



***AN EXPLORATION INTO STATUTORY SOCIAL WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS
AND EXPERIENCES OF THEIR CHILD PROTECTION WORK***

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE DEGREE IN CLINICAL SW (SWK 5001W)

By

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or the works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Special acknowledgment to Child Protection Social Workers around the world for: their passion for the work; their commitment to protecting children; and their satisfaction found in working with families to make positive changes to their lives.

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Abstract

The South African statistics for child abuse, neglect, and death is extreme by international measures (UNICEF, 2016). Concurrently, skilled Social Workers are in demand in South Africa but subject to complex social dynamics while working under immense pressure (DHET, 2018; Calitz, Roux, & Strydom, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore Statutory Social Workers' perceptions and experiences of their Child Protection Work. The objectives of this study was to gain insight into the role, responsibilities and experiences of Statutory Child Protection Social Workers in order to identify their perceived challenges and rewards within the profession and to make recommendations to improve Statutory Child Protection Work.

The study used a qualitative research design. A purposive non-probability sampling method was used to select the 19 respondents in this study. All respondents were Statutory Child Protection Social Workers from Government and Non-Government Child Protection organisations. The data was collected using a semi-structured interview schedule to conduct one-on-one interviews. The interviews were analysed using Tesch's (2013) approach and NVIVO 12 data analysis software.

Overall, the study found that while respondents experience challenges in their profession, there are rewarding aspects in Social Work that motivate them to continue in the work. More specifically, the study has found that the main responsibilities and roles of Statutory Child Protection Social Workers are embedded in the context of Statutory Social Work. In this context, Social Workers' Child protection interventions are mandated by Social Work and Child Protection legislation to respond to social problems. Main social issues reported by respondents are poor parenting, substance misuse, gangsterism, domestic violence, school dropouts, unemployment, and teen pregnancies. The study revealed the importance of effective collaborative work with the stakeholders of Child Protection Work. Most respondents reported that collaborative work in Child Protection Work can be more effective when there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities and good working relationships between collaborators.

The study found that there are both extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of the work that are perceived as challenging and rewarding for respondents. The most challenging extrinsic experiences of Social Work perceived by respondents are poor working conditions, namely: concern for safety, lack of resources to do the work, high caseloads and dissatisfaction with the salary. The most challenging intrinsic experiences perceived by respondents are lack of recognition received from collaborators, the public and government.

The most rewarding extrinsic experiences of Social Work perceived by respondents are; support received at work and good working relationships and support received from colleagues. Intrinsic aspects experienced as most rewarding by respondents are; achievements at work, recognition received for their work, motivation to do SW and remaining in SW, and experiencing a sense of personal and professional growth in their work.

Based on the results of the study, recommendations can be made to inform Social Work Practice (workers and employers), Social Work Education and Training, Government, and future Social Work research. The study found that self-care is an important coping mechanism for the respondents to manage emotional exhaustion and the challenges of the work. Respondents' recommendations to employers include their plea for better resources, effective supervision, support and acknowledgement. Recommendations that respondents had for improvement of statutory child protection service delivery is; improved working relationships with collaborators and clarification of roles and responsibilities of collaborators, and a need for forums and networking. Recommendations that respondents had for Social Work education and training institutions included better preparation for the work while studying at university. The main recommendations that respondents echoed to government are justice for victims of abuse and neglect, better working conditions for Statutory Child Protection Social Workers and the inclusion of Social Workers' voices when Child Protection policy and legislation is developed.

List of abbreviations

DSD:	Department of Social Development
CP:	Child Protection
CPS:	Child Protection Services
CPSW:	Child Protection Social Work
CPS Worker:	Child Protection Social Worker
CPSWs:	Child Protection Social Workers
CPW:	Child Protection Work
GG:	Government vehicle
HOD:	Head of Department
NGO:	Non-government Organisation
SACSSP:	South African Council for Social Service Professions
SAPS:	South African Police Services
SCP:	Statutory Child Protection
SCPW:	Statutory Child Protection Work
SCPSW:	Statutory Child Protection Social Work
SCPS Worker:	Statutory Child Protection Social Worker
SCPSWs:	Statutory Child Protection Social Workers
SW:	Social Work
SWs:	Social Workers
UN:	United Nations
UK:	United Kingdom
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO:	World Health Organisation

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Chapter One - Problem Formulation

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one introduces the research. It presents the statement of the problem, rationale and significance of the study, context of the research, research topic, research questions and objectives, clarification of terms, reflexivity and ethical considerations of the study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2016) has identified child abuse and neglect as a critical global social problem. According to WHO (2016) abuse and neglect of children encompasses physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as exploitation and deprivation. Child abuse occurs in various contexts including physical spaces and on the internet (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2016). Violence against child victims can leave emotional and physical scars; in some cases, children have been killed (UNICEF, 2016). Over the last decade, awareness and acknowledgment of abuse against children has increased (UNICEF, 2016). However, much about this phenomenon remains under-reported and undocumented due to society's likely desensitisation to crimes against children and children's lack of capacity to report crimes (UNICEF, 2016). Furthermore, when these crimes are reported, aspects such as the legal system's failures to respond and challenges in the availability of Child Protection Services (CPS), fails the child (UNICEF, 2016). Challenges have been researched by Van Westrhenen (2017a) who furthermore found that Social Workers (SWs) reported that cases were delayed and withdrawn for many reasons and that perpetrators were seldom prosecuted, leaving children at risk of abuse.

In South Africa, the amount of cases of child abuse and neglect is one of the highest in the world; this epidemic is strongly related to socioeconomic problems (Van Westrhenen, 2017b). Approximately two-thirds of more than seven million children residing in South Africa are living well below the poverty line, which is the monthly income required for basic needs in homes, with a monthly household income of less than R604 per person per month (Hall, 2018). This means that two thirds of the Western Cape's child population are

at risk and are in urgent need of the services provided by Child Protection (CP) agencies. Crime Statistics South Africa (Crime Stats SA, 2019) reported that child related crime and violence has increased in recent years in South Africa. When looking at the provincial lists of total crimes reported, the Western Cape ranked second highest following Gauteng (Crime Stats SA, 2019).

The main social issues in South Africa are: poverty, poor access to education and social services, high illiteracy levels, teenage pregnancy, family breakdown, lack of community resources, malnutrition and infant mortality, absent fathers, HIV/AIDS, housing and sanitation issues, single parenting, child-headed households, public health issues, unemployment, gangsterism, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and substance misuse (Stats SA, 2019; Patel, 2015). These are aspects that place children at risk for abuse and neglect (UNICEF, 2016).

Present socioeconomic issues in South Africa link to its historical context and structural issues caused by policies such as Apartheid and Group Areas Act (Delaney, Grinspun & Nyokangi in Delaney, Jehomah & Lake, 2016). Resultant of this legacy of exclusion and oppression, crime, violence and social issues have manifested and escalated in many communities across South Africa (Patel, 2015).

In recent years poverty has deepened in South Africa, and thus there is an increasing national demand for professional social services (Aguilar, 2018; Masango, 2016). In 2016, the South African government recognised a shortage of skilled SWs in the labour market and acknowledged the significant role of SW in the fulfilment of national priorities; namely, poverty alleviation, youth development, social crime prevention and social cohesion (Khumalo, 2016). In 2018, Social Work (SW) was listed as an occupation high in demand by the Department of Higher Education (DHET, 2018). Even though many SWs are trained in SW, a shortage of employed SWs lingers in many CPSW organisations in South Africa (Calitz, Roux, & Strydom, 2014).

South African leaders have publicly acknowledged the need to retain SWs who are increasingly emigrating for better work conditions and safer work environments (Khumalo, 2016). Former Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, acknowledged that

due to high levels of social issues, namely; poverty, deprivation and HIV/AIDS, SWs' caseloads exceed the norm of 60 cases per worker (Moloi, 2012). Van Westrhenen (2017b) confirmed that due to shortage of skilled SWs, caseloads of SWs are generally high.

Child Protection Social Work (CPSW) is the essential response to social issues such as child abuse and neglect (Van Westrhenen, 2017b; UNICEF, 2016; Simelane, 2015). SWs are employed in healthcare, education, community, justice, correctional services, corporate services, police services, and across domains of private practice, government organisations and Non-Government Organisations (NGO's), (White Paper, 1997). However, there is a shortage of SWs in South Africa and the Western Cape, and the norm for population to Social Worker is 5692:1 (Moloi, 2012).

This section presented the statement of the problem. It discussed universal social issues as it manifests in South Africa today, and the on-going plight of SW under those conditions. The next section discusses the rationale and significance of the study.

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

UNICEF (2016) stated that the lives of children are in danger globally and that more research needs to focus on how to improve CPS delivery. This study contributes to the gap in the body of South African CP research by providing insight into Statutory Child Protection Social Work (SCPSW), as an essential profession, and a critical response to social problems. Crandall, Martin, Hazen and Rolls Reutz (2019) indicated that multidisciplinary collaboration of systems in CP is crucial in SCPSW for effective CPS delivery. Multidisciplinary collaboration is the process of agencies and families working together for the wellbeing of clients (Crandall, Martin, Hazen & Rolls Reutz, 2019). The study explored the SCPSW's interactions with numerous collaborators such as clients, colleagues, and interdepartmental government and non-government collaborators revealing the importance of effective working relationships with the multidisciplinary collaborators of SCPSW.

The study is motivated by the fact that research on the experiences of SCPSWs in South Africa is scarce relative to other nations; ergo research of this nature is an academic and professional imperative (Capri, Kruger & Tomlinson, 2013). The literature review indicates that there is a serious dearth of research in the field of SCPSW in South Africa compared to international research. Far more research is required in South Africa to fill the present gaps in the SCPSW field (Van Westrhenen, 2017).

Maslach (2017) stated that much mental health profession's research has prioritised the perceptions, experiences and needs of clients, but more research is needed to explore the experiences and perceptions of the SWs. The study provided insight into SCPWS perceptions and experiences of their roles by exploring and clarifying the daily roles and responsibilities of SCPSWs and what experiences they perceive as rewarding and challenging. Through the voices of the SCPSWs, the findings of this study shed light on how CPS service delivery can be improved in South Africa. Simelane (2015) and Oliphant (2015) indicated that it is important that prospective CPSW students, organisations, collaborators and government understand challenges that the SW profession is facing today.

This study aims to inform possible SCPSW students and others considering a career in SW so that they can be equipped with the knowledge and training required to make informed decisions when entering the field of SCPSW. This knowledge could inform them about what the challenges and rewards of working in CPSW are. Furthermore, the study aims to inform SCPSWs about what coping mechanisms are required to equip themselves to better handle the challenges of this profession. Pack (2016) stated that SW education and training Institutions have focused much on self-care and coping for clients compared to the self-care and coping of SWs. This study aims to contribute to the body of research concerning the self-care and coping of SCPSWs as recommended by those working in field of CP.

1.4 Context of the study

This study was conducted in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The Western Cape with a population of 5, 823 million, is the second richest province in South Africa, after Gauteng (Stats SA, 2019). Although it is one of the better resourced provinces, it has the highest level of inequality in South Africa (Stats SA, 2019). This shows that there is unequal participation in the economy and a big divide between the rich and poor in South Africa. The City of Cape Town is the oldest municipal entity of the Western Cape (Stats SA, 2019). The population of Cape Town is approximately 3 740 026 (Stats SA, 2019). Cape Towns' race demographics are 42, 4% coloured, 38, 6% black, 15, 7% white, 1, 4% Asian/Indian and 1, 9% other (Stats SA, 2019).

Given the statistics (Stats SA, 2019), it is known that the Western Cape is a well-resourced province compared to other provinces, but it has the second highest crime rates in the country after Gauteng as reported by the government's integrated Poverty Reduction Strategy for the Western Cape Province in 2005. Despite Cape Town being a well-resourced area, it has become known as an area where there has been an increase in related child crimes and murders that has impacted negatively on its population (Crime Stats SA, 2019). SCPSWs in Cape Town are exposed to some of the most dangerous areas in SCPSW and many CP agencies in Cape Town are battling with a shortage of SW manpower to do the work (Van Westrhenen, 2017). This study was conducted at four SCP organizations in the City of Cape Town.

1.5 Research Topic

An exploration into Statutory Social Workers' perceptions and experiences of their Child Protection Work

1.6 Research Questions

- What are the daily roles and responsibilities of Statutory Child Protection Social Workers?

- What experiences are perceived as challenging by Statutory Child Protection Social Workers?
- What experiences are perceived as rewarding by Statutory Child Protection Social Workers?
- What recommendations would Statutory Child Protection Social Workers make for the improvement of Child Protection service delivery?

1.7 Research Objectives

- To explore daily roles and responsibilities Statutory Child Protection Social Workers.
- To ascertain what experiences are perceived as challenging by Statutory Child Protection Social Workers.
- To ascertain what experiences are perceived as rewarding by Statutory Child Protection Social Workers.
- To ascertain what recommendations Statutory Child Protection Social Workers would make for improvement of Child Protection service delivery.

1.8 Clarification of Terms

Perception: Weiten (2016) defines perception as individuals' gathering, management, and clarification of sensory (stimulated by sense organs) input and translating it into something meaningful as experienced from their viewpoint.

Experience: People encounter events or occurrences based on their perceptions from concrete encounter, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Li & Armstrong, 2015).

Social Worker: The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP, 2016) defines a Social Worker in terms of the universal definition of the SW Profession, as follows: it is a practise based profession and academic discipline that supports aspects such as social change and development, cohesion, and upliftment and deliverance of individuals. SW is based on principles of social justice, human rights, collective

responsibilities, and diversity is appreciated. It has foundations in SW theory, social sciences, humanities and indigenous information. SW promotes people and agency collaboration, to address challenges, and to improve wellbeing in society.

Statutory Child Protection Social Work (SCPSW): This is a specialized field of SW directed at enhancement of social functioning of people, families and communities through the application of legislation (Children's Act and Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010). Their role is to provide court-ordered CPS targeted at protecting wellbeing, protection, and rights of children and families through legislative mechanisms (Department of Social Development [DSD], 2013).

Child Protection Services: This is the investigation of cases of child abuse and neglect and the identification, assessment, and provision of services to children and families in an effort to protect children and prevent further abuse, while wherever possible preserving the family (Children's Act and Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010).

