uphold, and safeguard the status, well-being, rights and security of senior citizens. The Act aims to ensure the prevention of abuse of elderly citizens. Malherbe (2007: 6) indicated that the Act places great emphasis on community care and senior citizens.

2.9.8 White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2015

The National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (2023: 1) explains that the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aims to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities. The National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (2023: 1) further mentions that social inclusion and protection, employment, skills development, accessibility, economic development and universal design are the key focus areas of the White Paper.

2.9.9 National Development Plan 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 is not necessarily a legal document. However, it is a plan of action to alleviate poverty and while reducing inequality in South Africa by 2030 (uMkhonto weSeziwe 2024). The NDP lays forth a thorough vision and action plan for the socioeconomic development of South Africa by addressing major issues and suggesting fixes to build a just and inclusive society (uMkhonto weSeziwe 2024). Some of the key objectives highlighted by the NDP 2030 include the eradication of unemployment, elimination of poverty, promoting both sustainable and infrastructure development, promoting the accessibility of healthcare and education and the reduction of inequality (National Planning Commission 2024)

2.9.10 Labour Relations and Basic Conditions of Employment Act

The Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No.75 of 1997 are some of the labour related pieces of legislation that indirectly support social welfare in South Africa. The acts establish fair and equitable labour practices, which contribute to social protection systems for workers.

2.9.11 CONCLUSION

Chapter two of this dissertation provides a comprehensive exploration of the grant-in-aid social grant within the broader landscape of South Africa's social assistance system. It examines the various social grants administered by SASSA, including the Social Relief of Distress Grant, Care Dependency Grant, Child Support Grant, Foster Child Grant, Disability Grant, Older Persons Grant, War Veterans Grant, and the Grant-in-Aid itself (South African Social Security Agency, 2022). The chapter further distinguishes the concept of Public Administration, tracing its development and

positioning it in relation to the administration of social welfare. Through this discussion, it becomes evident that the evolution of the discipline of Public Administration has created and sustained a strong connection with social welfare policy and administration. This relationship is clarified by locating social welfare within Public Administration through both the Integral and POSDCORB lenses, demonstrating how social welfare objectives are operationalised and managed within the discipline. Overall, the chapter provides a solid conceptual foundation for understanding how the grant-in-aid is situated within South Africa's social welfare framework and within the discipline of Public Administration. The next chapter presents the research methodology in detail.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The word “research” according to Pandey and Pandey (2015: 7) is made up of two words Re + Search which directly translates to search again. The concept of research has been defined differently by several scholars. For instance, Pandey and Pandey (2015: 7) defined research as any scientific study or action aimed at learning something new about an established fact. (Pandey & Pandey: 2015: 8) defined research as “a method of studying problems whose solutions are to be derived partly or wholly from facts”. Clifford Woody on the other hand described research as a methodical effort to acquire knowledge (Pandey & Pandey: 2015: 8). The research project defines research as an exploration of a topic or idea to discover new knowledge (Giradin 2023).

Pandey and Pandey (2015: 9) further indicated that the most important objective of conducting research applying scientific methods to find innovative solutions to problem. Kothari (2004: 1) further indicated that research is important as it tests hypotheses of a causal relationship between variables, and that this is more prevalent in studies that adopt quantitative methods. Thirdly, research is aimed at gaining familiarity with a particular phenomenon. For instance, this research study intended to examine the perceptions of the recipients of SASSA’s grant-in-aid. Finally, in a blog published by Discover Ph.Ds. (2020) it is stated that research is meant to simplify one’s understanding of the world and learn how the knowledge obtained can be used on a day-to-day living.

When conducting research, for either leisure or academic purposes, a methodology section is imperative. An article published by Sreekumar (2023) revealed that a methodology section is of great importance as it ensures that the researcher makes use of the appropriate data collections and analysis tools to meet both the questions and objectives. The following section of this chapter will unpack the research methodology. The methodology consists of the research approach, design, data collection, population and sampling as well as the data analysis techniques.

3.2 WHAT IS A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY?

Perhaps an adequate point of departure for this section is to define what a research methodology is. A methodology refers to a way of systematically solving a problem (Purwanto 2023) It can be deduced from this definition that a research methodology involves the steps or methods used to identify, locate, pick, process, and evaluate secondary sources information and empirically collected data. A research methodology section is essential for any research project as it assists the reader in comprehending the methodologies and approaches employed by the researcher. Additionally, the methodology lends to both the credibility and reliability of the results that will be produced (Indeed Editorial Team 2023). The following research approach, paradigm, design, sample size, procedure, data collection instruments, and data analysis strategies will be unpacked below.

3.2.1 Research approach

Three approaches to research can be used: mixed-methods, qualitative and quantitative (Bryman 2016: 310). According to Creswell (2003: 3), a research approach encompasses the plans, and procedures for interpreting and collecting data. Furthermore, a research approach depends on the complexity of the research subject that is being investigated (Creswell 2003: 3). This research adopted a qualitative approach as it sought to examine the lived experiences of grant-in-aid recipients. A qualitative research approach is characterised by words rather than numerical values (Bryman 2016: 31).

A quantitative research approach to research on the other hand places great emphasis on the quantification of both data collection and analysis (Bryman 2016:548). Heigham and Croker (2009: 137), in their publication "*Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Introduction*", indicated that the mixed- methods approach to research is relatively new as compared to the quantitative and qualitative approaches. It has become a more popular and recognised method for carrying out social research not only in public administration but in other subjects such as Education and Sociology (Bryman 2016: 473). A mixed-methods approach to research combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches research to make sense of research problems (Bryman 2016: 547).

The key objective of this study has been to examine the experiences of recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, South Africa. Therefore, a qualitative research approach was adopted. According to Aspers and Corte (2019: 139), there is no precise definition of qualitative research. Many scholars have tried to define it before. For instance, Bhandari (2019) defined qualitative research as a procedure that involves the analysis and collection of non-numerical data to have a better understanding of experiences, concepts, as well as opinions. Bhandari (2019) further indicated that qualitative research is more often used to accumulate in-depth understanding and knowledge of a problem. In his book *Social Research Methods*, Bryman (2016: 294) defined a qualitative research approach as an approach where great emphasis is placed on words rather than numbers when gathering and analysing data. As a working definition, qualitative research is defined as a research approach that explores and provides insights into real-life problems. Qualitative research helps to gather an individual's behaviour, experiences, and perceptions. It answers the how's and whys of questions instead of the how much or how many (Trenny *et al.* 2022).

A qualitative research approach allows for flexibility, provides meaningful insight into people's real-life situations, and provides a holistic understanding and view of real-life situations. Unlike a quantitative approach to research, qualitative research makes room for flexibility. Flexibility in research is always used figuratively and can be defined in several ways. However, for this research study, flexibility refers to the ability or capacity to promptly adjust to evolving circumstances (Brainly 2023). Flexibility in qualitative research is of utmost importance as it ensures that the uncertainties of everyday life are catered for (Budworth 2023: 1). The grant-in-aid social grant is a supplementary grant for individuals who receive an older persons', war veterans' or disability grant. This entails that some of the recipients are unable to do some daily activities or even participate in research projects such as this one. However, by using a qualitative approach the research was able to make use of in-person interviews as well as translations during interviews to not only make it easier for the participants in the data-collection phase, but to also meet them at their point of need.

A holistic view relates to the totality of things. A holistic view of things is further concerned with complete systems rather than specific parts (Stange 2023). According

to (Bhandari 2022), conducting any kind of qualitative research is important because it provides a larger picture of any situation. For instance, should a researcher decide to study Public Administration to attain a holistic viewpoint of the locus, he /she must study both the academic discipline and the realisation of the subject foci in practice. Therefore, conducting qualitative research enables a researcher to get full insight into a topic. This research project aimed to examine the experiences of recipients with the Grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality. Thus, by using a qualitative approach, the research project was in a better position to not only understand the lives of the individuals who are recipients of the grant-in-aid but also assisted in understanding how the individuals came to receive the grant and how exactly they utilise the grant once they receive it.

Quantitative research lacks depth and is less detailed in comparison to qualitative research. This is because quantitative researchers focus on the analysis of numerical data by making use of a variety of computational methods (Rahman2023). Furthermore, quantitative research is done in an unnatural setting (Mander 2022). Qualitative research on the other hand provides both depth and detail. This, therefore, means that that quantitative research does not provide a full picture of a phenomena but instead it merely gives a snapshot (Rahman 2016: 106). This research study for instance explored the living conditions, the nature and conditions of the recipients of the grant-in-aid. The research revealed that, although social grant recipients required the funds to access additional care, they were often unable to do so. This was largely because they had to use the grant to support their unemployed children, including providing food, clothing, and other basic necessities.

3.2.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is an approach, method, or system used to carry out research. It refers to a set of concepts, principles or even perspectives that bridge the gap between theory and practice (Abbadia 2022). Bryman (2016: 474) earlier on stated that a research paradigm explains what exactly should be studied in a specific

discipline. Simply put, a paradigm is a plan that assists a researcher in understanding both theory and practice of his / her research project (Abbadia 2022). Most research paradigms originate from two research methods namely positivism and interpretivism (Abbadia 2022).

According to Dudovskiy (2024), positivism has been a predominant form of research in multiple fields for decades. Positivism is a research paradigm that centred on the belief that knowledge may be acquired through objective measurements and observations (Jansen 2023). Positivism is generally associated with quantitative data collection techniques. Therefore, according to positivism, answers to research problems are obtained by analysing and measuring numerical data (Jansen 2023). Interpretivism on the other hand, states that reality is a social construct. That is to say that a person's reality can only be understood through their personal experiences (Dudovskiy 2024). Interpretivism relies heavily on observations and questioning in order to acquire understanding and knowledge on a topic or phenomenon (Jansen 2023).

The study adopted an interpretivist research paradigm. This is because the study aimed at gaining in-depth understanding, using interviews of the perceptions, experiences, and behaviours of individuals who are recipients of the grant-in-aid social grant in Polokwane Local Municipality. Moreover, interpretivism aligned with the main objective of evaluating the experiences of the recipients with the grant-in-aid social grant. The use of interpretivism has not only aided in understanding the administration process in relation to the grant-in-aid but it also assisted in understanding the lived experiences of individuals who are recipients. The following three main research methods that are associated with interpretivist research:

Bryman (2016: 22) indicated that epistemology is the study of knowledge. Epistemology sets out to explain the rationale behind why somethings are considered to be true while other are not (Sol & Heng 2022: 80). An interpretivism epistemological perspective asserts the following: first, research is conducted to comprehend a specific issue (focus) rather than a broad one. Second, research is only comprehended through perceived knowledge (Edirisingha 2012). Interpretivism

was an appropriate paradigm for this study as it has been aimed at examining the recipients' experiences with the grant-in-aid. This enabled the researcher the chance to not only acquire in-depth knowledge of the South African social welfare system but also further insight into the lives, thoughts as well as their backgrounds with the social grant.

Ontology is the study of reality. The study of ontology is premised on determining the general existence of a phenomenon (Edirisingha 2012). Interpretivist ontology asserts that there is no single external reality. In terms of the nature of the world, interpretivist ontology implies that there is no direct link to the world (Edirisingha 2012). Moreover, ontology suggests that the researcher and reality cannot be separated. The ontological view for this study was that the processes, systems, and the administration of the grant-in-aid have a direct influence on the perception, behaviours and experiences on the recipients of the grant in Polokwane Local Municipality. Moreover, the study aimed to examine the recipient's perspectives on the Grant-in-aid social grant in Polokwane Local Municipality.

Axiology is the study on the judgement of value. In contrast to epistemology and ontology, axiology is a more recent research paradigm. The study of axiology is concerned with the role of a researcher's own value on all stages of the research process (Dudovskiy 2024). Simply put, axiology focuses on the researchers' value in relation to their research project. Values are important as they can significantly affect the process of research and the outcomes of the project (Dudovskiy 2024). The axiological position taken emphasises value such as transparency and confidentiality. The researcher ensured that she at all times was that they were transparent. For instance, during the process of conducting participants were made aware that their personal information would not be shared with other parties. Furthermore, the researcher was open and honest and indicated to the participants that they were allowed to at any time decide not to take part in the interviews. Most importantly though, participants were told and explained to what would be done with the findings of the interviews.

3.2.3 Research design

Different research approaches are associated with different kinds of research designs. McCombes (2021) explained that a research design establishes a framework for the general structure for research. Several research designs are associated with qualitative studies, for instance, grounded theory, ethnographic, phenomenology and case study. Bryman (2016: 545) defined grounded theory as a research design that derives theory from research data by obtaining a correlation between the two. This approach is useful when a researcher does not have an appropriate theory for why individuals behave in a specific way (Taheer 2024). When conducting research, several Human Resources departments tend to make use of a grounded theory. An example of a research paper that made use of a grounded theory was titled "*Why are employees frustrated at work*" (Harappa 2021).

Reeves *et al.* (2013: 1365) explained that ethnography is a qualitative research design. It is defined as the study of how people in communities, organisations, and groups connect, act, and think about each other (Reeves *et al.* 2013: 1365). Ethnographic research gives researchers the opportunity to immerse themselves in a specific culture to gain insights through observation and interaction (Taheer 2024). Furthermore, it should be noted that ethnographic research not only provides specific data about demographic but also ensures more in-depth and nuanced information than questionnaires or interviews.

Phenomenology is a qualitative research design (Taheer 2024). The study of phenomenology tries to explain and understand the behaviour of humans and how people make sense of their experiences by focusing on what was experienced and how it was experienced (Ayton 2023). Moreover, phenomenology enables researchers to participate in adaptable activities that explain and facilitate comprehension of complex phenomena, including diverse facets of human social experience. Research projects that make use of phenomenology as a research design are mainly concerned with cross-cultural studies.

This dissertation focused on the recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study therefore used a case study

research design entailing a thorough examination of current, real-world phenomena within its environment. A case study can focus on an individual, an organisation, an event or even a community (Lohman & Boyd 2023). According to Cherry (2023), case study research design does not make room for replication. Replication is the process of being able to reproduce a study and get the same results. Although case studies cannot be replicated, they assist in the stimulation of new research (Universal Class 2005). For instance, the research on the experiences of recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa, is the first of its kind. It

Generalisability, according to Bermingham (2020), refers the extent to which the results of a research study can be extended to other settings. For instance, a study may generalise the results of a survey of 250 people in a college to the college as an entirety (Clearinghouse 2024). A case study, although it cannot generalise findings, it studies a specific object intensively, thoroughly and deeply. This research design has enabled the researcher to have a nuanced understanding of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality as well as the lives and behaviour of the recipients.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

According to Kabir (2016: 202), data collection is a critical phase in any research. Kabir (2016: 202) further mentioned that it is because data collection is a manner of obtaining and assessing information of interest in a defined systematic way, allowing research, questions, hypotheses, and outcomes to be realised. Data can either be primary or secondary (Ajayi 2023: 1).

Byju's (2011) paper titled '*Difference between Primary and Secondary Data*' explained that primary data is original data because it is collected by the researcher for the first time. Ajayi (2023: 1) added that not only is primary data factual but it is acquired with the intention of resolving a problem at hand. There are various sources of primary data, these are observations, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and experiments (Ajayi 2023: 1). This research project made use of interviews as its primary source of data. There are three types of interviews. First, structured

interviews. George (2022) explained that structured interviews include predefined questions in a specific order. They are frequently closed ended, using dichotomous (yes/no) or multiple-choice questions. Second, unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews are considered to be the most flexible of the three interview types. Generally, unstructured interviews are open-ended, making room for the interviewer to be spontaneous when conducting interviews (George 2022).

This research project adopted the third interview type, namely, semi-structured interview. The interviews were conducted in-person and face-to face. George (2022) indicated that semi-structured interviews are a combination of structured and unstructured interviews. According to Kumar (2014) interviews are time-consuming and quite expensive. For instance, in this study, the fifteen interviews conducted brought about a fair amount of money and time that had to be spend on transportation and travelling between the SASSA provincial head-office in Polokwane and the different deployed pay points throughout Limpopo Province. The process of conducting in-person interviews took longer than anticipated, this can be attributed to several reasons. First, the SASSA officials did not distinguish between the recipients of the grant-in-aid and other recipients of other social grants, thus causing confusion. Secondly, recipients of the grant-in-aid are relatively less as compared to other forms of social grants, thus resulting in waiting for longer periods of time for the recipients to be present at the pay point. Thirdly, during the interviews, some of the recipients struggled to answer some of the questions that were posed to them. Patience and interpretation on the side of the interviewer were required.