1.9 Reflexivity

In research, the researcher has to apply reflexivity, which is self-awareness about how one's own cognitions can influence interactions with humans; this self-awareness pertains to the researcher bias, reactive bias and respondent bias (De Vos et al., 2011). In this study, self-awareness allowed the researcher to remain aware of her own bias and reactions towards respondents and the research topic.

Having worked in SCPSW herself, the researcher remained aware of her own bias or perceptions based on the context of SCPSW, the challenges and rewards of it, and what improvements are desired for the development of the profession and service delivery to clients. The researcher remained mindful of how her own experiences may have affected objectivity in this study. To manage this, the researcher ensured that while creating the interview schedule and its questions and while interviewing, that her own perceptions did not affect data collected; to avoid bias, the words of respondents were recorded in verbatim so that the researcher's own inferences to information mentioned by respondents, were eliminated.

The researcher aimed to remain neutral yet show understanding of information shared by respondents throughout interviews, even though it was difficult not to react and comment on the experiences of the respondents. Five respondents were known to the researcher in a professional capacity prior to the interviews, but the researcher has not worked with them closely prior to the research interaction. To manage their possible bias towards the researcher and their perceptions that the researcher is still employed in SCPSW, the researcher introduced herself as a researcher who used to work in the field of SCPSW but who is no longer employed as such, and currently a researcher in the field of SCPSW. It was made known to the respondents that their identity would remain confidential throughout this study. This assisted the researcher to manage her own reactions to their responses with neutrality.

1.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount to social sciences and human services research; it serves, as guidelines for research particularly when human subjects are under investigation and therefore specific ethical considerations are paramount (De Vos et al., 2011) as outlined next.

1.10.1 Avoidance of Harm to Respondents

Avoidance of harm to respondents means that the researcher pre-empts any psychological or physical harm that could be prevented (De Vos et al., 2011). In this study, there was no foreseen physical harm, but due to a high level of perceived emotions related to Child Protection Work (CPW), the researcher needed to ensure certain aspects were in place to protect respondents from possible emotional harm. The researcher allowed time for briefing respondents before the interviews about possible emotional risk of the study as well as debriefing after the interviews, when required.

Before conducting interviews, the researcher provided information and briefed respondents about the study and answered questions they had about the study (De Vos et al., 2011). Briefing entails the explanation of the study, the use of the recorder and allowing the respondent to ask questions about the study (Babbie 2015; De Vos et al.,

2011). The researcher remained mindful of sensitive questions that could be experienced as personal or sensitive to respondents, and thus phrased questions more carefully where applicable. In the consent form and verbally, respondents were informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at any point.

1.10.2 Debriefing of Respondents

Debriefing are those sessions, after the interview, in which respondents get the chance to work through any possible psychological effects from the study, have any questions answered, and misunderstandings eliminated (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher allowed extra time for debriefing during and after interviews, to allow respondents time to reset after discussing some emotional aspects of the work. They were given the choice to continue or to terminate the session. Respondents would have been referred, if further intervention was required, however no referral was required. Debriefing was done with all respondents to decrease emotional harm and clear any misunderstandings that may have surfaced during interviews.

1.10.3 Informed Consent

Informed consent relates to human rights, specifically ensuring that respondents are informed before consenting to participate in the study, allowing them to make an informed decision about their participation (De Vos et al., 2011). To gain consent for the study from organisations, the researcher sent a letter (Appendix A) outlining the purpose of the study.

Subsequently, the respondents and researcher signed a consent form (Appendix B). Informed consent includes respondents being informed that there is no pressure to participate in the study and that they would be able to opt out of the study at any point without any negative repercussions (De Vos et al., 2011).

1.10.4 Deception of Respondents

Deception in research refers to the researcher deliberately withholding information from respondents or providing inaccurate information to ensure respondents participation (De

Vos et al., 2011). In this study, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to respondents as accurate as possible. Sufficient time was allocated to answer their questions, as precise as possible, about the study.

1.10.5 Violation of Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality

Privacy is protecting that which is usually not for others to see or hear (De Vos et al., 2011). In this study, the researcher aimed to protect privacy of respondents by conducting interviews in a private room allocated by management. It was to protect respondents' right to privacy and so that others did not overhear their responses.

Anonymity is when no one, including the researcher is able to identify any of the respondents' after the study (De Vos et al., 2011). To facilitate anonymity, names and identifying details of respondents were changed at the point of transcription. Respondents selected numbers that served as their identifiers. No one except the researcher had access to recordings and transcriptions that were securely stored electronically and password protected.

Confidentiality is ensuring that the researcher will handle information respondents shared in a confidential manner (De Vos et al., 2011). In this study confidentiality, was contracted at the beginning of each interview and no identifying details were included in transcripts. Even though the researcher had briefly met some respondents in a professional capacity during former CPSW; this did not affect confidentiality.

1.10.6 Actions and Competence of Researchers

A researcher has an ethical obligation to assure respondents that she is capable and sufficiently skilled to undertake research (De Vos et al., 2011). SW values and principles; namely, the right to self-determination and a non-judgmental attitude was applied. The researcher was further able to use her SW skills such as responses to non-verbal communication (being attentive to body language and tone of voice); active listening and interviewing skills; namely, paraphrasing and clarifying. Respondents were ensured that the findings of the study would be treated within the ethical guidelines of the university.

1.10.7 Cooperation with Contributors

Research can be costly and time consuming and it can include commitments to sponsors (De Vos et al., 2011). Taking time off from work to interview respondents was time consuming. The researcher had no specific sponsorship commitments for the study.

1.10.8 Release and Publication of Findings

The researcher has an obligation to report findings scientifically without manipulating data (De Vos et al., 2011). Feedback was presented in the form of a Dissertation, which aimed to be objective and written in an understandable manner that does not reveal any identifying details.

1.11 Conclusion

Chapter one introduced the research. It presented the statement of the problem, rationale and significance of the study, context of the research, research topic, research questions and objectives, clarification of terms, reflexivity and ethical considerations. Chapter Two presents the literature review.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two presents a review of previous studies in the area of CPSW. The review shall frame its discussion starting with roles and responsibilities of SWs, the challenges followed by the rewards of SW. It will include a discussion of previous research findings of SCPW and theory applied to this research.

2.2. Review of the Literature

2.2.1 Roles and Responsibilities of SWs

SCPSW as a specific field in SW requires specific statutory interventions, tasks, and multidisciplinary collaboration as provided by the Children's Act (Children's Act & Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010). However, most SWs' are generally prepared by training institutions for a multitude of roles, responsibilities and interventions to improve the social functioning and quality of life of people (McKlennen, Keys & Day, 2016).

2.2.1.1 CP Interventions

In their work, CPSWs draw from theories, research, models and render services at various intervention levels such as prevention, early intervention, and assessments (DSD, 2013). Prevention and early intervention in SCPSW are actions or services targeted at minimising threats to the child's wellbeing (NAPCAN, 2018; DSD, 2013). When prevention services and early intervention services have been unsuccessful, statutory or tertiary services are required to mitigate the impact of the problems and to assist with restoration of the individual's social functioning and quality of life (McKlennen, Keys & Day, 2016; DSD, 2013). At this stage, the child's quality of life or social functioning can be severely affected; they may require removal from their home environment, by court order, to a more restrictive or protective environment such as alternative care (e.g. foster care) or residential care, subsequently rehabilitation and on-going care services are

rendered (DSD, 2013; Children's Act, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010). Reunification and aftercare services are aimed at client independence and optimum societal effectiveness in a less restrictive environment and; it assists with reintegration into the family and community environment after separation (McKlennen, Keys & Day, 2016; DSD, 2013).

2.2.1.2 SW Tasks

SWs' roles generally include tasks such as appointments with clients, responding to crises, collaboration with other service providers, advocating for victims of abuse, individual counselling, family counselling, and couple enhancement (Payne, 2018; DSD, 2013). They offer practical assistance as agents of social control to assist with the empowering of clients in order to enhance their social capacity, wellbeing and connection with resources to improve their circumstances: they advocate for vulnerable people and the improvement of relationships between people and resource systems, and they contribute to policy development and modification (Payne, 2018). Specifically in SCPSW, these tasks are related to statutory tasks such as removal of children from harmful environments, educating parents about their children's rights and the parents' rights and responsibilities, court work and collaborations with the multidisciplinary collaborators in CP (Children's Act & Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010). .

2.2.1.3 Multidisciplinary Collaboration with Service Providers

Multidisciplinary or interagency collaboration is the process of agencies and families working together, sharing resources and efforts for improved and effective service delivery to children (Crandal, Martin, Hazen & Rolls Reutz, 2019). The various stakeholders of CPW are not only the family and agency, but also the children's court, child and youth care centres, health care providers, children's' home, non-government agencies, parenting centres and schools (DSD, 2013; Children's Act & Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010). To be successful and for optimal service delivery, it is important that multidisciplinary collaboration between stakeholders in CP are built on shared objectives, mutual respect for each other together with clearly outlined roles and

responsibilities of each collaborator (DSD, 2013; White Paper, 1997). The challenges as experienced in SW are discussed next.

2.2.2 The challenges of SW

This section discusses the challenges of SW generally and in CP and SCPSW with children.

2.2.2.1 Staff Turnover

A huge challenge in SW is high staff turnover (Schelbe, Radey & Panisch, 2017). Staff turnover in SW has been an on-going problem in South Africa where SW had been a scarce skill (Khumalo, 2016; Calitz, Roux, & Strydom, 2014). United States research by McKlennen, Keys and Day (2016) indicated that the reasons to why SWs change jobs include aspects such as high caseloads, low company morale with few opportunities for growth, concerns for safety, burnout, inadequate supervision, low salaries and too many regulations (McKlennen, Keys & Day, 2016). In South Africa specifically, SCPSWs are challenged by additional aspects such as working in dangerous areas, lack of resources, emotional exhaustion and public criticism (Van Westhreenen, 2017).

2.2.2.2 Public Criticism

The media and the public's viewpoints or criticism of SWs has been widely experienced over many years as a tremendous challenge for all SWs (Schelbe, Radey, & Panisch, 2017). Furthermore, SWs especially those in SCPSW remain challenged by the pressure of cases in the media, where SCPSWs were publicly held accountable and publicly blamed for child abuse, neglect and child deaths instead of keeping carers accountable for the safeguarding of their children (Davies & Duckett, 2016; Hyslop, 2013).

2.2.2.3 Collaboration Challenges

Research by Heenan and Birrell (2018) reported conflicts experienced by SWs in the British healthcare system such as: disempowerment of their SW authority for instance in the event where there is pressure to discharge a client who is physically ready, but not psychosocially ready for discharge; the strains between professional viewpoints, conflicts and misunderstanding of roles, work demands, lack of adequate financial compensation, and the setup of the work environment, were found to contribute to stress and burnout for SWs (Heenan & Birrell, 2018).

Leigh (2014) reported on collaboration challenges experienced specifically by SCPSWs namely; lack of recognition received, denigration from collaborators, and opposition experiences affecting a sense of powerlessness. International research by Han, Carnochan and Austin (2008) reported about the powerlessness experienced by CPSWs in the CP system when they experience collaborative challenges with courts.

According to Han, Carnochan and Austin (2008), SCPSWs are universally characterized with aspects such as challenges in statutory procedures and reliance on courts for guidance and authority, significant amount of conflict between court officials and SCPSWs over dependence on young, inexperienced, graduate SWs, and the challenge of a lack of good practice and expert service provision (Han, Carnochan & Austin, 2008).

2.2.2.4 Caseloads

Casework SWs each carry and manage a caseload (McKlennen, Keys & Day, 2016). International research by Renner, Porter and Prester (2009) found that CPSWs are experiencing challenging and high caseloads. United States researchers, Yamatani, Engel, and Spjeldnes (2009) stated that when caseloads are unmanageable it can cause SWs to make mistakes and this could impede the safety and wellbeing of children.

According to South African Norms and Standards for SW, a practitioner's caseload in CP should be up to 60 cases (DSD, 2013). South African researchers, Naidoo and Kasiram (2006) explored the working conditions of South African SWs in the United Kingdom [UK]

and found that South African CPSWs appear to manage on average approximately 80 to 120 cases compared to the approximately 20 cases which are considered extremely draining in the UK. Naidoo and Kasiram (2006) found that lower caseload is more manageable and allows for more in-depth interventions. This is in line with findings by Weaver, Chang, Clark and Rhee (2007) who listed factors such as high caseloads, low company morale and few opportunities for growth along with other aspects, as reasons why helping professionals change jobs. Chiller and Crisp (2012) later found that those same aspects researched by Weaver, Chang, Clark and Rhee (2007) could lead to negative organizational cultures, poor staff morale and deterioration of peer networks.

2.2.2.5 Resources

International research by Bertotti (2016) reported on the lack of resources experienced by CPSWs. Renner, Porter and Prester (2009) mentioned that CPSWs are dependent on resources to carry out their interventions but that the lack of resources to do the work remains a challenge for SWs. This is supported by Oliphant (2015) who reported that at the first SW Indaba held in Durban, Kwazulu Natal, in 2015, about 1500 SWs from various sectors (government, NGO, private) stated their concerns about a lack of essential resources required for adequate service delivery. Mugwagwa (2011) and Van Westhreenen (2017) supported these findings by reporting that CPSWs in South Africa SWs do not have the necessary resources to do the work.

2.2.2.6 Salaries

Research by Renner, Porter and Prester (2009) reported that SW salaries remain low and according to SWs, it does not adequately cover all their living expenses. South African research by Simelane (2015) acknowledged SWs generally in South Africa had been underpaid historically; that compared to other helping professions such as medicine, psychology, psychiatry, nursing; the SW profession in South Africa remains neglected and underpaid.

2.2.2.7 Safety

While providing services to the clients in communities and in their offices, CPSWs' face concerns for personal safety (Renner, Porter & Prester, 2009). South African research (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015; Petersen, 2013) reported that there is ongoing safety challenges that are linked to gang violence and the effects of poverty in South African communities that impacts on SWs working with children in these communities. Safety challenges include SWs challenges with non-cooperative clients (Nhedz & Makofane, 2015).

2.2.2.8 Burnout

Burnout is the emotional exhaustion experienced by SWs due to ongoing exposure to stress and trauma, which can result negatively on the worker's mental and physical wellbeing; numerous aspects contribute to emotional exhaustion or burnout for SWs in CPSW (McFadden, Campbell & Taylor, 2014). These are aspects such as ongoing stressful working conditions namely extensive administration, long work days, not enough opportunity for growth and futile bureaucracy (McFadden, Campbell & Taylor, 2014). Graham and Shier (2010) reported earlier on more aspects that lead to burnout, namely; unrealistic expectations, social undermining, role conflict, emotional disagreement and high caseloads.