Although, interviews are generally expensive and time consuming, conducting semi-structured interviews made room for the recipients of the grant-in-aid to have a deeper and broader understanding of the grant-in-aid and the system that SASSA makes use of in the application and administration of all social grants in South Africa. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews also promote flexibility (George 2022). For instance, during the interviews, participants had the opportunity to be exploratory in their answers to questions. Thus, enabling the interviewer a chance to follow up on questions due to verbal and non-verbal reactions and signs from the

respondents. The information was helpful and contributed greatly to the analysis of the collected data (Kakjlla 2016: 1).

The interview schedule was designed in a way that assisted the participant to answer and provide an in-depth understanding on the key objectives and questions of the study. The questions in the interview schedule of the study were designed from more generic questions to specific ones. Furthermore, the questions were all placed into different themes, being demographic information, knowledge or experience, support and care, financial management, general challenges and empowerment.

As indicated previously, data can be classified into two broad categories, namely primary and secondary data (Ajayi 2023: 1). It has been established that primary data is original data because it is collected for the first time by the researcher. Secondary data on the other hand, refers to data that has previously been obtained from primary sources. It is a form of data that was previously collected (Longe 2024). Examples of secondary data include blogs, unpublished sources, journals, newspapers and governments records (Longe 2024). For secondary data, the study made use of qualitative research document analysis. Document analysis involves systematically evaluating both printed and electronic documents. It is a qualitative research method, that demands the inspection and interpretation of data to gain meaning and insight (Bowen 2009: 7). The study used regulatory documents such as the Constitution, and legislation that governs welfare in South Africa like the Social Assistance Act and the National Development Plan 2030. Furthermore, official documents such as both SASSA and the Department of Social Development's strategic plans were also used.

As opposed to primary data, secondary data is both inexpensive and easily accessible (Longe 2024). For instance, documents such as the Constitution and strategic plan are all readily available on the internet at no fee. Moreover, all government departments have published and made all necessary documents available to the public at no cost. Secondary is most of the times collected by an individual, therefore, it is bound to sometimes lack accuracy. According to Mora

(2022) secondary data can lack accuracy because it might have been produced for some other purposes than research. Bowen (2009: 32) further indicated that secondary sources do not usually provide sufficient information to answer research questions.

Making use of secondary sources is not as time-consuming as primary data collection (Longe 2024). The only thing that is required when collecting secondary sources information, the identification and search skills needed for the right sources. This according to Bowen (2009: 31) can be attributed to the fact that secondary sources' information and data had been gathered before. Although, secondary data is less time-consuming and inexpensive it sometimes can be misleading as there may be sources that are outdated, thus bearing unusable information. Online blogs and articles for instance, may have outdated and incorrect information.

3.3.1 Population and sampling

A research population (also referred to as the target population) is the set or group of objects, events, and individuals that all have specific characteristics. Simply put, population is the larger group from which a sample is obtained (Thomas 2023). The target population of the study was all the individuals who received a social grant from the government. However, only the beneficiaries of the individuals who receive the disability grant, older persons grant, and the war veterans grant were considered as the unit of analysis. This is because these are the only people who, according to the South African legislation, are eligible for the grant-in-aid. Furthermore, the population parameter was limited to five individuals per group of the recipients of the grant-in-aid (Table 2.1). A population parameter refers to the number that describes something about an entire group or population (Lim 2024).

Sampling refers to the procedure of selecting a subgroup population for a research project (Turner 2020: 8). There are two broad sampling methods namely, probability and non-probability. McCombes (2019) described probability sampling as a randomised selection in order to draw strong statistical conclusions about the whole group. Some probability sampling methods include simple random and systematic.

However, for the purposes of this study, a non-probability sample technique was used. There are several non-probability sampling techniques, these include quota, snowballing, convenience and purposive sampling. The study focused on a purposive sampling method (McCombes 2019). Purposive sampling is a sampling strategy used to find specific individuals with study-relevant traits (Turner 2020: 10).

The study made use of a purposive sampling strategy as it ensured that only the recipients of the grant-in-aid are interviewed as they are the most relevant individuals to provide insight on the social grant (Nikolopoulou 2022). Purposive sampling has also assisted in gaining in-depth knowledge not only about the Grant-in-Aid but also about the recipients of the social grant. Furthermore, the sample size has been limited to only 15 participants to obtain more fruitful and in-depth interviews:

Table 2.1: Population and sampling table

Unit of analysis (recipients)	Population parameter
Disability Grant	5
Older Persons Grant	5
War Veterans Grant	5
Total	15

Source: Makhongela (2025).

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis entails breaking down large amounts of information and data into manageable units. Additionally, it offers pertinent and factual information and allows the researcher to draw insightful conclusions. It can, however, be deduced that data analysis also assists the researcher to keep critical data while ensuring that insignificant information is removed (Shai 2017: 32, 33). There are several methods that data can be analysed in qualitative research. These methods include discourse analysis, content analysis, narrative analysis, grounded theory analysis, and thematic analysis (Content Square 2024).

In his article '*Introducing Discourse Analysis for Qualitative Research*' Mcleoad (2024: 1) indicated that discourse analysis is a data analysis tool used in qualitative

research. Discourse analysis is a research method that investigates both spoken and written discourse as it relates to its social context. Furthermore, it seeks to comprehend the utilisation of language in real-world contexts (Mcleaod 2024: 1). Discourse analysis allows researchers the opportunity to view and understand the main functions of language in shaping societal narratives, power structure and formulating opinions (Mcleaod 2024: 2).

Content analysis on the other hand is a data analysis tool that makes use of the presence of particular phrases, terms, or ideas in qualitative data to describe a phenomenon (Delve 2023). Content analysis is important for two distinctive reasons. First, it assists in the exploration of theoretical claims in research studies. Secondly, it helps to quantify qualitative data (Delve 2023).

Narrative analysis places great emphasis on the interpretation of the core narratives from a study's groups stories. A narrative analysis allows researchers the opportunity to understand the lived experiences of individuals (Kaluza 2023). The sole purpose of making use of narrative analysis in research is to ensure that researchers can understand the impact of a certain event, feeling, or decision on the involved persons (Kaluza 2023).

Grounded theory analysis is also a qualitative data analysis tool, used to generate a theory that is grounded in the data collected. Grounded theory analysis identifies and examines patterns in the generation of theory. The sole purpose of this data analysis tool is to formulate a theory that explains relationships between factors in a specific situation (Success Team 2023).

For this study, a thematic data analysis technique was adopted. The thematic analysis was used to focus on the recipients' perceptions and understanding of the grant-in-aid. Naeem *et al.* (2023:1) indicated that thematic analysis is a popular data analysis technique used by many scholars who conduct qualitative research. Crosley (2021) define thematic analysis as the process of identifying patterns in order to deduce new insights and understanding. Simply put, thematic analysis involves identifying patterns within a data set in order to determine the underlying

importance. The process of thematic analysis is largely guided by a research study's questions and objectives (Naeem *et al.* 2023: 1).

3.4.1 PROCESS OF CONDUCTING A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This section presents the process followed when conducting thematic analysis and how each step was applied in the study.

3.4.1.1 Step one: Getting familiar with the data

As a point of departure, the first step that the researcher undertook in the process of conducting a thematic analysis was to be familiar with the information and empirical data. What stood out at first glance was the way in which the interviews were structured. The questions in the interview schedule were designed according to specific themes. The first four questions of the scheduled interview were centred around demographic information, such as how old are you? What is your ethnicity and marital status? The second section of the interview schedule was centred around the knowledge and experience of the recipients of the grant-in-aid. One of the questions that were posed in this theme was: "Can you tell me about your experience with the grant-in-aid social grant in Polokwane?". The third section or theme that was used in the scheduled interview focused on questions of support and care. The fourth section reflected on some of the financial management issues. The fifth section featured questions on the challenges that the recipients of the grant-in-aid accessibility and information. The last theme / section of the interview structure was around the issue of empowerment. One of the questions that was posed around this theme was: "How can the grant-in-aid social grant system be improved?"

3.4.1.2 Step two: Coding data

Upon being familiar with the data, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews from audio to text. Step two in the process of analysing data thematically is coding data. Coding entailed the process of assigning phrases, words and codes to identify specific topics in the data. Some of the codes that came up in the data include, accessibility, awareness, experience and challenges.

3.4.1.3 Step 3: Identification of themes

From the transcription and identification of codes the following major themes for the study were identified: demographics, grant accessibility, awareness of the grant, financial adequacy, grant approval time, impact of the grant on daily life, and suggestions and recommendations. The selection of these major themes was influenced by a close examination of the data gathered from the interviews as well as recurring terms, body language elements, keywords and patterns. The recurring patterns assisted in deriving the recipients' perceptions and experiences of the grant-in-aid.

3.4.1.4 Step four: Review themes

The fourth step of analysing thematically was to review the themes that were identified in step three of the steps undertaken. The main objective of the study was to examine the experiences of recipients of the grant-in-aid. Therefore, the themes were reviewed to realise the research objectives and questions of the study.

3.4.1.5 Step five: Definition and naming of themes

As indicated previously, the themes that were identified were first, demographics. Demographics refers to the information on the age, gender, and marital status of the recipient. The second theme that was identified was grant accessibility based on the experiences of recipients in applying for and accessing the grant-in-aid within the Polokwane Local Municipality. The third theme that was identified was that of financial adequacy. This theme delves into the recipients' perspectives on whether the grant amounts meet their needs. Fourth, is the direct impact(s) of the social grant on the lives of the recipients and their families. The fifth theme explored was around the awareness of the grant. This theme speaks to the knowledge and information regarding the grant-in-aid social grant. The challenges that surround the administration of the grant was expanded upon. Finally, the last theme of the interview schedule was the proposed recommendations. These zoomed in on possible ways to improve the system and administration of the grant-in-aid social grant.

3.4.1.6 Step 6: Write up

Upon gathering all the necessary data, the findings section of the paper was then put together in order to make the data both easy to read and understand

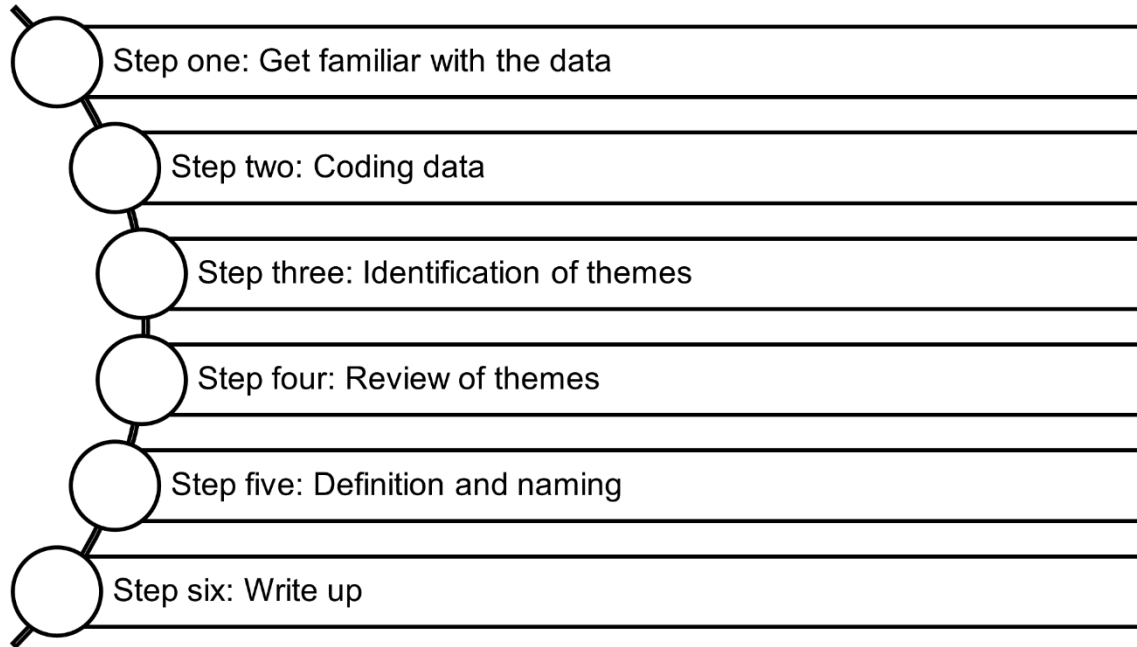


Figure 3.1: Steps involved in thematic analysis
Makhongela (2025).

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter of the dissertation unpacked the research methodology. The qualitative research approach as well the respective research design, data collection tool, population and sampling techniques were also explored. The next chapter presents the findings and analysis thereof.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study has been to examine the experiences of recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The chapter will address recipient's perspectives with the grant and further identify measures that the Municipality can adopt to enhance the effectiveness of the grant in meeting the needs of the individuals.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

In this study, a thematic analysis framework was employed to analyse the qualitative data collected with personally taken down and noted semi-structured interviews. As indicated in chapter three of the study, thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative research method that focuses on identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within collected data. This approach is particularly effective for exploring the experiences, perceptions and insights of participants, making it well-suited for the objectives of this research.

By focusing on the identification and interpretation of themes, the analytical framework enabled a deeper understanding of the current talent management practices and challenges for capacity development in the Polokwane Local Municipality. The insights gained from this analysis were instrumental in informing the findings and results of the study.

This study used a qualitative approach to examine the data collected from fifteen people who are the recipients of the grant-in-aid social grant in the Polokwane Local Municipality. Of the fifteen people who participated in the study, 12 were women and three were men. Averaging between 18-60 years of age. The participants are all recipients of other types of social grants such as the disability, older person and war veteran's grant. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected from interviews, focusing on key themes such as demographics, key experiences, grant accessibility, financial adequacy of the grant, grant approval time, impact of the grant

on the recipients' daily lives and challenges. These are the themes that are discussed below:

Theme 1: Demographics of the participants

Demographics refer to the statistical information utilised by researchers to analyse human populations. Some examples of demographics include age, sex, education, religion and ethnicity (Long 2022). Demographic information is important as it aids in comprehending persons' present situation, their past experiences, and their future trajectories (Long 2022).

The table below (Table 4.1) captures the demographic information of the individuals who were participants in this study and are recipients of the grant-in-aid:

Table 4.1: Demographics

Age				
Age in years	18-25	26-60	61 and above	Total
Number of participants	5	6	4	15
Gender				
Gender	Female	Male	Other	
Number of participants	12	3	0	15
Marital status				
Marital status	Single	Married	Widowed	
Number of participants	11	1	3	15

Source: Makhongela (2025)

The demographics theme focusses on data and characteristics of grant-in-aid recipients in the Polokwane Local Municipality. Demographic information includes age, gender, and marital status. Based on the demographic information (Table 4.1)

in terms of age, of the 15 people who participated in the data-collection phase of the research, all averaged between 18-60 years of age. Five were between the ages of 18-25 while six people were between the ages of 26-60. Only four people were aged 61 and above. In terms of gender, there were 15 people who participated in the study. Of the 15, 12 were female and three were male. Based on the marital status, there were 15 individuals who were considered, 11 were single, one person was married and three people were widowed.

It is quite evident from the above demographic information that the primary recipients of the grant-in-aid social grant in Polokwane are aged between 26-60 years of age and are females who are widowed. The above evidence further supports the literature by Baloyi (2020: 41) who indicated that the grant-in-aid social grant is received by marginalised groups in the RSA society such as the female-headed single-parent households. Baloyi (2020: 41) further indicated that these individuals require support to adequately participate in society.