Effects of burnout experienced by SWs generally are mental health challenges such as depression, stress, anxiety, and this could lead to negative job attitudes, and resignations (Probst, 2014; Capri, Kruger & Tomlinson, 2013). The challenge of separating from clients' painful experiences may trigger personal issues for SWs that can affect re-traumatisation, or continuously experiencing harmful over identification with the clients (Probst, 2014; Capri, Kruger & Tomlinson, 2013).

South African SWs across all fields of SW reported their need for psychosocial support as they often face traumatic work; this includes being able to have support with dealing with personal and professional emotional challenges through psychological and trauma counselling (Oliphant, 2015; Mugwagwa, 2011).

With some of the challenges of SW now covered, the SWs' perceived rewards of CPSW are discussed next.

2.2.3 The Rewards of SW

This section discusses the rewards of SW generally and in CP and SCPSW with children.

2.2.3.1 Helping people and contributing to change

Various research has stated the rewarding aspects of SCPSW, namely; contributing to change, helping vulnerable people and making a difference in the lives of children and families (Truter & Fouche, 2015; Schmid, 2013; Chiller & Crisp, 2012; Hartley, 2012). Research by Collins, (2008) indicated that SCPSWs reported about the most rewarding aspects of the work experienced by them, namely; having interesting, engaging and varied work tasks, helping people, rendering attuned support, self-development and feeling highly satisfied that they have contributed to positive change in the lives of others. This is supported by Jessen (2010) who found that the most rewarding aspects of SW in various fields of SW includes SWs' feelings of accomplishment from quality services rendered to others and the ability to solve challenging problems in their work.

2.2.3.2 Motivation to do SW

Thomas (2013) reported that motivation to do SW and to contribute to positive change in the lives of others is inspired by an internal resource known as a person's empathy for others. It has been reported on by Rawlins (2013) as well that SWs generally enter the profession due to a deep desire to help others and to make a difference in communities.

Earlier research by Lloyd, King and Chenoweth (2002) suggested that those who have chosen the SW profession could have an underlying wish to work through their own personal difficulties or early life adversity. They argued that those workers might do this by helping others but that this need to be helpful could easily result in over involvement, which may contribute to stress or burnout known as compassion fatigue. Conversely,

Olson and Royse (2006) found that early life adversity was not the general influence for a choice of career in SW but that SWs who reported personal experiences with mental health (in their own families) that contributed to participants' in depth knowledge and education or high rates of mental health awareness.

Once social workers have chosen SW as a profession, there are reasons that motivates them to continue working as SWs as discussed next.

2.2.3.3 Motivation to continue in SW

Chiller and Crisp (2012) reported on aspects that motivate SWs in general to remain in their work, namely; self-awareness, a sense of perspective, having a strong professional identity, a sense of humour, capacity to acknowledge and respond to the psychological impact of the work, clear professional and personal boundaries. According to De Castella and Simmonds (2013) some SW's in general are motivated because of religious beliefs, believing that it was their calling from God to be a SW, which had a big influence on their decision to serve in the child welfare field.

Jessen (2010) as well as Pösö and Forsman (2013) reported that some of the rewarding aspects that motivate CPSWs to continue contributing to positive change in children's lives are rewarding aspects of utilizing and applying CP legislation according to a professional code of ethics. This regulates their relations and interventions with clients to make that difference in children's lives (Pösö & Forsman, 2013).

Respondents in Mugwagwa's (2011) study mentioned their appreciation for guidance and support provided by supervisors and colleagues who played a motivating factor for them continuing in the profession. Despite challenges experienced by CPSWs, many have remained loyal to their work for many years (Mugwagwa, 2011).

2.2.3.4 Compassion Satisfaction

Wagaman, Geiger, Shockley and Segal (2015) found that many SWs generally have experienced personal growth and compassion satisfaction from their work. Compassion

satisfaction is the feeling of fulfilment or reward felt from helping others, and it includes having positive relationships with those in the work environment such as colleagues (Wagaman, Geiger, Shockley, & Segal, 2015; Stamm, 2010).

According to Wagaman, Geiger, Shockley and Segal (2015) compassion satisfaction can be a buffer against burnout among SWs. Graham and Shier (2010) provided further insight to aspects that lead to compassion satisfaction in SW, such as finding meaning in their work, experiencing career growth, practicing SW perspectives and values, having role clarity, being reflective on personal challenges and valuing their identity as SWs.

2.2.3.5 The Value of Supervision in SW

SW supervision is a mandatory requirement in general SW practice (Engelbrecht (2019). It is a statutory requirement informed by SW policy such as the SACSSP and the Children's Act No 38 of 2005 (Engelbrecht (2019). SW supervisors and SWs deal with stressful work situations and thus need adequate support resources to deal with the stress (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). The three main functions of SW supervision are education, administration and support carried out in a constructive relationship between supervisor and supervisee as its main goal of effective service delivery to clients (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). If there is no adequate support available, the SW service may be impaired and lead to agency ineffectiveness (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). When workers perceive their supervisor as supportive, they are more likely to be more considerate of the pressure on their supervisors and that supportive supervision thus influences them to be committed to their organisation and teams (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014).

International research by Jessen (2010), found that SWs reported that being valued, praised and receiving positive feedback from their colleagues in the team, and supervisors led to increased job satisfaction. These SWs reported that this support from their supervisors and colleagues contributed to their increased motivation in their work (Jessen, 2010).

2.2.4 Coping and Self-care

Coping is described as behavioural strategies applied to manage stress (Weiten, 2016). Coping is crucial, as stress has serious health consequences ranging from mental health issues to physical health problems for people (Sigelman & Rider, 2014; Collins, 2008). SW is widely acknowledged as a demanding and stressful profession and thus the nature of SW requires the necessary coping skills and resilience to deal with the stressful aspect of the work (Jessen, 2010).

Self-care is a coping strategy in SW and it is crucial because SWs are exposed to stress and trauma continuously in their work (Pack, 2016). A self-care strategy for SWs is to be mindful of how they are affected psychologically and thus to know how to cope with it and where to find support (Pack, 2016). It is essential that employers support the health of SWs (Pack, 2016). According to Hartley (2012) for self-care, SWs require thoughtful balancing of empathy and care as well as compassion whilst keeping their SW practice and wellbeing at heart. Therefore, it is important that those working in the helping profession practice aspects such as mindfulness (self-awareness) and self-care as it improves resilience, which leads to increased coping with a demanding and stressful job (Killian, 2008).

Other self-care factors for SW stress include acquiring efficient coping skills, social support, quality time with significant others, self-esteem, resilience, hardiness, individual control, peer support, supervision, spirituality and exercise (De Castella & Simmonds, 2013; Killian, 2008). Research by Conrad and Kellar-Gunter (2006) reported that good working relationships improve job satisfaction.

Later research by Lopez, Pedrotti, and Snyder, (2018) concur that protective characteristics for psychosocial resilience in people include psychological health, intelligence, personality, spirituality, capabilities, creativity, sense of humour, relation to others, close and nurturing family and friendship relationships, and connectedness to community resources.

2.2.5 Differences in SWs' Perceptions

The perceptions of SWs may differ due to the subjective nature of perceptions (Collins, 2008). According to Pösö and Forsman (2013); novice, specialist and experienced CPSWs had differences in their perceptions about what they found rewarding in SW; the latter perceived their work as independent expert work which include ample prospects to contribute to change in children's lives by being focused on child abuse, neglect and the child's wishes. Whilst novice SWs were more concerned with adhering to formal work protocol of CPSW. Difference in CPSWs' perceptions may also be attributed to what experiences individuals perceive as rewarding and challenging (Forsman & Pösö, 2013).

The theoretical foundations of the study are discussed next.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is Motivational Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

2.3.1 Motivation Theory

Motivation is the forces that act on or within a person to initiate and direct behaviours to reach goals or to perform (Weiten, 2016). A review of classical literature on motivation is Herzberg's (1966) Two Factor Theory, and Maslow (1943) hierarchy of needs. According to Pardee (1990) it is important to understand Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs when applying Two Factor theory as these theories overlap in understanding motivation.

2.3.1.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of fundamental human needs forms a basis on which Two Factor Theory (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959) is built. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy proposed that an individual's basic needs must be satisfied before higher needs can be satisfied. Such needs impact the development of a healthy personality (Maslow, 1943). For basic healthy functioning there are five fundamental human needs that must

be met for individuals, namely; (1) physiological needs such as healthy and nutritious food and drink, sex, and home (2) safety and security needs, such as living and working in a safe and secure environment, (3) social needs such as belongingness and love; this includes decent support networks and affiliation to other people, (4) esteem needs such as achievement and recognition in school and career, self-esteem and respect and ultimately (5) self-actualisation including realising one's potential, growth, the need for self-expression and fulfilment which can include knowledge and understanding.

Understanding Two Factor Theory and the aspects that relates to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction related to basic human needs is applied in this study with SCPWS to ascertain what aspects of the work meet their needs and how it contributes to their SCPSW satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In this study, the hierarchy of needs provides a foundation of the aspects required for the respondents relating to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction of their SCPSW work as explained in Two Factor Theory next.

2.3.1.2 Two Factor Theory

Two Factor Theory (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959) was originally pioneered by Herzberg, but later developed by Herzberg and other researchers such as Kalleberg in Jessen (2010), and Pardee (1990). This theory is also known as Herzberg's Motivation – Hygiene Theory or Dual Factor Theory (1966).

According to Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) people have fundamental needs that have to be satisfied and that there are specific aspects in the work environment necessary to meet people's needs that influences a person's job satisfaction. Two Factor Theory avers that there are distinct aspects that satisfy and dissatisfy people in their work (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). These aspects were grouped as Motivators or Intrinsic factors, and Hygiene or Extrinsic Factors of work (Pardee 1990; Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959).

Motivators on intrinsic aspects are factors that motivate the worker (Kalleberg in Jessen 2010; Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). It was explained by Pardee (1990) that these factors are rooted in positive and intrinsic aspects of the work itself and provides

long-term positive job satisfaction. The intrinsic aspects of the work were listed as; achievement, recognition, interesting work, increased responsibility and advancement, and growth (Herzberg, Mathapo, Wiener, & Wiesen, 1974).

In intrinsic aspects of work, according to Herzberg (1966), conditions for job satisfaction can be created when there are opportunities for achievement, when workers' contributions are recognized, creating work that suits workers' skills and abilities, providing each team's workers with sufficient responsibility, the provision of opportunities to grow and move up in the organisation and in providing ongoing training and development for the workers (Herzberg, 1966).

Hygiene factors are extrinsic factors in the work environment listed as; company policy, relationships with colleagues and supervision, working conditions, salary, status, benefits and security (Kalleberg in Jessen 2010; Pardee, 1990; Herzberg, 1966). To eliminate causes of dissatisfaction, company policy has to be adequate, there have to be relevant support from supervisors and good working relationships with others such as colleagues, working conditions have to be conducive, wages are to be competitive, the job status must be meaningful and job security has to be present (Herzberg, 1966). When Hygiene factors are absent or inadequate, the worker may experience a sense of dissatisfaction at work and when it is present it does not create motivation or satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966). Dissatisfaction can be prevented by improvement in Hygiene factors, but these improvements would not alone provide motivation (Herzberg, 1966). According to Herzberg (1966), to motivate an employee an employer needs to create circumstances to make the worker feel fulfilled at work.

In this study, Two Factor Theory is applied as it provides a foundation of the aspects required for the respondents relating to what aspects contribute to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction of their SCPSW and its systems.

2.3.2 Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) formulated the bioecological model of development to illustrate how nature and nurture collaborate to produce development. In his view, the

developing person, with biological and psychological subsystems, is rooted in a range of larger environmental systems that collaborate with one another reciprocally, and the person over time to impact development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An ecological systems perspective is an abstraction of General Systems Theory (Johnson & Yanca, 2010). The ecological systems perspective is applicable in SW as it combines ecosystems and strength-based approaches together with diversity proficient practice to empower change applied to diverse social systems such as individuals, groups, families and communities (Payne, 2018; Johnson & Yanca, 2010). The ecological systems theory perspective reviews the multidimensional aspects of a person's life and it considers the bio psychosocial factors in their life that may influence the person's behaviour (Payne, 2018).

Within ecological systems theory a person is understood to be situated within systems embedded within bigger systems such as their Microsystem (immediate setting in which the person functions), Mesosystem (Connections between microsystems in the immediate environment), Exosystem (Indirect environment, not experienced directly), Macrosystem (Social and Cultural conditions), and Chronosystem (changes over time) (Sigelman & Rider, 2014).

When elements in a system shift, it affects the system itself and the other systems connected to it, such as social problems that contaminate the social environment and decrease the chances of transactional adaptation and thus a person has to sustain a good fit for their environment (Payne, 2018). The person in environment perspective in SW supports the understanding of sustaining a good fit for the environment as it is a guiding practice principle that emphasises the importance of understanding the person and their behaviour in their living environment or context (Greene, 2017).

Human conditions are best understood in respect to the interactions between people rather than in respect of persons in isolation (Beckett & Horner, 2014). According to Beckett and Horner (2014) SW cannot be understood or promoted in a vacuum separated from social and political influences, as it is not the only profession responsible for CP and services to children, families and communities. In practice, SWs apply the person-in-environment perspective to their CPW to understand the child based on his or her social functioning, psychological health, physical health, and environmental aspects that can

assist the Social Worker to modify interventions to appropriately address areas for improvement (Hutchinson, 2011). In this research, this theory fuels understanding of the CPSWs in their environment and, how the Social Worker perceives his or her internal and external systems through their experiences and perceptions of their work.

The theories presented in this study incorporate components of both Motivation Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory. These theories provide an understanding of aspects perceived by the CPSWs that may motivate satisfaction or dissatisfaction in their work.

2.4 Application of Policy and Legislation

The main CP Policy and legislation presented in this study are the Children's Act (Children's Act & Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010) the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights, and the Framework for Social Welfare Services in South Africa (DSD, 2013).

The Children's Act (Children's Act and Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010) states that all major decisions and actions concerning children must respect, fulfil, promote and protect the rights of the person as set out in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. The Constitution is the cornerstone for democracy for all South Africans and it includes the right to dignity, as well as the right to equality.