Theme 2: Key experiences of the recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality

Recipients reported diverse experiences with the grant-in-aid program. Many highlighted its role in supplementing income, assisting with treatment, and improving access to food and medication. First-time recipients generally described their experiences as positive, though some noted challenges such as mental health issues or dependency. Of the 15 participants who were interviewed, five individuals expressed how the grant was not helpful due to the low amount of money received. However, 10 individuals indicated that they found the grant to be quite helpful in meeting their day-to-day needs. For example:

Participant two expressed the following:

“The grant is helpful. I always have money for transport to go and see the doctor at the clinic.”

Participant three indicated the following:

“For me and my family the grant is helpful. We do not have a full-time caregiver; we are able to allocate the money to buy more food”

Participant nine said the following:

“Ever since receiving the grant I can do more and access more”

Based on the above, it is evident that the grant-in-aid is helpful for the recipients. This aligns with research conducted by Zwane *et al.* (2022), who asserted that social grants such as the grant-in-aid, in South Africa are crucial in addressing poverty, income inequality, and improving the overall welfare of households. Patel (2023) further mentioned that although the grant-in-aid is a supplementary grant, it has reduced the number of families living in poverty.

Theme 3: Grant accessibility

The theme of grant accessibility highlights the experiences of recipients in applying for and accessing the grant-in-aid within the Polokwane Local Municipality. The process, as described by the respondents, generally caters for an approachable method of application and retrieval. Responses regarding the accessibility of the grant-in-aid did not vary significantly. Of the 15 participants who were interviewed, three indicated that they found out about the grant from other fellow community members. One participant mentioned that he/she heard about the grant from a SASSA official. Seven participants indicated that they were able to access the grant as a result of public health institutions such as hospitals and clinics. Four participants mentioned the radio and family members as sources of information regarding the grant. The following serve as examples of responses by the participants:

Participant 13 mentioned the following:

“I only heard about the grant-in-aid through a relative, after eight years of knowing nothing about it”

Participant 14 indicated the following:

“I am someone who enjoys listening to the radio. I managed to find out about the grant by listening to one of the shows on Thobela Fm”

Participant 15 stated the following:

“I was only able to receive a grant-in-aid after the principal at my school referred me to a psychologist”.

There is a lot of emphasis in the literature that indicates that there is a huge challenge in the administration of the grant-in-aid social grant. Some of the challenges in the administration of the grant is the lack of information regarding the grant and a confusion in the eligibility criteria of the grant. Delany *et al.* (2016:63) mentioned that citizens and residents of RSA do not have enough reliable information to help them, not only access the grant but to also be beneficiaries. Closely related to the lack of information is the confusion in the eligibility criteria of the grant-in-aid. Despite a wide outreach regarding the grant, there are still many individuals who are not certain whether they qualify for the grant even though they fit the criteria (South African Social Security Agency Grants 2022).

Theme 4: Financial adequacy of the grant

The Financial Adequacy of the Grant theme delves into the recipients' perspectives on whether the grant amounts meet their needs. When asked whether the grant-in-aid provides sufficient financial support to cover costs associated with care to the recipients, the responses varied. Some indicated the grants helpfulness while others highlighted its insufficiency. Of the 15 people who participated in the data-collection interviews, four recipients mentioned that the money is enough, while four blatantly stated that the money is not enough and does not assist. There were seven other recipients who indicated that it is not enough, but it is better than not receiving anything at all. The following were voiced:

Participant one stated the following:

“Receiving the grant-in-aid is better than not receiving any money at all”.

Participant two expressed the following:

“Yes, the grant is sufficient because it is an addition to my disability grant”.

Participant nine indicated the following:

“The government has to consider increasing the grant. It does not assist with much”.

Participant seven mentioned the following:

“We will try to balance where we can with the money. However, it will not cover anything”.

According to literature, South Africa is a low- and middle-income country (Kelly 2017). However, it continues to provide a generous set of social grants. Zwane *et al.* (2022: 1) indicated that social grants are used as tools of poverty alleviation. Although the grant money is not a significant amount of money, Waidler and Devereux (2019) believed social grants such as the grant-in-aid have contributed significantly to many RSA households that are living below the poverty line. Furthermore, social grants have provided individuals with some form of income to meet some of their needs and even start small businesses at home to ensure that there is a constant cash flow. This therefore indicates that there is a need to evaluate the grant amount against the actual cost of living and care requirements within Polokwane Local Municipality. The implications here call for an assessment and potential restructuring of grant amounts to better align with the contemporary needs of residents of the municipality's geographical area of responsibility. Consideration should be given to the varying needs across different recipient demographics to ensure the grant's effectiveness in providing meaningful financial support

Theme 5: Grant approval time

The issue of grant approval time sheds light on the varied experiences regarding the time frame from application up to approval of the grant-in-Aid. Participants' experiences range widely, reflecting inconsistencies in the processing times. For instance, four people out of 15 indicated that their grant applications were approved immediately. On the other side, five mentioned that it only took a month for their applications phase. Six upset and annoyed individuals indicated that it took between two to three months for their grants to be approved. Moreover, according to the recipients, the process of applying for the grant is very tedious and costly as they are required to go back and forth between doctors and SASSA offices. Herewith some responses by some of the participants in the data-collection interviews:

Participant 10 mentioned the following:

“It took so long for my grant application to be approved. I spent so much money traveling between doctors and SASSA offices just to make follow-ups. It was quite exhausting for me”.

Participant 11 revealed the following:

“When I applied for the grant, it was approved immediately. SASSA even back dated the payments”.

Participant 12 indicated the following:

“My grant application was approved in three months. It was a long wait for me because I was very sick when I started the process”.

These disparities not only highlighted potential inefficiencies within the approval process but also suggest that certain factors such as the administration of the grants and manual processes have significantly influenced how quickly an application is processed. According to Mbonambi (2016: 2), some of SASSA’s pay points, even to this day, do not have a system of recording applications. One such case is that of a pay point in Mankweng, a township just outside of Polokwane Local Municipality. Officials at the pay point still fill out applications manually. Because of this there has been a decline in the number of applications and a loss of important data. The manual processes have resulted in beneficiaries waiting in the long queues. Others have opted to stay over and sleep at payment sites as they do not have transportation-money to return to the payment sites (Ngubane 2021).

Theme 6: Impact of the grant on the daily life

This theme explores the direct effects of the grant on the lives of the recipients and their families. The study discovered that the grant had a predominantly positive impact on recipients' daily lives. It improved their quality of life and provided much-needed support. However, a few recipients noted that while the impact was positive, it was still limited in addressing all their challenges. The responses articulate a broad spectrum of impacts. 14 participants indicated that the grant-in-aid has impacted their lives positively, while one person indicated that the grant had no impact on his/her life. The following responses were received:

Participant one revealed the following:

“The grant has not only positively impacted me but my family as well. We are able to buy clothes, pay for stokvels and even send children to school”

Participant two mentioned the following:

“The grant has helped me and my family tremendously. We are able to buy fruits, vegetables, pay our funeral cover and caregiver”

Participant five revealed the following:

“I have a skin condition as a result the money has helped me to afford skin care products and visits to both optometrist and dermatologist”

Participant 10 stated the following:

“I struggle with bipolar and depression. The extra money I receive from the grant has allowed me the opportunity to get treatment from the psychologist.

Based on the above, it is quite evident that the grant-in-aid has positively impacted the lives of the recipients. This aligns with research conducted by Posel and Rogan (2012) who asserted that the grant has been instrumental in addressing poverty and inequality in the post-apartheid period. Additionally, the grant has been associated with improved market participation for smallholder producers and have been identified as a means of enhancing the welfare of poor households (Sinyolo *et al.* 2017).

Theme 7: Application and receipt challenges

The application and receipt theme explores the common or broad issues that recipients and their families encounter in relation to the application and receipt of the grant-in-aid social grant. When asked what some of the challenges are, the recipient's responses did not differ much. Of the 15 people that were interviewed one person indicated that he/she encountered some challenges with both applying and receiving the social grant. The majority indicated that the process of applying and

receiving their grant is seamless as they did not encounter any challenges. The following responses were received:

Participant one mentioned the following:

“We do not experience any challenges. If anything, the grant has reduced our struggles”

Participant three stated the following:

I do not encounter any challenges. I always receive my grant money on the same day of every month with no delays”

Participant five indicated the following:

“I would be lying if I said there are challenges, I am facing”

It is quite prevalent from the aforementioned that recipients of the grant-in-aid are not facing many challenges as it relates to applying and receiving their grant. This aligns with research conducted by Mlambo (2021) who stated that the primary objective of the grant-in-aid in South Africa is to educate families about better ways to care for their frail family members while eradicating poverty.

Theme 8: Recommendations from Grant Recipients

At the end of the interviews, participants were asked to propose recommendations to address the challenges they experienced. Their suggestions varied but centred on key areas for improvement, including reducing processing times, increasing financial support, and streamlining administrative requirements.

Some of the specific recommendations included the following:

- Reducing the waiting-period to ease financial strain caused by multiple trips to SASSA offices.
- Eliminating the annual renewal requirement, as it often takes longer than the initial application.
- Providing additional transportation assistance to help applicants and caregivers navigate the process more easily.

- Enhancing administrative efficiency to improve public service delivery.

The following perspectives were received from some of the participants:

Participant 1: "Please reduce the waiting period. It is too long. That would help cut down transportation costs significantly."

Participant 7: "I do not know what to say to SASSA."

Participant 9: "Annual renewal should not be a thing. It takes longer than the actual application."

Participant 10: "I just want to thank SASSA for all the good work they are doing for our families."

These responses highlight both the frustrations and appreciation experienced by recipients. While some acknowledged SASSA's efforts, others emphasized the need for urgent improvements in efficiency, accessibility, and support services.

Research supports these concerns. Delany *et al.* (2016: 63) found that applicants often struggle to complete application forms due to a lack of awareness regarding required documentation. Additionally, Megannon (2022) highlights that insufficient administrative capacity contributes to lengthy and tedious processes, further exacerbating delays and inefficiencies.

Addressing the aforementioned challenges through public policy adjustments, digitalization, and enhanced administrative support could significantly improve the experience of grant-in-aid recipients.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The primary objective of the study has been to examine the experiences of recipients with the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The findings provided valuable insights into the experiences of grant-in-aid recipients in the research locus, focusing on demographic profiles, key experiences,

grant accessibility, financial adequacy, grant approval time, impact of the grant on daily life, application and receipt challenges as well as recommendations.

The majority of participants in the data-collection phase of the research were elderly women, typically of African descent, with many identifying as widowed. Since the advent of democracy, the South African government has worked tirelessly to alleviate poverty and address poverty. However, this may not be the case as studies suggest that over 13.2 million people in South Africa are still living in poverty. Similar to the rate of poverty, the inequality gap in the country continues to ridiculously skyrocket (Cowling 2024). The high levels of poverty and inequality continue to marginalise black women, who also happen to be one of the most marginalised groups in society. Although, the grant-in-aid's intended goal is to support vulnerable individuals it seems though that there is more work that is required to ensure that more women get the chance and resources to improve their societal wellbeing to above the poverty line. Moreover, more opportunities need to be given to women who find themselves in positions such as this one (Cowling 2024).

Recipients of grants reported diverse experiences with the grant-in-aid program. Many highlighted its role in supplementing income, assisting with treatment, and improving access to food and medication. First-time recipients generally described their experiences as positive, though some noted challenges such as mental health issues or dependency. While social grants generally ensure that South Africans live above the poverty line, the grant-in-aid is not a sufficient amount of money to assist in buying food and medication. The cost of living in South Africa is extremely high. An article published by Business Tech indicates that households are not coping because the cost of transport, food, and electricity are exceeding inflation (Staff Writer 2024). What also seems to be problematic is that despite the introduction of the National Health Insurance Bill, individuals who are recipients of social grants with a supplement of the grant-in-aid are still struggling to get equitable access to health care services and medication.

With regards to grant accessibility, recipients primarily became aware of the grant through community networks, social workers, or SASSA offices. While this

demonstrates the importance of community-driven information dissemination the rest of the world is becoming digital by the day, In RSA there are groups or communities who live in remote areas and do not have access to electricity, let alone the Internet. Therefore, in its request to educate communities about SASSA services and social grants, more especially the grant-in-aid, many people are not familiar with it, and the outreach is only for those who are in townships or even rural areas that are not remote. Furthermore, it is evident that government campaigns are not being held regularly but on significant South African calendar days such as Nelson Mandela Day (Mashilo 2024).

Furthermore, recipients reported diverse experiences with the grant-in-aid social grant. Some indicated its helpfulness while others indicated its insufficiency. This Study in chapter two indicated that the grant-in-aid social grant is an additional grant for individuals who are recipients of the war Veteran's, older persons and disability grants. The grant-in-aid is an amount of R530.00 and it is paid monthly to individuals who require full-time care. The grant-in-aid can be both helpful and insufficient as indicated by the respondents. It is helpful for individuals who do not have to hire a full-time helper as their helper could be a relative, spouse or even a child. Furthermore, they are able to use the grant-in-aid money to try and meet their monthly needs and other commitments. However, for individuals who require a full-time care giver they are obligated to pay their helpers while still trying to meet ends meeting with their primary grant (Kelly 2019; Zwane *et al.* 2022:1; Waidler & Devereux 2019).

Moreover, with regards to the grant approval time, recipient's experiences range widely. Some recipients indicated that their grants were approved instantly while others mentioned that they waited more than six months for their grant applications to be approved. This reflects inconsistencies in the system of approving grants. These struggles with the approval time of the grant suggests that there is a need for streamlined application processes. Without streamlined processes many recipients of the grant-in-aid stand a chance of regressing in their health as they would not be receiving adequate healthcare. Furthermore, those who require full-time caregivers stand a chance of losing or not even affording their caregivers, thus also resulting in

their health deteriorating. After all, people will only work when they are being paid. This aligns with research conducted by Dawson (2025) who indicated that South African citizens and residents, specifically young individuals, are not willing to work without getting paid. This is because work that does not pay always ends up in some form of exploitation (Mbonambi 2016; Dawson 2025).

With reference to the grants impact on the daily life of the recipients, the grant had a predominantly positive impact on recipients' daily lives. It improved their quality of life and provided much-needed support. The grant-in-aid significantly enhances recipients' quality of life by covering essential expenses like food, transportation, and medical costs. However, many respondents viewed the financial support as insufficient to meet all their needs, particularly for hiring full-time caregivers, and that there is still a demand for finances. The study has revealed that the grant has alleviated poverty thereby enabling individuals access to education and education. This is supported by research conducted by the International Labour Office (2005) that indicated that individuals who come from poor households' live life without basic skills and an education. Several studies report that many South African households do not have a savings culture. However, the grant-in-aid as well all other social grants have facilitated good habits of saving and investing in many poor households (Metropolitan 2023).

There is a gap in the grant-in-aid program's ability to fully address the financial demands of care-dependent individuals. While challenges were generally minimal, some recipients highlighted specific issues such as financial limitations, the grant amount was often perceived as inadequate, especially for covering caregiver costs and other specialised needs. Healthcare-related issues were cited, obtaining required medical documentation posed barriers for some applicants. Finally, there is a lack of guidance, recipients placed emphasis on the absence of formal training on managing grant funds effectively, which could optimize the grant's impact.

Caregiver dynamics seems to also impact not only on the recipient of the grant but the caregiver as well. Although, many recipients could hire caregivers, a significant proportion indicated that caregivers struggled to meet all their needs due to financial

constraints. Recipients emphasized the importance of good relationships with caregivers, often maintained through mutual understanding and adaptability in resource-constrained settings.

Recipients provided several recommendations to improve the program. These included increasing the grant amount, providing more transportation assistance, and addressing caregiver-related issues to ensure better support. There are some processes that SASSA needs to improve significantly on. Recipients indicate that there is a difficulty in completing application forms. This can be attributed to the lack of knowledge on the documentation required. Furthermore, there is a need for administrative capacity to deal with the long tedious processes (Delany *et al.* 2016: 63; Megannon 2022).