The Children's Act (Children's Act & Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010) states that national norms and standards of SCP includes prevention and early intervention programmes, child assessments, therapeutic programmes, family reunification and integration, integration into alternative care, adoption services, and foster care services (Children's Act & Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010).

The Framework for Social Welfare Services in South Africa (DSD, 2013) is the product of the development and consideration of the collaborators involved in the evolving social services since the implementation of policies namely, the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (1994), and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter two presented the literature review. The review framed its discussion around roles and responsibilities of SWs, the perceived challenges, and the rewards of SW. It included a discussion of previous research findings of SCP research and applicable theory, policy and legislation to this research.

The following chapter presents the methodology of this research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three discusses the methodology of the research. It outlines the research design, population and sampling, data collection approach, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research design

Research design is the planning component of scientific inquiry (Babbie, 2015). A qualitative research design focuses on perceptions and experiences of respondents and how they make sense of their lives; it allows for deeper understanding and meaning of social phenomena studied (De Vos et al., 2011). A qualitative approach allowed rich data about the respondents' daily challenging and rewarding aspects of their work to be collected in this study.

According to De Vos et al. (2011), a qualitative approach is applied to understand the meaning respondents attach to their everyday lives. A qualitative approach was applied in this study as it allowed for the thoughts, feelings and viewpoints of the respondents to be explored through in-depth interviews so that deeper and new data could be generated, which confirmed links and comparisons to existing SW literature and theory.

3.3 Population and Sampling

In this study, the research population was SCPSWs working at government and non-government organisations in Cape Town, Western Cape. The sample is drawn from this population. According to De Vos et al., (2011), population and sampling in research refers to inclusion of all elements that meet certain characteristics for inclusion in the study as explained in the sampling technique, sampling characteristics and procedure next.

3.3.1 Sampling Technique

A non-probability sampling method was applied in this study. A purposive non-probability sampling method is most applicable to a study with a qualitative foundation (De Vos et al., 2011). Purposive sampling is applied when the researcher does not have a list of the known population; the researcher selects a sample based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, elements of the population and the nature of the research aims as to be able to select the sample for the research (De Vos et al., 2011).

In this study, the sample was selected from government and NGO SCPSW organisations as it is the domain where SCPSWs are employed. Inclusion criteria for respondents to partake in the study were that only SCPSWs registered with the SACSSP could partake in this study. Only SCPSWs with any amount of SCPSW experience were allowed to partake in this study as they could provide the specific data output required to critically answer this study's research questions.

3.3.2 Sample Characteristics

A sample of 19 CPSWs was selected (see Table 1). Respondents were males and females of various ages and from various backgrounds working at SCPSW organisations. Their SW experience ranged from one month to 26 years. There was no specific amount of experience needed to be included in the study however, a SW Degree was a compulsory sample characteristic of each respondent to be included in the study.

3 3.3 Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedure in research methodology is the manner that the sample is accessed (De Vos et al., 2011). The sample of SWs was accessed by first contacting management at the SCP organisations, where the study was conducted. A letter was sent to the organisations requesting permission to conduct the research within their organisations and to enquire about the application process for the research (Appendix A). Four of the five organisations responded to the request made for this study

Once management had granted permission for this study it then conveyed all relevant information to its SWs requesting willing participants on a voluntary basis. Subsequently, respondents indicated via email to the researcher their availability for the interviews that were scheduled with respondents. According to De Vos et al., (2011) such a voluntary approach enhance research when respondents know that they are not forced to participate in research and thus may be more motivated to participate in the study (De Vos et al., 2011).

3.4 Data Collection Approach

The data collection of the study will be discussed in terms of the data collection method, data collection tool, and data recording.

3.4.1 Data Collection Method

The researcher used interviews as a method of data collection for this study and not focus groups. One-to-one interviews are a common qualitative research data collection method and allow the researcher to hear respondents' viewpoints and meaning they attach to their experiences (De Vos et al., 2011). For this specific study this method provided rich data which generated the findings in this study. The duration of interviews was 40 minutes to an hour and a half, depending on respondents' answers. These interviews were conducted in a private room at various SCPSW organisations where respondents were employed.

All interviews were conducted in English. All respondents were asked about their language preference for the interviews and all chose to respond in English regardless of their home language. This enabled the researcher to ensure that essential elements of the study were explored within a conversational dialogue manner (De Vos et al., 2011).

3.4.2 Data Collection Tool

The researcher employed a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix C) to serve as a guide for the data collection (De Vos et al., 2011). This semi-structured interview

schedule included open-ended questions that gave respondents the opportunity to express themselves, and to provide in depth information generously. This provided data rich information about the aspects explored in the study (De Vos et al., 2011). The interviews started with demographic questions in order to build rapport and trust with respondents. Once rapport was established with respondents, questions of a more sensitive nature were asked.

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main study. Pilot studies are carried out to ensure the success of the research by which the researcher can orientate her- or himself for the research (De Vos et al., 2011). A Social Worker with prior SCPSW experience was interviewed as a pilot for actual data collection. She was able to provide information required for the study due to her CPW knowledge and experience allowing the researcher to familiarise herself with the interview schedule and protocols, and make any changes required before the actual interviewing process began. The pilot interview was not included in the reporting of this study's findings.

3.4.3 Data Recording

An audio recording device was employed to capture the spoken words of respondents with all the expression of meaning carried by tone, tension and silence. Recording allowed information to be recorded comprehensively; it frees the researcher to focus on the interview with the respondent instead of making notes (De Vos et al., 2011). Due to the voice recording, the researcher could focus on non-verbal cues and physical expressions of respondents by not being limited to manually recording the interviews.

It was anticipated by the researcher that a recording device could be distracting to the respondent and that the presence of it could affect information shared by respondents, thus it was placed out of sight of respondents.

Recordings also allowed the researcher to transcribe interviews after they were conducted for accurate and in-depth data analysis (Babbie, 2015; De Vos et al., 2011). Consent for recording the interviews should be gained from respondents (De Vos et al., 2011). Consent was gained from respondents at the start of interviews.

3.5 Data Analysis

A qualitative data analysis approach was applied to the study. Qualitative data analysis converts information from data collection into findings and this process involves organizing the raw information, sifting, finding meaning of and identifying specific patterns related to the study's objectives (De Vos et al., 2011). In qualitative data analysis, the links between categories and themes are explored with the aim of understanding the research phenomenon (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

In this study, the researcher analysed the data as follows by applying Tesch's (2013) eight data analysis steps. These steps can overlap (Tesch, 2013). Additionally, NVIVO (2012) which is a contemporary computer software programme was applied to electronically complete some of Tesch's steps to code data. Competency for the use of computer software such as NVIVO is required. This is as coding too much or too little information or creating too many or too little categories can affect the outcome of the findings (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). The researcher read literature written by Bazeley and Jackson (2013) for a better understanding of the NVIVO computer programme.

- The researcher read all transcripts carefully to get a sense of the data collected, and made notes about ideas as it emerged according to Tesch's (2013) first step.
- The researcher selected one interview, and read it to find meaning in the information, writing down ideas as it came to mind, according to Tesch's (2013) second step.
- After going through all transcripts, the researcher arranged similar topics into groups, major topics, and unique topics and left-over information according to Tesch's (2013) third step. The transcripts were imported into NVIVO which electronically expedites and simplifies data processing by using a system to colour code themes and patterns as opposed to more conventional manual methods, which relied on the use of colour pencils to code themes and patterns as it emerged from the raw data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Within NVIVO, the researcher electronically coded the data using themes, categories and subcategories, which emerged. The researcher re-read transcripts by reading the shortest, longest, and most interesting and less interesting, and made notes (Tesch, 2013).

- The list was taken back to the data to abbreviate topics as codes for appropriate topics, according to Tesch's (2013) fourth step. The researcher re-thought labelling and included some new categories and subcategories that emerged under one label.
- The researcher found the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into categories according to Tesch's (2013) fifth step. In this step, the list of categories was reduced by grouping topics that related to each other.
- A final decision was made on the abbreviation for each category, according to Tesch's (2013) sixth step.
- This was followed by a tabular representation to depict themes, categories and subcategories that formed the framework (Table 2) for writing up the data analysis and findings, according to Tesch's (2013) seventh step.
- Tesch's (2013) eight step is applied when a study's framework needs further revision and recoding. This was applied in the final stages of the study's framework to aid a logical flow to the framework.

Actual quotes of respondents should be utilised within the discussion of findings (De Vos et al., 2011). In this study, quotes were compared and contrasted with research presented in the literature review, and a critical explanation of the findings was advocated in the discussion of these findings.

3.6 Data verification

Social and human service professions conduct research by employing four criteria for data verification, namely; credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (De Lincoln & Guba, in Vos et al., 2011).

Credibility in qualitative research refers the internal validity, wherein the aim is to show that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the topic was accurately identified and described (De Vos et al., 2011). The strength of the qualitative study that aims to investigate an issue or describe the situation, process a social group or a pattern of behaviors is its validity (De Vos et al., 2011). A thorough description showing the complexity of variables and behaviors will be so embedded with the data produced from the setting that it could only be valid; within the parameters of that setting or context of

the population, and theoretical framework the research will be valid. The researcher has to clearly state the parameters, place and boundaries around the study (De Vos et al., 2011).

In this study a background is described about the problem and the context of the study is described. To increase credibility of this research, a qualitative process and not quantitative method was employed to gather and analyse data. The responses of the respondents were recorded. This was so that the responses of the respondents, their description about behaviors could be accurately identified and reflected in the discussion of the findings and the respondents' actual quotes were used to verify the findings of this study.

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings of a study can be replicated in other contexts, places and groups using different respondents (De Vos et al., 2011). As this research applied a qualitative approach and was compared with similar research contexts in addition to the researcher reporting the findings in a research document, it is deemed that transferability of this study is highly likely. The findings of this study revealed aspects that the respondents' experienced as challenging and rewarding and these findings are transferable to experiences of other SW respondents in former studies or possible future studies. The findings of this study revealed that what the study's respondents reported in terms of their challenges with aspects such as case load, safety, support are also experienced universally by social workers not only in CPW but in general SW.

Confirmability is linked to the notion of transferability and it summarizes the usual perception of objectivity; in addition it places emphasis on the data evaluation and the quality thereof (De Vos et al., 2011). It is about whether the findings of this study could be confirmed by another study and whether the findings are a product of the focus of inquiry and not the biases of the researcher. (De Vos et al., 2011). The literature review echoed findings from former research studies which were confirmed or validated in this study. Numerous international and local research confirmed that SWs universally are challenged with aspects such as poor working conditions, namely concern for safety, lack of resources, high caseloads, poor salaries, and collaborative challenges that can be frustrating. This study validated or confirmed as well that many SCPSWs experience their

work as rewarding by feeling motivated to help people, and that they are motivated to continue in their work when they see positive changes.

Dependability refers to the degree to which it can be certain that the outcome of the study can be replicated, if the study is conducted in similar contexts with respondents similar to those in this study (De Vos et al., 2011). Repeating the study in a similar context would yield similar results. However, replication can be a problem as the speculation is that this qualitative research in the social sciences is not concrete but based on the subjectivity of respondents. In addition, due to limited local research on this subject matter, the researcher drew many parallels with the literature of research conducted internationally in similar contexts of this research. This ensures that the research could remain constant and sound over time.

Qualitative research is bound to these criteria regardless of its inherent limitations discussed next.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

In research, limitations are unforeseen issues, which impacted a study, or could have impacted a study if not managed accordingly in the moment (De Vos et al., 2011). Limitations are possible in even the most cautiously structured research and therefore have to be outlined (De Vos et al., 2011).

There were delays in the initial stages of this study. This was due to specific company procedures and protocol that had to be followed with regards to research at SCP organisations. This was time consuming and affected the timeline of the research, as the researcher had to wait for approval from the organisations' management before interviews with respondents could be arranged.

The researcher aimed to interview 20 respondents however only 19 respondents contributed to the study. This was due to one respondent being absent due to unforeseen illness. Even though this is a sufficient number of respondents for the research, it could be seen as a limitation of the research. Due to issues, namely, staff shortages,

emergencies, urgent commitments, statutory CP responsibilities, court work, sick leave and absenteeism, it was not easy to replace respondents for the study.

Respondent 11 could only commit to half of the interview due to work commitments. Thus, respondent 11's responses were limited.

A recording device could be a limitation itself (De Vos et al., 2011). During three interviews, the recording device briefly stopped recording and it had to be reset by the researcher. Very little information was lost. The researcher asked the respondent to pause a moment while the recorder was restarted.

Another limitation of the study was office space and privacy for some interviews at the organisations. Colleagues of respondents who needed to discuss work matters interrupted two interviews, but fortunately, it was towards the end of the interviews, and no sensitive information was overheard. Respondents informed them that they would be available shortly as this was during the latter part of interviews.

Researcher bias is a limitation that can affect the data analysis (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher has had contact with some respondents on a professional level in the past. While being a Social Worker herself with CP experience, it could be an advantage and limitation to the research, as respondents could have perceived the researcher in liaison with employers and thus could have minimised information about their challenges.

3.8 Conclusion

Chapter three outlined the methodology of the research. It outlined the research design, population and sampling, data collection approach, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four presents the discussion and findings of the study.

Chapter Four: Presentation and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings of this study. A demographic profile of respondents and framework for analysis is presented before discussion of the findings.

4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic profiles of respondents are provided below.