According to Martinez (2022), the empowerment theory attempts to empower communities and individuals to obtain political and personal power to improve their lives. Haddad and Toney-Butler (2022) added that the theory is centred around an individual's ability to envision their life goals and achieve them. There are two basic assumptions of the empowerment theory. The first key assumption according to Haddad and Toney-Butler (2022) is that the empowerment theory perceives that every person has the ability and potential to be empowered. Similarly, Zimmerman (2000: 43, 44) found that through empowerment organisations can master their own lives. The second key assumption of the empowerment theory is that communities and organisations only become empowered as a result of individuals who work together towards a shared goal (Haddad & Toney-Butler 2022). Perkins and Zimmerman (1995: 571) asserted that the participation of a group of people can result in the better and quicker achievement of goals, gain, and better access to resources.

What is evident from the findings and discussion is that the grant-in-aid social grant has provided many South African households both socially and economically. Socially it has given them the opportunity to have access to education, and healthcare services. For individuals who are sick and bedridden it has given them an opportunity to live by making leeway for hiring caregivers. Although caregivers will

not earn much money it has allowed them to have some form of financial freedom to provide for their respective households.

Economically, it has allowed both citizens and residents of RSA a fair chance at contributing to the South African economy. By earning the grant some people have managed to save up their money and start businesses which help them to generate money on a monthly basis. The introduction of some of these businesses has also assisted in reducing, although not significantly, the unemployment in the affected families and in South Africa generally.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter of the dissertation unpacked the research methodology followed in this research adventure. The approach and the respective research design strategies, data collection tool, population and sampling techniques were also explored. The chapter, furthermore, presented the findings. The findings were explored using five main themes, being, demographics, grant accessibility, financial adequacy of the grant, grant approval time, impact of the grant and challenges

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter summarised the major topics from the data findings. The chapter also addressed essential issues, such as the experiences of recipients of the grant-in-aid social grant in Polokwane Local Municipality. The following chapter presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations on how government can mitigate some of the challenges in order to improve more effective, efficient and cost-effective implementation, administration, and evaluation of the impact(s) of the grant-in-aid social grant. The chapter includes a conclusion of the study.

5.2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The subsequent section provides primary findings and some SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timeous) recommendations on the themes that were used to examine recipients' experiences with grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality.

5.2.1 Finding 1: Demographics

With regards to the demographics, majority of participants were elderly women, typically of African descent, and with many identifying as widowed. The study firstly, recommends that widowed women be empowered. The Department of Social Development as well SASSA need to allocate and prioritise the empowerment of widowed African women. The empowerment of widows will give them the opportunity to support themselves and their lives while still maintaining their integrity and dignity. There are numerous ways in which that can be addressed, however, the most powerful tool that can be used to empower widowed women is by giving them an opportunity to obtain an education.

When widowed women are given an opportunity to receive an education this will significantly reduce poverty but also close the inequality gap. Furthermore, this will also allow them to be active participants in the South African economy.

5.2.2 Finding 2: Key experiences of the recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality

The experiences of the participants varied; however, it was evident that they were clear that the grant-in-aid amount is not sufficient. Considering the escalating standard of living in the country, the study recommends that SASSA increases the grant-in-aid amount. According to Wadler and Devereux (2021), social grants create a culture of dependency and laziness. Although this may be true to an extent, the truth is also that the standard of living is high and there is therefore, a need for the increment in the amount of the grant-in-aid social grant. The cost of living in South Africa does not only increase on an annual basis, but also more on a monthly basis. Although, it would not be possible to increase the grant-in-aid amount monthly, however, it should be increased on an annual basis by a percentage or two. The increment will not be significant, but it will assist the recipients to at least make ends meet.

5.2.3 Finding 3: Grant accessibility

With regards to grant accessibility, recipient (participants) primarily became aware of the grant through community networks, social workers, or SASSA offices. What is quite evident is that there is a need for more information sharing initiative by SASSA. The study recommends firstly, the use of radio to educate South Africa's citizens and residents about all grant-related processes, procedures and SASSA services. The radio is a good starting point because not all South African have internet connectivity to learn about all social welfare services. Secondly, SASSA should have on-going drives in all South African provinces. These drives will assist in ensuring that people do not receive information once-off, but they receive information on an on-going basis. Thirdly, SASSA should dispatch some dedicated teams to all SASSA pay-points in South Africa. This will ensure that individuals who are beneficiaries and those who are not have access to SASSA information, at whatever point in time they may need it. These SASSA information centres will be responsible for educating the public on SASSA services, eligibility criterion for the various social grants, and most importantly how to properly complete the application forms.

5.2.4 Finding 4: Financial adequacy of the grant

This finding is closely linked to the second theme. Responses regarding the financial adequacy of the grant differed amongst the participants during data collection. It was, however, evident that there is a need for the grant-in-aid amount to be increased. The study therefore recommends that public policymakers consider revising the grant amount to align with the rising costs of caregiving and essential services. This adjustment would help recipients meet broader care-related expenses, particularly for hiring caregivers. Furthermore, recipients of not only the grant-in-aid but also of all other social grants, require capacity-building for fund management. Introducing workshops or training of financial literacy for recipients would empower them to manage grant funds effectively, maximising the grant's impact. Moreover, this will reduce instances where the recipients do not have money to cover their monthly expenses and needs.

5.2.5 Finding 5: Grant approval time

Majority of the recipients in the data-collection phase of this study, expressed their concerns regarding the duration of getting their applications approved. What seemed to be quite evident in the delay of approval of applications is the outdated systems used by SASSA to approve grants. The world is moving into a digital era, and technology is progressing and evolving daily.

It is, therefore, recommended that the application process be digitised. Public policymakers should explore digital tools to simplify grant applications. Mobile-friendly platforms, combined with in-person support for those with limited digital literacy, could expand accessibility and efficiency. As previously indicated not all individuals may have access to internet, the SASSA information centres would be a great location to assist people with applying and attaining an approved status without a hassle.

5.2.6 Finding 6: Impact of the grant on the daily life

It was deduced that the grant had a predominantly meaningful contribution on recipients' daily lives. Although the recipients of the grant indicated their general

satisfaction with the grant on a daily basis, it is recommended that SASSA conducts, either monthly or even quarterly, check-in session with the recipients. These check-in sessions will help not only the beneficiaries of the grant-in-aid, but it will also assist SASSA as well to be able to know what is happening on the ground and what exactly are some of the real challenges that recipients of the grant are experiencing every day.

5.2.7 Finding 7: Application and receipt challenges

The application and receipt theme explores the common or broad issues that recipients and their families encounter in relation to the application and receipt of the grant-in-aid. Most challenges may be caused by recipients' lack of understanding the application forms. Simply put, submitting an incorrectly completed application results in challenges of receiving. Without a grant a recipient will not be able to get any medical attention or even medicine. The study therefore recommends a strengthened healthcare collaboration: The government should streamline collaboration between healthcare providers and SASSA. Simplifying medical referral requirements and offering more accessible healthcare documentation processes would reduce application barriers.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the study has been to examine recipients' experiences with the social grant in Polokwane Local Municipality. Section one of the first chapter of the dissertation unpacked the concept of social grants. Section two discussed the covid-19 social relief of distress grant, care dependency grant, child support grant, foster child grant, disability grant, older persons grant, war veterans grant, and the grant-in-aid as the eight social grants administered by SASSA (South African Social Security Agency 2022). In section three, public administration spelt in both upper- and lower case were distinguished. The development of Public Administration was detailed in section four. Section five unpacked social welfare along with its objectives.

Chapter two of the study has managed to explore and provide a thorough understanding of the grant-in-aid social grant and some form of conceptualisation of social welfare within Public Administration. What was evident from the aforementioned is that the paradigms of Public Administration created and ushered in a relationship with social welfare. This was made possible by because of social welfare administration. It is through both the Integral and POSDCORB lenses that social welfare was located within the discipline.

Chapter three of the study unpacked the methods. The qualitative research approach and the respective research design strategies, data collection tool, population and sampling techniques were also explored. The chapter, furthermore, presented the findings. The findings were explored using five main themes, demographics, grant accessibility, financial adequacy of the grant, grant approval time, impact of the grant and challenges.