	Gender	Age	Home Language	Race	Qualifications	CPW experience	Present caseload
1	Female	30	Xhosa	Black	BSW, University of Fort Hare	7 years	40
2	Female	52	Xhosa, English	Black	BSW; Currently studying towards MPhil, UWC	7 years	100 plus
3	Female	31	Afrikaans, English	Coloured	BSW, UWC	6 years	52
4	Male	43	Xhosa, English	Black	BSW, UWC	14 years	90
5	Female	48	Afrikaans	White	BA, Stellenbosch; MSW, pending PHD	10 years	110
6	Female	31	English	Coloured	BASW, UWC	7 years	17
7	Female	26	English	Coloured	BSW, UCT	4 years	50-60
8	Male	52	English	Coloured	BSW, UWC	6 years	71
9	Female	45	Xhosa	Black	BSW, UNISA	1 Month	unknown
10	Female	29	English	Coloured	BASW, UWC	6 years	45
11	Female	24	English	White	BSW, Stellenbosch	3 years	80
12	Female	24	Afrikaans	White	BSW, Stellenbosch	2 years	70
13	Female	26	English	White	BSW, Stellenbosch	3 years	147
14	Female	24	English	Coloured	BASW,UWC	1 year	166
15	Male	29	Xhosa/ English	Black	BSW, UCT	7 years	30
16	Female	27	Afrikaans	Coloured	BSW, UNISA	4 years	59
17	Female	56	Xhosa	Black	BSW,UWC	25 years	60 plus
18	Female	35	Afrikaans	Coloured	BASW, UWC	10 years	78
19	Female	51	English	White	BSW, UCT	26 years	40

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Table 1 depicts the sample of 19 CPSWs; 16 females and three males; aged between 24 years and 56 years. Six respondents identified themselves as Black, seven Coloured and six White. All respondents preferred to respond in English even though English was an additional language to 11 respondents.

Respondents' SW experience ranged from one month to 26 years. A SW Degree was a compulsory sample characteristic of each respondent to be included in the study.

Eight respondents graduated from the University of the Western Cape (UWC), followed by four from University of Stellenbosch, three from University of Cape Town (UCT), two from University of South Africa (UNISA) and one from University of Fort Hare. One respondent has completed a Master's Degree and two are in the process of postgraduate studies (one masters and one doctorate).

The caseloads (in Table 1) were the cases of respondents at the time of the interview. Their caseloads ranged from 30 cases to 166 cases. Only one respondent's caseload could not be presented, as she could not recall her exact caseload.

Next, the framework of analysis presents main themes, categories and subcategories that emerged from the data analysis.

4.3 Framework of Analysis

Themes	Categories	Subcategories
The context of the work as perceived by SCPSWs	Main social issues addressed in SCPSW	Types of interventions applied to main social issues
		Perceptions of statutory interventions
	Daily tasks, administration work, and planning	Unpredictable nature of daily work
	Perceptions of SCP roles and responsibilities	Application of legislation
	Collaborative work with other CP agencies	Collaborative challenges
Extrinsic factors of work	Perceptions of relationships and support at work	Perceptions of supervision
	Working conditions	Concern for safety
		Resources
		Caseload
Perception of salary and benefits		
Intrinsic factors of work	Perceptions of achievements experienced	
	Recognition received from others	
	Reasons for doing SW	
	Personal and professional growth experienced	
Recommendations CPSWs would make for the improvement of CP service delivery	Recommendations for coping in SW	
	Recommendations for employers of SCPSWs	Resources
		Effective supervision, support and acknowledgement
	Recommendations for Collaborators of CPSW	Clarification of roles and responsibilities
		To improve working relationships
		Forums and networking
	Recommendations for SW Education and Training Institutions	
	Recommendations for Government	Justice for victims of child abuse and neglect
Better working conditions for SWs		
Inclusion of SWs in SCPSW policy and legislation decision-making		

Table 2: Framework for analysis

The research findings of the study are discussed next.

4.4 Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are discussed according to main themes, categories and subcategories that emerged from the data analysis. The main themes were the context of CPSW as perceived by the SCPSWs, extrinsic factors of the work, intrinsic factors of the work and recommendations SCPSWs would make for improvement of SCPSW service delivery.

4.4.1 The context of the work as perceived by SCPSWs

A salient theme that emerged from the data is the context of SCPSW, as perceived by the respondents. Most respondents shared their experiences and perceptions of main social issues addressed in their work and interventions applied; daily tasks, such and administration work and planning; application of legislation and collaborative work with CP agencies as discussed next.

4.4.1.1 Main social issues addressed in SCPSW

When asked about the main issues addressed in their work, most respondents mentioned a range of social issues. The most common social issues mentioned by respondents were substance abuse, teen pregnancies, and developmental challenges in children, parenting problems, poverty, school dropouts, unemployment and on-going gang violence in communities that affect the wellbeing of children.

“Substance abuse, alcohol, dagga, tik...early pregnancies...school dropout... alcohol affects...developmental stages of children. A lot of...children [has] alcohol syndrome...it affects their schooling...high behaviour challenges and poor performance... in the community where I work there is lots of social ills. It’s...gang related... not...much recreational services and activities for...children...Unemployment is actually the main cause of...social ills, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, school drop-out ...every area comes with their poor people and rich people...I would say all...areas they have more or less the same problems.” [Respondent 10, Female, 29]

“The lack of parent skills... I think it goes back to how they grew up as children. There’s obviously ... drugs ...a big thing in the community.” [Respondent 11, Female, 24]

From these findings, it is evident that there are many social issues in South Africa affecting the well-being of its children. UNICEF (2016) reported that such socio-economic problems remain the reality of many children and their families in South Africa. Stats SA (2019) reported that 37% of the approximate 53 million people in South Africa are children born into these major social problems. Research (Van Westrhenen, 2017b; UNICEF, 2016; Simelane, 2015) confirmed that SW is an essential service and much needed response to such social problems.

These findings echo the social issues raised by Patel (2015) about social issues in South Africa. These are issues such as poverty, poor access to education and social services, high illiteracy levels, teenage pregnancy, family breakdown, lack of community resources, malnutrition and infant mortality, HIV/AIDS, housing and public health issues, parenting issues, unemployment, gang and domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and substance abuse. Respondents' views regarding interventions applied to these issues are discussed next.

4.4.1.1.1 Types of Interventions applied to address main social issues

Almost all respondents referred to their interventions applied in their work as it relates to the teams that they work in, namely; early intervention, crises intervention, foster care and family reunification on micro, mezzo and macro levels. This includes the referral of cases to other organisations as required.

"We are divided into four [intervention] teams...We work in [and do] intake, intervention...CP...foster care...reunification and supervision services."

[Respondent 3, Female, 31]

"You receive the case and do the preliminary assessment, then plan in terms of early intervention. Thereafter you implement your intervention. Thereafter refer if there is a need to do that."

[Respondent 4, Male, 43]

SCPSW requires various interventions. These findings validate research by McKlennen, Keys and Day (2016) that SWs' follow national SW norms and standards to improve social functioning and quality of life of others by rendering these types of intervention services, namely; assessment, early intervention, statutory intervention, alternative care,

residential care, family reunification and after care services. These are adapted to the type of cases or the child's circumstances (Children, Act No 38 of 2005, amended 2010).

"We work on all three levels of intervention. From micro, mezzo and macro."
[Respondent 15, Male 29]

SCPSW intervention is often applied on various levels. These findings validate what the National Framework for Social Welfare (DSD, 2013) and Children's Act and Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, outlines when it stated that national SW norms and standards are to be followed by SWs on micro, mezzo and macro levels.

Perceptions of statutory interventions, as reported by respondents, are discussed next.

4.4.1.1.2 Perceptions of statutory interventions

Most respondents discussed their experiences and perceptions of their statutory intervention as: emotionally taxing and, they experience it as traumatic for the child, and stressful and frustrating when families do not cooperate. Their comments revealed the various emotional effects experienced.

"Sometimes, I feel sorry for the child, because the child is the victim and by removing the child from the house, you punish the child more, but you are trying to help because they can't continue in that household...I feel...it's ...painful because some will be crying, wailing, kicking and screaming."
[Respondent 1, Female, 30 years]

"Some families...work with you...but...[some] don't...ultimately it comes down to the point where you need to remove the child... It makes it frustrating to work with them because...in one to two months you can see...this family is not going to work with me, so I need to remove the child, but then at the end it's almost like they turning it back to you like you didn't do anything, but...you've been trying your best...but no cooperation from their side...for example when it comes to removals I don't think the legal things that you need to do that comes easier... when you still need to remove a child and you've been working with the family. You've been trying to assist them when it comes to a removal, it's difficult to do it... a lot of emotions comes into play...it's difficult."
[Respondent 18, Female, 35 years]

These findings validate that SCPSWs are exposed to stressful, frustrating conditions in their work that can impact on their emotional health. Research by McFadden, Campbell

and Taylor (2014) has reported that SWs are exposed to stress and trauma on a daily basis that can affect their mental and physical wellbeing. Research by McFadden, Campbell and Taylor (2014) reported exposure to stress that can lead to secondary trauma and burnout for SWs.

Inextricably linked to the practical intervention aspects of SCPSW is administration work and planning as discussed next.

4.4.1.2 Daily tasks, administration work and planning

This study revealed valuable insights into the day-to-day operations of SCPSW as reported by respondents. When asked about their daily tasks, most respondents described their daily tasks required for their work in terms of administration and planning. It appears that administration work forms a significant part of the work for them, and that this was not anticipated before becoming a CP worker.

“Admin, admin, admin, admin.”

[Respondent 13, Female, 26]

“When you start your day you first check your diary and see if you have any appointments. You do your daily planning if there is urgent visits that you need to do, you need to follow up. Schedule...interviews, office interviews, home visits, report writing.”

[Respondent 16, Female, 27]

“I wasn’t prepared for...the amount of paperwork. Everything has to be recorded and reports have to be written.”

[Respondent 19, Female, 26]

These findings provide insight that administrative work and planning forms a tremendous part of daily SW. Most respondents highlighted their administrative responsibilities when they shared their experiences about their day to day work. From these findings it appears that it is crucial for respondents to plan and complete administrative tasks daily. DSD (2013) outlines the roles of SWs but does not specifically note the magnitude of administrative tasks. This is concurred by Payne (2018) that SW tasks include interviews with clients, responding to crises, collaborative work, advocating for victims of abuse, and counselling. Such aspects can impact on the predictability of it as discussed next.

4.4.1.2.1 Unpredictable nature of the daily work

Planning in SW appears to be a crucial aspect of the work, as the work can be unpredictable. Most respondents shared their perceptions about the unpredictable nature of their work. It was found that despite trying to plan their day and having schedules, their days are subject to changes especially when they have to respond to crises. The work can vary and be dominated by various experiences and tasks varying from waiting for crises and responding to it, to daily case management, administrative tasks, meetings with clients, planning, and team work.

“You are always waiting for crisis...regarding a child...from the time you receive the case you have to deal with the case, until the case is done or settled... That is our daily life.”

[Respondent 2, Female, 52]

“Every day is not the same. Some days are quiet and some days are hectic... you’d have days where there is nobody reporting cases...days when there are two three cases reported on one day. especially...with high levels of drug abuse, child neglect,...it varies from day to day...days that it is quiet...you can admin and intervention, and there is days when [they cannot do] anything. When a CP matter is reported, it can take a few days because that is the focus and then...it varies.”

[Respondent 3, Female, 31]

“We try to have schedules...but it never ever works like that.”

[Respondent 14, Female, 24]

These findings revealed that SCPSW is unpredictable and that no day is like another, and therefore planning is crucial. In these findings, most respondents did not express frustration with the unpredictability of their work. This could be due to their empathy for the client and due to their passion for their work, which is known as compassion satisfaction. Wagaman, Geiger, Shockley, and Segal (2015) as well as Stamm (2010) stated that compassion satisfaction is the feeling of satisfaction experienced from helping others. According to Wagaman, Geiger, Shockley, and Segal (2015) compassion satisfaction can be a buffer against burnout among SWs as shown in this study. I think sentence should read. Respondents in this study all appeared to have a resilient quality which helped them sufficiently cope with the unpredictability of the work.

4.4.1.3 Perceptions of SCP roles and responsibilities

There are various roles in CPW. It is the roles and responsibilities of SCPSWs to apply CP law and follow statutory processes in safeguarding children. All respondents provided insight into their statutory roles and responsibilities.

“We go to court only if ... necessary. We get a Form 22 or referral [for] sexual abuse, any form of abuse, neglect...we...do an assessment to assess what risk the child is exposed to. Based on our assessment, if we find ... the child ... in need of care and protection, we would as a last resort...do a removal...we obviously obtain parents or somebody or...family members to look after the child. Go to court the next day to ratify the Form 36. We have a period of 90 days to do our report, the Children’s Court Inquiry report.”

[Respondent 10, Female, 29]

“Whenever there is a concern or report [of] child neglect [or] abuse, that will result in a statutory process...you first need to assess the circumstances and assess the care of the child and secure the safety of the child. If the child is ... at risk, [there] needs to be a removal and ...you need certain processes to be in place. ... safety parents which means its people recruited to work, trained to work with these type of children and to ensure that the court procedures follows after that...for the three months’ period the child is placed to monitor and to assess...whether to decide [if] further statutory intervention [should] take place.

[Respondent 16, Female, 27]

“First of all, I must protect children. To do removals..., it’s also our responsibility to see that the foster placements are running...smooth...if there’s any... hurdles or... challenges in...the foster setting ... obviously it’s our job to intervene and see what we can do. If... children needs counselling, it’s our work to see if we can deal with it ourselves by giving them sessions, counselling...it’s our job to do referrals to...organisations.”

[Respondent 18, Female, 35]

These findings corroborate with research by McKlennen, Key and Day (2016) and the Framework for Social Welfare (DSD, 2013) that when prevention services and early intervention services have failed, statutory processes are required as intervention to protect children from harm. Most respondents presented with good perception of their statutory roles and responsibilities and processes required in their child abuse and neglect interventions. It is an essential role and responsibility of SCPSWs to follow these processes with the help of legislation as discussed next.

4.4.1.3.1 Application of legislation

SCPSWs have a mandate to apply and implement national CP legislation. All respondents emphasised the importance of using CP legislation as a guide to inform their work and for rendering CP services. Furthermore, they referred to how useful the Children's Act is as a guide for decision making in CP.

"What's helpful is that it guides ... your work. The Children's Act is your Bible. ... to help...and...support the client...to work in the best interest of the child."
[Respondent 8, Male, 52]

"It makes it...easier, not to do according to your own assumptions, according... to what is written. Whatever that you are doing, we have to go and check if we're still in the right track."
[Respondent 9, Female, 45]

These findings resonate with The Children's Act No 28 of 2008; the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) and Framework for Social Welfare (DSD, 2013), that SCPSWs are the official implementers of CP legislation and they play pivotal roles in the provision of CP services. The findings furthermore validate that SWs are aware of the importance of the Children's Act in their work and that they are mandated to utilise it as an essential guide in their work. The Children's Act and Regulations (No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010) notes the importance of collaborative work with CP service providers as discussed next.

4.4.1.4 Collaborative work with other CP agencies

Collaborative work is a crucial part of CPW as stipulated in the Children's Act (Children's Act and Regulations, No 38 of 2005, as amended, 2010). All respondents indicated who the collaborators of CPW are and how they work with them. They have reported on the importance of working together with DSD, Education, Health, Correctional Services, Justice and Constitutional Development, Home Affairs, SASSA (South African Social Security Association), SAPS and NGO's.

"We deal with police, hospitals, ...Safeline do the counselling for us because in the capacity that we are, we don't do Justice all the time. Most of the time we do the referral but there are cases we see ourselves. FCS is the investigating officers so it's The Family [and Children's] Unit. Sexual Offences [unit]... SASSA, we also work with them in terms of stopping grants...It's all

part of CP. From the hospital, we get feedback...we work with...schools...that we have to contact for follow up investigations.”

[Respondent 10, Female, 29]

[Departments of] “ Education, Home Affairs, Health...NGO’s ... in Wynberg its Parent Centre’s...Mosaic,...Bosasa,...SANCA...Drug Counselling Centre...we all collaborate together...if...community leaders actually become...involved in the community I mean what impact can we have. It’s an ideal dream and I guess that’s why this dream is so beautifully put in the policies.”

[Respondent 13, Female, 26]

Collaborative work in CPW is a crucial aspect of the work. Crandall, Martin, Hazen and Rolls Reutz (2019) stated that interagency collaboration is the process whereby families and agencies work together for the wellbeing of their clients. All aspects in these systems are interconnected as Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) proposes. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) all organisms are systems comprising of subsystems that are in turn part of larger systems. Therefore, the CPS Worker, with their physical and psychological subsystems is a system rooted in a range of interacting environmental systems. These interactions are between the SWs and collaborators or stakeholders.

The manner, in which these collaborators respond to the SCPSWs in their work, or the SCPSWs with collaborators, can contribute to outcome that is more efficient or rewarding, or it can lead to challenges as discussed next.

4.4.1.4.1 Collaborative challenges

Most respondents stated collaborative challenges with particular reference to the police and courts. They mentioned that a lack of role and responsibility clarification between CPSWs and their collaborators can lead to frustration; misunderstanding and resulting in a subsequent inefficiency.

“What is challenging is when the magistrate does not interpret it the same way as you do... [Causes] a fight between the two of you. Maybe the magistrate thinks this child should go home because there is food and there is a house and a parent... like this child cannot go home, I am looking at the social side.”

[Respondent 1, Female, 30]

“People...come from SAPS complaining that [they were] not...handled with respect... [They report] domestic violence... [that happened] at home, but instead of dealing with the case [SAPS] will laugh at the person... will humiliate

the person, while the perpetrator is getting away with murder... So now the person will come back to us...I phone...police officers I tell them what to do... by saying you are supposed to do this. You cannot humiliate a client like this, this client was there by you and he spoke to Mr [X] and then he was humiliated until he didn't know what to do. So you are supposed to do this and this and this. They are supposed to work with us...we have to work together."

[Respondent 2, Female, 52]

"They just drop off kids here and ... leave... they should be informed of our processes...Police officers here are very scared of doing Form 36s. They...drop the kids off here and say ... you do it, klaar [finished]."

[Respondent 13, Female, 26]

This quote is indicative of collaborative challenges experienced by the social service profession and Justice Profession. These findings support research by Han, Carnochan and Austin (2008) that SWs are challenged by differences in opinion with the courts. These findings reveal that even though they are the experts in their fieldwork, they are often questioned about their recommendations that are not always accepted at Children's Courts, causing frustration for SWs.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) stated that agencies affect each other reciprocally. This theory and research by Payne (2018) concur that collaborative challenges can lead to frustration and that it can influence service delivery. These findings validate what Crandal, Martin, Hazen, & Rolls Reutz (2019) stated about multidisciplinary or interagency collaboration being the systems necessary for family and agencies to work well together, sharing resources and efforts for improved and effective service delivery to the clients of SW.

4.4.2 Extrinsic factors of the work

Extrinsic factors of the work emerged as a salient theme when most respondents spoke about their perceptions and work experiences. These were views about their perceptions of relationships, teamwork and support received from colleagues, perceptions of supervision, their working conditions, and perceptions of salaries and benefits as discussed next.

4.4.2.1 Perceptions of relationships and support at work

Relationships with colleagues are pivotal to SW. Most respondents described their relationships with colleagues and their teamwork. Almost all respondents spoke positively about relationships and support received at work. Most respondents in this study attached a sense of value to this support received and it appears to be a coping mechanism for the work. This is the support received from colleagues and their teamwork.

“We laugh a lot, we joke...have a very good team dynamic and very supportive of each other...You’re your brother and sister’s keeper. When one is going through something we all go through something...when one is struggling with a case nobody is leaving here until it’s sorted out. ...that... helps because the job is difficult enough but to have someone support you... entire team support...helps.” [Respondent 7, Female, 26]

“We have our occasional outburst at each other. But ... we learn from each other... you have to [get along], because your team is who is gonna cover for you when you need them ...when there is tasks that you need to do, that you have to prioritise. They will assist you... They are willing to listen and they are supportive. They wouldn’t throw you to the wolves. We have a very protective team...we have...arguments...like a family...My daddy always say we are crazy because we are 7 sisters and one brother so I would skel (scold) with my sisters now. We would be rude to each other, and then we laugh the next...it’s the same with our teams.” [Respondent 10, Female, 29]

Most respondents referred to their colleagues as their work family and described a sense of belonging with them. They appeared appreciative of social support received from team members and even identified to their teams in terms of belonging to a family. These findings support Maslow’s theory (1943), that a sense of belonging is a basic need for healthy psychological functioning and motivation. This sense of belonging ties in with what Herzberg (1966) referred to that support at work is a motivational aspect for a person. These findings confirms research by Oliphant (2015) that South African SWs reported that psychosocial support is an important need and it is a coping mechanism for coping with challenging work.

These findings validate the value of social support and teamwork, and with what Hertzberg (1966) theorised, that people thrive in their work when they feel supported. Furthermore, these findings tie in with what Conrad and Kellar - Guenther (2006) reported

about the value of good relationships at work and that when people support each other, they may experience a sense of satisfaction, fulfilment or reward.

Most respondents demonstrated a motivation to continue in their work. Chiller and Crisp (2012) reported that various positive aspects motivate SWs to do and remain SW, namely; self-awareness, a sense of perspective, having a strong professional identity, a sense of humour, capacity to acknowledge and respond to the psychological impact of the work, clear professional and personal boundaries.

Most respondents described using humour in coping at work and in their relationships with colleagues. These findings echo the value of humour as a coping mechanism as well as a sense of belonging with colleagues. According to Lopez, Perdotti and Snyder, (2018) a sense of humour and relation to others, and close and nurturing significant relationships are protective characteristics for psychosocial resilience in people.

Most respondents also reflected positively on the value of sound supervision received at work - as discussed next.

4.4.2.1.1 Perceptions of supervision

Teamwork along with supervision is an important support aspect of SW. Most respondents, who spoke about supervision, Averred at having a good relationship with, and feeling supported by, their supervisor.

"I have a very good relationship with my supervisor... Because of her personality and things that has happened in the past...I have a...strong bond with her."
[Respondent 12, Female, 24]

"I feel supported...you know exactly what you gonna discuss, you are given that opportunity."
[Respondent 18, female, 35]

From these findings, it is evident that respondents expressed value in supervision. Those who felt adequately supported at work demonstrated a commitment to the

work and their organisation. According to Kadushin and Harkness (2014), when SWs feel adequately supported in their work place, this is a protective factor for SWs against burnout and stress.

These findings tie in with what Herzberg (1966) referred to that, support at work is a motivational aspect for a person. These findings are confirmed by Oliphant (2015) that South African SWs reported that psychosocial support is a crucial coping mechanism in SW.

Linked to relationships and support received at work are working conditions such as resources, and caseload as discussed next.

4.4.2.3 Working conditions

Almost all respondents conveyed the positive and negative aspects of their working conditions as discussed in this section. Positive aspects described (in the work environment) are them enjoying the office environment with others. This is due to the support received from colleagues in helping them overcome the daily challenges faced at work. However those with more work experience presented somewhat different perceptions than those with lesser years of experience.

“The office environment is a good environment. We laugh a lot; we joke a lot we have a very good team dynamic.” [Respondent 7, Female, 26]

“Oh well I wouldn’t I feel like it’s a comfortable environment...I’m sharing the office with another person...not too overcrowded.” [Respondent 12, Female, 24]

It is not unusual that perceptions of respondents’ may differ. The latter respondent has about two year’s SW experience whereas the former has six years SW experience. Pösö and Forsman (2013) CPSWs stated that respondents may have differences in their perceptions due to their extent of experiences and areas of specialisation. They averred that those with more experience perceived their work as autonomous expert work, which includes sufficient prospects to contribute to change in children’s lives by being focused on child abuse, neglect and the child’s needs. Whilst novice SWs were more concerned

with adhering to the prescribed work protocol of CPW. Difference in CPSWs perceptions may also be attributed to what experiences individuals perceive as rewarding and challenging (Forsman & Pösö, 2013).

Aspects of their working conditions namely; concerns for safety, resources, caseload and salary is discussed next.

4.4.2.3.1 Concern for safety

Almost all respondents stated that safety is a tremendous concern for them. They are often confronted with safety issues at the office, both in the office and in the communities where they work, that place them at risk of harm.

“This is violent areas...gang related... I needed to do this home visit ... and they started to shoot... neighbours,...told me you need to leave now coz they ...shoot here...I felt ... I needed to do this home visit...if he hadn't to tell me, about the gun shots, I would've still gone to...the home visit. Once ...probably 5 metres away from me they shot somebody and I just turned around and I drove away...my colleague...for a month, were threatened by different clients. But you get so used to by being threatened... There is certain houses, dodgy homes that you feel unsafe in, but...cannot show it. The moment you show it, you are vulnerable to people...you get used to dangerous environments.”

[Respondent 10, Female, 29]

“Gangsterism is... high...I don't feel always safe... I take someone with to do a home visit because I don't feel safe, especially because I don't...know the area...lots of gang activities taking place within the area, even at some of our clients' houses...it's a risk going in that area, but we need to do our job.”

[Respondent 16, Female, 27]

“Safety ...is...an issue especially ... where they're making threats. Where they come to the office...smashing windows and stuff... However, we do have a safety gate here on top that we're supposed to close, but that doesn't always happen because we're in and out of the office and up and down for copies... so we rarely close it downstairs... example the lady buzzed them in downstairs ... they can just automatically walk up.”

[Respondent 18, Female, 35]

From the findings, it is evident that concern for safety is an on-going challenge for most respondents but they are brave and committed to do their work. These findings validate

that SWs' face concerns for personal safety (Renner, Porter & Prester, 2009). The findings revealed that gansterism and crime is a huge social issue affecting safety for respondents. Nhedz & Makofane (2015), as well as Petersen (2013), reported that there are on-going safety challenges linked to crime, gang violence and effects of poverty in South African communities.

According to Maslow (1943), safety and security needs, are one of the most crucial five fundamental human needs. It has to be satisfied or met in order for healthy psychological functioning (Maslow, 1943). In this study, most respondents reported that their basic needs for safety were not met. This remains a challenge for the wellbeing of these respondents. Such factors impact on job satisfaction for workers (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). For most respondents there is a risk to their personal safety which impact on their feelings of job satisfaction.

4.4.2.3.2 Resources

Almost all respondents reported on the importance of resources to do their work but that this is insufficient in their present environment. This includes placement facilities for children, foster parents, safety parents, child and youth care centres, funding, privacy, lack of stationary, office furniture, and cars.

“Especially the cars... you have to wait... sometimes two weeks ... because you can't get any gg [cars] because the priority... for those... going to court...the chairs are old...brought from other offices... we were told that we must choose from these chairs. ... [That is] broken...The fax machine its broken...4th year now. The last time that we had a fax machine, I think it was 2012. ... We don't even know what's happening. It wasn't working...they said they will fix it... they are still fixing it because we don't see any fax machine anymore. ...the photocopying machine; we used to have two...For the whole staff, but now we...have one photocopying machine that gives us problems... It's [for] more than 40 people. ...we don't have enough resources.”

[Respondent 2, Female, 52]

“We have limited resources...we have one...car for eight people, so we need to find ways as how we can utilise that and most of the time I use my own private car to do home visits, and I do not even get a cent from the manager because of it...[The] Office environment, open plan (laughing). No privacy..., but we do have an intake room or consultation room for ...clients. But when you have telephonic contacts there is no privacy, so it's an open space, not

that crowded, ...there is no privacy...don't have enough [resources], especially when it comes to group work...Not having enough resources is... frustrating... limits you,...by the end of the day you have to do what you can with the resources that you...have...when you have...group work you don't have stationery, you don't have a venue, adequate venue...need to go out to the community, and...depend on... resources outside.”

[Respondent 16, Female, 27]

“It's very difficult to get... space in a Children's Home or ... Place of Safety ... when you need to find placement for a child...we make use of... ..Safety Parents that we've trained ourselves,...you should also take into consideration...the space...available in their house... sometimes a challenge ...for example where there is no family for children that you want to place in foster care...we [are] short of parents...to take the child...long term... when you open a case..., you get three months to investigate ... but if ... [no] foster parents, you couldn't get a Children's Home but you've applied to centralisation for a Children's Home ... obviously in those type of cases you would extend your finalisation. They give you ...two to three months to find alternative placement to see what you can do from your side, but eventually you get.

[Respondent 18, Female, 35]

These findings reveal that a lack of resources is a challenge for most respondents. It is experienced as frustrating, disempowering, hampering social service delivery and as impacting negatively on the workers. These findings concur with what universal SW research reported that SWs are challenged by a lack of resources to do their work (Oliphant, 2015; Renner, Porter & Prester, 2009).

4.4.2.3.3 Caseload

Most respondents expressed their views about their caseloads as being overburdened and the psychological impact that that this has on them. Most respondents did not anticipate this working condition.

“Not just the amount of work, the things that you have to deal with from...day to day ... is emotionally and psychologically ...draining.”

[Respondent 3, Female, 31]

“I'm near...70 files. When I started here a year and a half ago I closed a lot of files... my colleagues also had some of this office's...I have about 70 long term and about 10 to 20 short term [cases] which is about 2 3 4 contacts before they can be closed... Just to write up those reports...take a long time...the workload is too much.”