Chapter four of the dissertation the findings and analysis. The chapter presented the experiences of recipients of the grant-in-aid in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The chapter addressed the recipient's perspectives with the grant and further identify measures that the Municipality can adopt to enhance the effectiveness of the grant in meeting the needs of the individuals. Some of the measures that were identified was to introduce information centres and radio shows to educate the general public on SASSA services. The dissertation further proposed workshops on financial literacy that will assist the recipients to better use their money. There is need for SASSA to streamline its process with those of healthcare providers. Through the streamlining of processes SASSA will be in a better position to check-in with all recipients. The last recommendation provided by the dissertation is the empowerment of women as they are one of the most marginalised groups in society.

Chapter five provided the conclusions and recommendations that the Polokwane Local Municipality can take note of, consider and hopefully introduce to facilitate an improved implementation of the grant-in-aid to the area's recipients.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the study was limited to only Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, Republic of South Africa. Consequently, the findings and recommendations of this study cannot be generalised to other municipalities or provinces, as the specific socio-economic conditions and backgrounds of recipients in the Polokwane Local Municipality are not necessarily representative of those in other regions. To address this limitation the study focused on providing in-depth, context-specific insights that could serve as a foundation for future comparative research in other parts of the country and the world. Secondly, the use of interviews in the study has resulted in the inability of the researcher to determine whether or not the participants provided correct or incorrect information. To mitigate this, interview questions were carefully designed to be clear and unambiguous, and participants were assured of confidentiality to encourage honesty. Where possible, responses were triangulated with available policy documents and reports to enhance credibility.

Another limitation of the study was access to ethics application forms and contact details of the municipality officials. The information was not readily available, moreover there was a lot of organisational “red tape” that made the process longer and even tedious. In response, the researcher maintained consistent communication with gatekeepers, followed formal protocols diligently, and allowed additional time in the research schedule to accommodate these delays. Lastly, the study was restricted in terms of the sources that were consulted. This is because there is no literature that has been written or even published on the grant-in-aid social grant. To address this, the researcher consulted related literature on social grants and social welfare within the broader South African context and relied on policy documents, government reports, and grey literature to support the analysis.

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

Prospective should explore long-term strategies to complement social grants, such as job creation programs and skills development initiatives, to ensure sustainable livelihoods for recipients in Polokwane Local Municipality and beyond. Furthermore, there is a need to explore the connection between the distribution of social grants and gender. It was quite apparent from the results of the study that many households in South Africa are female-headed and survive on social grants. The study also indicated many people, not only the recipients of the grant are not well informed about the grant-

in-aid. There is, therefore, a need for research to be done on, for example, the accessibility of the grant-in-aid.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This study examined recipients' experiences with the social grant system in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa, shedding light on both its benefits and challenges. Findings reveal that while social grants aid in alleviating poverty and providing financial relief to vulnerable individuals, recipients still face bureaucratic hurdles, interruptions in payments, and the inadequacy of grant amounts to meet rising living costs. Despite these challenges, social grants remain an essential lifeline for many.

To enhance effectiveness, public policymakers should consider streamlining administrative processes, improving accessibility, and ensuring that grant amounts are adjusted in line with inflation. Additionally, initiatives that promote financial literacy and economic empowerment among recipients could reduce long-term dependence on grants and foster self-sufficiency.

Ultimately, social grants are a fundamental part of South Africa's social protection framework, but continuous improvements are necessary to maximise their impact. Future research should explore long-term strategies to complement social grants, such as job creation programs and skills development initiatives, to ensure sustainable livelihoods for recipients in Polokwane Local Municipality and beyond.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT

Combined Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

School of Public Management and Administration

Examining recipients' experiences with the social grant in Polokwane,

South Africa

Research conducted by:

Ms F. K. Makhongela, U19274531, 076 497 2337

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Fanessa Khensani Makhongela, a Masters student from the School of Public Management and Administration at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to examine recipients' experiences with the social grant in Polokwane, South Africa.

Please note the following:

This is an anonymous study, and your personal information will not appear on any transcript. The responses you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.

Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be stored on a safe and secure platform as governed by the University of Pretoria's Research Data Management Policy.

Your participation will involve a face-to-face interview which will last approximately sixty minutes (60), either in person at your workplace or virtually via Zoom or MS

Teams if you are not based in Pretoria. During the interview you will be asked open-ended questions that will allow you to draw upon your lived experience regarding the utilisation of evidence in policy formulation and implementation.

The study's results will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings upon request.

Please contact my study leader, Dr. S.N. Lubinga, Senior Lecturer, School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria, on 064 396 1576 or email stellah.lubinga@up.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

In research of this nature, the study leader may wish to contact respondents to verify the authenticity of data gathered by the researcher. It is understood that any personal contact details you may provide will be used only for this purpose and will not compromise your anonymity or the confidentiality of your participation.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

You have read and understand the information provided above.

You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Participant's signature

Date

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AND COLLECT DATA
CONFIDENTIAL



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

Office of the Premier

Research and Development Directorate

Private Bag X9483, Polokwane, 0700, South Africa

Tel: (015) 230 9910, Email: mokobij@premier.limpopo.gov.za

LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Review Date: 08 May 2024

Project Number: LPREC/06/2024: PG

Subject: Examining recipients' experiences with the social grant in Polokwane, South Africa

Researcher: Makhongela FK

Acting Chairperson: Dr NE Malindi

Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

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

Note:

- i. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ii. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.

- iii. **The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.**
- iv. **The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**

CONFIDENTIAL



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

TO: MR MJ MOLOISI

FROM: DR NE

MALINDI

ACTING CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)

REVIEW DATE: 08 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: EXAMINING RECIPIENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THE SOCIAL GRANT IN POLOKWANE, SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCHER: Makhongela FK

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC). The committee is satisfied with the methodological and ethical soundness of the proposed study.

Decision: The proposal is granted full approval.

Regards

Chairperson: Prof I Swarts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Mokobi', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi

Handwritten initials in blue ink, possibly 'HS', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Date: 10/05/2024

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE GRANT IN AID RECIPIENTS IN POLOKWANE

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Date:

Demographic information

1. How old are you?
2. What gender do you identify as?
3. What ethnicity do you identify as?
4. What is your marital status?

Knowledge/experience

5. Can you tell me about your experience with the Grant-in-Aid social grant in Polokwane?
6. As a resident of Polokwane, how did you find out about the availability of the Grant-in-Aid social grant?
7. Can you describe the process of applying for a Grant-in-Aid in Polokwane?
8. Have you encountered any challenges in applying for or receiving the Grant in Aid?
9. How long have you been receiving the Grant in Aid social grant?
10. In your experience, how helpful has the Grant in Aid been in supporting your care needs?
11. How has the Grant in Aid impacted your quality of life?

Support and Care

12. Has the Grant in Aid allowed you to hire a full-time caregiver?
13. If you have a caregiver, are they able to meet all your needs with the support of the Grant in Aid?
14. Have you faced any difficulties finding a qualified caregiver in Polokwane?
15. How has the Grant in Aid affected your relationship with your caregiver?

Financial Management:

16. Do you feel the Grant in Aid provides sufficient financial support to cover the costs associated with your care?
17. Have you received any guidance or training on managing the Grant in Aid funds effectively?
18. Are there any additional financial resources you would need to improve your care situation?

General Challenges

19. What were some of the challenges you encountered when applying for the Grant-in-Aid in Polokwane?
20. How long did it take for your Grant-in-Aid social grant application to be approved?
21. Have you encountered any difficulties with receiving your Grant-in-Aid social grant payment?

Empowerment

22. How do you typically utilise the funds received from the Grant-in-Aid social grant?
23. Has the Grant-in-Aid social grant had any impact on your life and the lives of your family members in Polokwane? If so, can you describe this impact?
24. Has the Grant-in-Aid social grant alleviated financial strain or improved your standard of living?
25. How can the Grant-in-Aid social grant system be improved?

APPENDIX D: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

28 April 2025

To Whom It May Concern

This Certificate serves to inform that the draft Dissertation “*Examining recipients’ experiences with the social grant in Polokwane, South Africa*” was submitted by Me Fanessa Makhongela to PAT for professional proofreading, linguistic editing and academic English language refinement.

Using the Track Changes feature of Microsoft Word's Review function, PAT identified and highlighted typing-, language use-, and linguistic shortcomings, and provided suggestions for improvements and changes for the student’s consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. EJ Nealer

PAT Contractor
SATI registered (No. 1002488)
[Website: <https://patsa.co.za>]