[Respondent 12, Female, 24]

"I didn't realise how much casework it would be and I wasn't prepared for the abuse and the neglect." [Respondent 19, Female, 51]

These findings reveal that most respondents are presented with caseloads above the norms and standards required for SCPSWs. According to the demographic profile of respondents (in Table 1) some individual caseloads exceed 100 cases. This study reveals that respondents are feeling the impact of the work professionally and psychologically.

These quotes echo research by Naidoo and Kasiram (2006) that South African SWs on average manage more than triple the caseload compared to the number of cases, which is considered extremely draining in the UK. Naidoo and Kasiram (2006) reported that a lower caseload is reported by SWs as more manageable and allows for more in depth work.

SWs do not only manage risky cases but there is risk involved to them, and to their clients, due to having to manage high caseloads. Yamatani, Engel, and Spjeldnes (2009) stated that when caseloads are unmanageable it can cause SWs to make mistakes and this could impact the safety and wellbeing of children.

Furthermore, Chiller and Crisp (2012) found that those conditions could lead to negative organizational cultures, poor staff morale, and deterioration of peer networks. This is supported by McKlennen, Keys & Day (2016) as well as Weaver, Chang, Clark and Rhee (2007) who indicated that high caseloads are amongst some of the reasons why helping professionals change their jobs.

4.4.2.3 Perception of salary and benefits

Most respondents revealed for the benefits and salaries earned in relation to the amount of work they do, their earnings remain inadequate. They are unable to save money for extras such as holidays or studies. Their descriptions of their salaries included words such as "pathetic". This indicates tremendous dissatisfaction in remuneration.

Furthermore, most respondents mentioned that despite earning extra money for after hour duty work, this does not make much of a difference for them. They are unable to afford decent vehicles or own a house on their salary. Those living with partners mentioned that they are dependent on their partner's income as an additional source of income to make a decent living. They are not sure how they would have coped if it were not for the income of their partner that supplements their income. They have mentioned that it is unfair that there are people with fewer qualifications than what they have but who earn more money in some other posts.

"Sometimes you get only R700 for the month because of ...standby...I'm Level seven...its R20 000 a month...Especially for someone who is the breadwinner... I'm the only breadwinner in my family...doesn't cover our expenses. They pay us...like we don't have a value. They don't think of our work, how difficult it is, how we sacrifice...but it's like the government doesn't care about this. We just have to take what we are given and...keep quiet."

[Respondent 2, Female, 52]

"I'm going to be frank, it's pathetic... the amount of work that you do.... and ... things that you have to deal with from a day to day basis that is emotionally and psychologically...draining...then you see a job advert in a newspaper for Admin post, requirement is...Grade 12 and the salary level is equal to your salary level and that just makes me very upset. ... Compare the SWs salary to other professionals. It's pathetic...the huge difference between ... salary levels ...you are not seen as a professional if you look at your salary... That should...be looked into...an admin clerk earns Level Seven salary compared to a Social Worker who studies...four years...have a degree and then you say..., finish school and go work and earn the money. If you want to drive a decent car, ... its either you drive a decent car, or you buy a house, but on the salary you can't afford both you have to make a choice...You would find amongst the staff members for those who are not yet married, either you have a car or you have a flat or a house. If you have both its normally in the case when you are married where there is a second salary, but on our salary it's impossible."

[Respondent 3, Female, 31]

"It's about R14 000 around there. Once tax is still deducted, Medical Aid is ... deducted, UIF, Pension is deducted we clear about R11 100. ...there are lots of other things I would have liked, i.e. study further, ... or ... to go overseas,...to have the experience of holiday more often but because you don't get a bonus here so you only get your 12 months salaries... it is so little that you don't get to save. I haven't been saving for a year and a half that I have been working and it is a problem because what if I need the savings one day."

[Respondent 12, Female, 24]

These quotes reveal that there is dissatisfaction experienced by respondents with regards to SW salaries. Most respondents felt that they have been poorly compensated for their work. This is supported by research (Simelane, 2015; Renner, Porter & Prester, 2009) that SWs had been underpaid for many decades compared to other helping professions such as medicine, psychology, psychiatry, and nursing.

Noteworthy in the findings is that there is a disparity in SW salaries earned and benefits, despite having the same qualifications. This aspect may require further research by future studies.

Respondents in this study expressed dissatisfaction with their poor salary as it sets them back financially, and this appears to be frustrating, and negatively impacts on respondents. According to Herzberg's theory (1966), salary and benefits are aspects of work referred to as Hygiene factors, which are extrinsic factors in the work environment vital to motivation (Herzberg, 1966). It is thus authenticated in this study that when Hygiene factors are inadequate, workers experience a sense of dissatisfaction at work (Herzberg, 1966).

The intrinsic aspects experienced in their work as perceived by respondents are discussed next.

4.4.3 Intrinsic aspects of the work

Most respondents reported on the intrinsic aspects of the work and shared their perceptions of achievements experienced, recognition received from others, finding their work interesting, and personal and professional growth experienced in their work.

4.4.3.1 Perceptions of achievements experienced

When asked what sort of achievements respondents' experienced at work, almost all respondents shared their perceptions of achievements experienced in CPW, namely; incentives such as performance bonuses, success with cases, successful safeguarding of children, training received, and building good relationships with stakeholders of CPW.

“There’s one case; the children should have been removed...years ago...I took a photo of the one girl, she was,...nine years old... her eyes were dead and she was just expressionless...I placed her with a foster family and I’ve been doing play therapy with her and the other day I took a photo and I showed it to one of the SWs who’s known her for...some time and she said she can’t believe it’s the same girl. Just the expression and the way she’s talking to grownups now... nice to see that ...you can make a difference.”

[Respondent 5, Female 48]

“I think...relationships that I have built with certain people and the way I have worked and people ...I have been able to experience certain things... they have developed certain task teams to clean up the streets ... I think I have been given certain opportunities for growth...I form relationships and I have meetings with organisations and stuff to see how we can collaborate and we do programmes and sort of things.”

[Respondent 7, Female, 26]

“I was nominated for ... performance bonus already and nominated for different trainings. Other achievements is basically the success cases when you can close a file and you are sure that that person has been sorted. That’s... achievement.”

[Respondent 10, Female, 29]

These findings echo the respondents’ compassion for CPW in terms of their perceptions of their achievements. According to Graham and Shier (2010), SWs’ compassion for the work is what motivates them to make a difference and contributing to change. Furthermore, from the findings it is evident that most respondents are satisfied with their perceived achievements at work. According to Herzberg, Mathapo, Wiener, and Wiesen (1974), achievement is one of the aspects of work that forms part of what organisational theory termed Motivators that is rooted in positive and intrinsic aspects of the work itself; it provides long term positive job satisfaction and arises from the intrinsic aspects of the work. Therefore, respondents experienced their perceived achievements as a positive aspect of the work.

4.4.3.2 Recognition received from others

Most respondents referred to how recognition makes them feel in their work. There are stakeholders who recognise the work that they do while some do not recognise what they really do. When asked whether they think society, government, clients and other professionals recognise what they do in their work, they responded that some do not know what SWs do, due to ignorance, thus do not show recognition for them.

"I don't think so. I think that the idea is that all SWs do is...remove children. I think they are naïve or ignorant or I don't know what word is it the politically correct word to use. They don't...understand what SWs do... I don't think society understands or acknowledges and the majority of them think that we don't do our work."
[Respondent 7, Female, 26]

"Not at all. I think there are certain, I can't say society in general, because there are people...that does recognise, but within the government sphere they do not recognise you as a professional...,SW is not seen as a profession...in other departments...they feel that they can dictate to you. ... Community members misrepresent themselves as SWs. ... They believe they know what we do... [They think] what I'm supposed to do, you don't recognise, you don't take time to consider what we do as SWs."
[Respondent 10, Female, 29]

"I don't think they [government] recognise because they will just say in a nice way, it's a scarce skill... in April, no March, SWs were ... toi toing [for better wages and work conditions]. What does that say, and even now we were supposed to get a feedback on the 26th [2017]. The Minister said she did not have...her diary was full... we are not being taken serious. I don't know whether we are... not like teachers..., if it's a strike. It's a standstill and the government feels the pitch because now, kids now are going to be all over."
[Respondent 17, Female, 56]

From the findings it is evident that recognition is an important aspect of motivation for most respondents. These findings support what Leigh (2014) as well as Han, Carnochan and Austin (2008) reported that when there is a lack of recognition it can negatively lead to sense of powerlessness in their work place. According Herzberg, Mathapo, Wiener, and Wiesen (1974), recognition is one of the aspects of work that forms part of what organisational theory termed Motivators is rooted in intrinsic positive aspects of the work itself. This is a factor indicated by the participants as necessary for long term job satisfaction.

4.4.3.3 Reasons for doing SW

Most respondents expressed their various reasons for doing SW. These reasons motivate them to do their work because it gives them an opportunity to contribute to change and making a difference in the lives of others. Most respondents expressed the reasons as; their contribution to change being most rewarding when they safeguard children, when they see progress, persuade clients to attend counseling and help parents

improve their parenting, and finding the work interesting. Almost all respondents positively stated that they find SCPSW interesting, and even though it is not experienced as easy, it is not a boring job. Doing this is something that appears to happen naturally for most of respondents. They seem to enjoy doing their work for a living and this reflects their humanitarian and spiritual believe systems.

“Most rewarding is to see the child being in a safe place and...to see that those people who were abusing the child..., especially parents have come to realise that this is not on. Their child needs them, for safety and protection ...they have changed the way they were dealing with the child, the abuse. It feel...good because I have changed the way they were handling the child. I have changed them to become responsible parents... when you see things like that, you say wow! God is good. I mean at least you have managed to save a life... when you deal with some cases like that... at least it was a success. It makes you so happy... [that] you in this profession.” [Respondent 2, Female, 52]

“We made some kind of family arrangement ... I motivated her to go for counselling,...the other day she could counsel me with regards to substance abuse. So she has got her child back and she is doing well and I can finally close the case. I don't even need to send it on so those things it is rewarding. ...seeing...progress in ...clients...You don't always get a thank you, but that is my thank you...The most rewarding part is if I get a better place for the child, that is the best for his development. ...it is rewarding when there is a way forward for the child but when you are stuck and nobody wants to assist, everybody rejecting the child ... that is also a very bad thing for me. But keeping them sorted, that's...rewarding.” [Respondent 10, Female, 29]

“Fascinating. Absolutely interesting ... I can't guarantee you an easy job but I can guarantee you an interesting job. You'll never be bored here at all, ever.” [Respondent 19, Female, 51]

These findings are strongly supported by Collins, (2008) that most SCPSW are motivated by helping others, making a difference and contributing to positive change in the lives of others. Furthermore, Jessen (2010) found that the most rewarding aspects of SW include SWs' feelings of accomplishment from quality services rendered to others and the ability to solve challenging problems for clients. It can be concluded that such feelings of accomplishment, as it relates to higher order needs such as self-actualisation needs, are being met in this regard for respondents.

The findings further show that respondents are driven by empathy to make a difference. This validates what Thomas (2013) averred that those who are driven with an internal

resource such as empathy, are motivated to contribute to positive change in the lives of others. Rawlins (2013) found that SWs enter the profession due to a deep desire to help others and make a difference in the lives of people and communities. Earlier research by Lloyd, King and Chenoweth (2002) stated that SWs may be motivated to do their work due to their own early life adversity or their own psychological challenges while Olson and Royse (2006) found that early life adversity was not always the reason for SWs choosing SW but that psychological challenges experienced personally and with their families, contributed to SWs' sharpened mental health awareness.

These findings authenticate that most respondents found their work interesting. This is an aspect of Herzberg's (1966) motivational aspects of the work. Although finding the work interesting, it is not always easy. It is evident that these findings validate what Forsman and Pösö (2013) stated with regards to SW being challenging as well as rewarding work.

4.4.3.4 Personal and professional growth experienced

All respondents reflected on personal and professional growth experienced in their work. They presented with self-awareness; that it is through challenging situations that they learn more, become assertive and lay down boundaries, are humbled by the work, thankful for what they have, and subsequently grow and become more resilient as people.

“When it comes to dealing with clients that is where you...grow professionally and personally...clients engage with you differently...some are very difficult and some ... easy to work with, but ...difficult clients...stretches you to go and find other skills on how to deal with a difficult situation and sometimes it reveals something in you personally that you didn't know was there... and ...you have to say...I have to work on that... but you can put your foot down and be more assertive and sometimes it's difficult with some clients...they would teach you that... I can be soft spoken...with different clients, different approaches you would have to take...clients...stretch you personally and they stretch you to the limit personally as well...I think with some clients it's that they push you to become a better Social Worker. Especially, when I go to the questions of why is this happening. To go further and to read...explore...reasons behind certain things... there is books and things that you can go back to and you can make sure that you guide your client properly and that you do the proper intervention.”

[Respondent 3, Female, 31]

“Professionally, working with different clients...makes me grow into a better Social Worker professionally because I get to deal with different people. And you get to make a difference. They don’t know how they contribute to your life but it makes you also, it makes you ... better worker. Personally it makes me grow, ...more thankful for what I do have. It...makes me appreciate my family more ...They make me feel fortunate for certain things.”

[Respondent 10, Female, 29]

“It made me grow a lot faster than anyone else. It’s ...frustrating...to speak to people the same age as me because they don’t understand that they can’t have the same conversations as I do...they [don’t] have that exposure to life... Especially with my friends it ... is ...tough to have conversations with them... so it has made me grow up fast...with...report writing I have grown. Also with...people skills. I was a very and still am a ‘black-and-white’ person, [i.e.] this is right and this is wrong. I’m a very strict, loud, hard person. I have ...become more empathetic towards clients. To walk a road with them not just want to open the file, go through the process driven, to... allow them...to become close to me.”

[Respondent 12, Female, 24]

These findings echo Wagaman, Geiger, Shockley and Segal (2015) that many SWs experienced personal growth and compassion satisfaction in their work. Graham and Shier (2010) provided further insight about aspects that lead to this satisfaction in SW. Compassion satisfaction is due to aspects such as finding meaning in their work, experiencing professional and career growth, being assertive and practicing SW perspectives and values. According to Graham and Shier (2010), growth takes places due to SWs’ reflections on their lives, and the value of their identity as SWs.

Chiller and Crisp (2012) reported that various positive aspects motivate SWs to remain in their work, namely; self-awareness, a sense of perspective, having a strong professional identity, a sense of humour, capacity to acknowledge and respond to the psychological impact of the work, and clear professional and personal boundaries. Furthermore, these findings support Maslow’s (1943) Theory and Herzberg’s (1966) Two Factor theory. According to Maslow (1943) the need for self-actualisation, growth, self-expression and fulfilment for knowledge and understanding is crucial for healthy psychological functioning. Thus the respondents would be motivated in the CPW as the aspect of growth is present, which according to Herzberg Mathapo, Wiener and Wiesen, (1974) is an intrinsic aspect of work, also known as a motivator.

Recommendations made by respondents, on the improvement of the CP service delivery, are discussed next.

4.4.4 Recommendations SCPSWs would make for the improvement of CP service delivery

All respondents had recommendations for improvements of CP service delivery with regards to SWs' self-care, SW employers, collaborators of CPW, SW education and training institutions, and government as discussed next.

4.4.4.1 Recommendations for coping in SW

Good coping mechanisms are crucial in SW. Self-care is an essential coping aspect in SW. Most respondents shared recommendations regarding self-care strategies that they find beneficial for coping. For self-care, most respondents recommended various positive coping mechanisms such as not taking work home, spa treatments, retail therapy, spirituality, meditation, positive attitude, debriefing from work with significant others, or with a professional counsellor.

"We can get carried away. We drown in the work instead, of taking care of ourselves. I don't...carry...cases home..., treat yourself to something nice ...to refresh your mind, like...retail therapy, ...except there is no money... ...you can go to the spa ... get your hair done. It feels...nice when you are coming from the salon, even just the nails, ...that's what I do to keep going...sometimes you feel, ...things are...too much and I can't carry on, ...then ... go... to church, its soothing, it brings your spirit up, so when I go to church I feel that there is a purpose, let me just carry on...,even if nothing happens, like physically...you can say ...this is... the change I got from going there,...it just lifts my spirit up, ...it ... keeps me going...I think you have to be passionate about SW than just view it as just a job... If you think it's just a job ... you will not last, and some of the things won't...make sense to you."

[Respondent 1, Female, 30]

"See counsellors or psychologists at least once every two weeks. To talk about where we are...our mental state. Not supervision, but talking about our emotional things so that would be a recommendation for self-care... you can't take work home and still want to have a personal life. If it was only me and no one else ... it would have been fine but you have other people, you have family,

you're married, you have children. Don't take work home it's not going to work."
[Respondent 12, Female, 24]

"Healthy nutrition, exercise, sleep...personal health or maintaining a healthy lifestyle contributes...to your attitude [and] mind set at work...I've read that meditation helps.... Taking leave and...not taking work with you on leave...completely shutting off for two weeks and not thinking about anything work related ..., just giving your mind...rest...I think meditation helps as well because it channels your mind ... and it helps you ..., it's about acknowledging the thoughts that come in but then focusing your mind back to where it needs to be...We have...Wellness Sessions once a month... go to a Private Social Worker for a Wellness session... Especially if your support system is secure, you have a strong foundation of support and trust and you can be yourself... there's a SW group ... they started this kind of Wellness Supervision here in the Southern Suburbs... debrief and have a cup of tea... Self-care, supervision groups... luckily our office [have] this debriefing session every month, we're in the right path but we should embrace these opportunities."

[Respondent 14, Female, 24]

These findings reveal that respondents are aware of the importance of self-care and its value in combating stress. Global research (De Castella & Simmonds, 2013; Collins, 2008) concur that self-care factors combat SW stress. According to researchers (De Castella & Simmonds, 2013; Collins, 2008; Killian, 2008), aspects that include efficient coping are; social support, quality time with significant others, self-esteem, resilience, hardiness, individual control, peer support, supervision, spirituality and exercise. However, not all of the self-care strategies mentioned by respondents could be healthy as some seem to be pseudo-satisfiers such as retail therapy.

These findings concur with Pack (2016), that there to be need focused on wellbeing. According to Pack (2016), SWs need to be mindful on how they are affected psychologically, and they need to know how to cope, and where to find help. According to Hartley (2012), SWs require thoughtful balancing of empathy, care as well as compassion, whilst keeping good SW practice and wellbeing at heart. Therefore, it is important that SWs practice self-awareness and self-care as it improves resilience, which leads to increased coping with a demanding and stressful job (Killian, 2008).

4.4.4.2. Recommendations for employers of CPSWs

When asked what recommendations respondents would make for employers of SCPSW, most respondents expressed the need for an improvement in working conditions such as better resources, effective supervision, support and acknowledgement

4.4.4.2.1 Resources

Most respondents recommended that resources to do the work should improve. They suggested that they are strained by not having sufficient resources and staff capacity to do their work. Resources to enable them to be more effective in their work included accessible emergency items for children removed from home, cars, staff capacity, foster and support or safety parents, placements for children, and training.

“During the day if there is...crisis... we don’t have anything...if the child has been found and has been dropped here without any clothes and the child is dirty. We don’t have any clothes here for the child. We don’t have parcels for the day, the parcels that we have are from ... from AGAPE. It’s only for night cases, but there is nothing here. There used to be parcels here ready for each and every child. And we were also able to take the child and the child can have a bath here. Put basins, bath the child and put on clean clothes for the child, but we don’t have those things here... it’s standing in our way to achieve what we want to achieve. Now we must wait for the night so that we can get the parcels from there or we must go there to get the parcels. Instead of having the stuff here...the...GG cars...You rush the child to the clinic...you must wait for someone, or the other day not today because there are no GG cars for you to drive the car with the child to the clinic. You must for a car for tomorrow or Friday.”

[Respondent 2, Female, 52]

“We don’t get to all our files but if we all had an auxiliary at least it would have made it much easier because... a lot of these things that are laying on my desk are just follow up things; get this order, or contact this person or write this letter up. And if you had an auxiliary that knew what was going on in your office it would be much better. It’s difficult with one auxiliary to now go and explain the while file to her to tell her this is what you need to do.”

[Respondent 12, Female, 24]

“[We need] resources, resources more resources, more staff, more people to work on and also more training on the legal things.”

[Respondent 16, Female, 27]

These findings support the fact that SWs deal with stressful work situations and require adequate support and resources to do their work effectively (Kadushin, 2014). If support is inadequate, SW service may be hampered, and lead to agency ineffectiveness (Kadushin, 2014).

Most respondents emphasised the importance for better resources to do their work, whether it is staff capacity, placements for children, training or stationery. The lack of resources is a working condition. This is an aspect of work that forms part of what organisational theory grouped as Hygiene factors of the work that impact on job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). If resources are not going to improve for respondents, they will become dissatisfied at work and subsequently they might leave SW or change jobs. This is consistent with findings of McKlennen, Keys & Day (2016).

4.4.4.2.2 For effective supervision, support and acknowledgement

Social support appears to be an aspect that needs to be on-going and consistent for the SWs to flourish in their work. They expressed that they feel motivated when they are acknowledged, valued and given autonomy. Most respondents made recommendations about how important effective and consistent supervision, guidance, support and acknowledgement is for them. This is regardless of being a novice or veteran SW.

“For SWs that just start out...measures should [be] put in place in order to guide them...a proper orientation about what that they are going to do in the work with, tell them, this is a CCI [Children’s Court Inquiry], this is how you are going to type is. This is how you are going to do a removal. This is the processes. I think that will help with having them properly orientated to do the work.”
[Respondent 6, Female, 31]

“SWs working at agencies...have their own space, their own room. They supervise and that means they are growing, they develop...they manage the facility, so their leadership skill ... develop there so... can give better input, into the facility and into the children and child care workers, to develop them as well. SWs are general practitioners, so can they can flex themselves, they can live themselves out in terms of their role fully.

[Respondent 8, Male, 52]

"I feel that the supervisor need to know, should have a statutory background... [to] be able to guide or show you in you work."

[Respondent 16, Female, 27]

These findings reveal that respondents value SW support and supervision. This is essential for productive SW. If there is no adequate support available, the SW service may be impaired and lead to agency ineffectiveness (Kadushin, 2014). When workers perceive their supervisor as supportive, they are more likely to be more considerate of the pressure on their supervisors, and that supportive supervision thus influences them to be committed to their organisation and teams (Kadushin, 2014).

4.4.4.3 Recommendations for collaborators of CPW

Most respondents had recommendations for the multidisciplinary collaboration needed in SCPSW with regards to improvement of working relationships, role clarification, and forums and networking

4.4.4.3.1 Clarification of roles and responsibilities

Most respondents suggested a need for role clarification between SWs and collaborators to improve for more efficient CP service delivery.

"It's important that each Department understands what...SWs ...in government, outside of government...understand...our roles and responsibilities...So that we do not put expectations on certain departments... if we are clear on...roles and responsibilities...,the process would go more smoother and...clients wouldn't come with expectations that's not going to be met."

[Respondent 3, Female, 31]

"Definitely with SAPS we need to work better with because they are referring clients here to us that they should be dealing with...something definitely needs to be done there...maybe...management needs to go speak to them and they should set clear guidelines as to what exactly it is that they do and that we are supposed to do."

[Respondent 6, Female, 31]

These findings reveal the importance of role clarification, in the opinion of respondents, for the improvement of CP service delivery. To be successful and for optimal service delivery, it is important that collaborative partnerships are built on shared objectives,

reciprocal respect for each other, together with a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of each partner (DSD, 2013; White Paper, 1997).

In these findings, it is evident that if role clarification is exercised, it will make it easier for CP agencies to work alongside the client and meet clients' needs. These findings substantiate research by Graham and Shier (2010) that role clarity is important in SW. Furthermore, the findings validate the South African national norms and standards for SW (DSD, 2013; White Paper, 1997) to be successful and for optimal service delivery in CPW, these partnerships should be built on a shared objective, reciprocal respect for each other together, and with a clear description of roles and responsibilities of each partner.

4.4.4.3.2 To improve working relationships

Most respondents suggested recommendations for improvement in working relationships with collaborators of CPW. They felt that better working relations can improve CP service delivery when communication and understanding are improved.

“To have a separate meeting with the Presiding Officer just to come together and say...this is how we interpret it. And this is how you understand it... it is...good to work together because ... everyone understands what role everyone is playing, because sometimes, there can be an expectation, ... they don't...understand that it can ...work that way we have to do it this way...The easier thing is that with the working relationship we got with the hospitals, if you go to the hospitals you can stand the whole day waiting there. The good working relationship, it makes it easier. when you go there and ... they recognise you,... the Social Worker,... just meet and greet and you go there, when they invite you for their meetings, their functions, just attend, just to be supporting each other so then they know that.” [Respondent 1, Female, 30]

“After the referral, they just want to know that I know.”

[Respondent 14, Female, 24]

These findings are evident of respondents' recommendations for improvement of working relationships. Their responses support the Colorado research by Conrad and Kellar - Gunter (2006) that SWs experience job satisfaction when good working relationships are experienced. However, poor working relationships are a demotivating factor for SWs and it makes tasks challenging (Leigh, 2014; Han, Carnochan & Austin, 2008). Thus, good working relationships with collaborators are essential for improvement of effective CPS delivery.

4.4.4.3 Forums and networking

The study revealed a need for forums and networking with collaborators of CPW. Most respondents recommended the establishment of forums, panels, networking or meetings with collaborators to improve service delivery and working relationships.

“There is need for ... departments to get together so that we can be on the same page and understand... having sessions on clarifying...what we are doing... that can be helpful.” [Respondent 4, Male, 43]

“We need to start networking. Attend...CP service forums...we need to start [collaborating with FCS] ...because if a form 22 comes through and it’s sexual abuse; where does their services start and where does ours end. ... and Probation as well. What I figure out on my own...is that if a Probation Officer is involved you, you just stand back completely until that, the criminal investigation is done and then you can take over and we had to learn that all on our own by being exposed to that kind of cases so we have no clue what they do. They have some kind of perception of what we do so even in our own profession there’s miscommunication so, educate, educate.” [Respondent 13, Female, 26]

“We can sit...in a panel...and ... do a presentation about your work and ... understand each other; we are on the same page...especially with Health. They would know what type of challenges you experience...For them when a child is fit the child can be discharged meanwhile ... exactly the mother is not ready...there are two things; [namely] for them to understand...give me time to get another family member.” [Respondent 17, Female, 56]

These findings reveal a need for networking, panels and forums in CPW. Such aspects will improve an understanding of stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and better working relationships between stakeholders. The findings support Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and research (Crandal, Martin, Hazen, & Rolls Reutz, 2019) that interagency collaboration is the process of agencies and families working together, sharing resources and efforts for improved and effective service delivery to children and families.

4.4.4.4 Recommendations for SW Education and Training Institutions.

Most respondents had recommendations for SW education and training institutions. Most felt that they have not been adequately prepared for what CPSW really is and that what is written in theory is not exactly the same as the actual work.

Most respondents recommended that it would be helpful if they had received practical training in SCPSW whilst at university prior to entering the profession so they could have been better prepared. Furthermore, most respondents recommended that the Children's Act be taught as a module at university level.

"What you are taught at university does not...prepare you for the field because when you come to a local office and you have to start working you will find that what you were thought versus what's happening in the field, it doesn't gel...its two worlds apart and what you have learnt is...thrown out ...the window...even though you would want to implement theory and narrative therapies, and solution focused therapies,...in the field, the amount of work that you have to do does not allow you to do that...there is some gap between university and the field... we were talking to get to a point [to] either make the gaps smaller; how do you eliminate that gap...They should be more aware of what's happening in the field...to prepare the students or SWs better for what's to come. Not just theory, but the practical...it's compulsory... to go to an organisation that deals with statutory work [to] get exposure."

[Respondent 3, Female, 31]

"They need to do the practicals at university. They should have students go to...a CP organisation because it is different than other organisations."

[Respondent 5, Female, 48]

"We had a two week crash course of the Children's Act in our final year... the courses that we did we did were more of the Child Justice Act ...The Children's Act must be a module on its own...They gave us a copy and they said just look at it. But to understand how do interpret the law and how the act has an impact ... they...need to train these students how to survive...because when you're sitting in your lecture room they just say you're going to swim when you start working. They're going to throw you in the deep end, but they can actually try and prepare us."

[Respondent 13, Female, 26]

It is crucial the SWs are prepared well at university so that they may be better equipped to not only apply SW theory, but CP legislation as well. These findings strongly support the importance and effective use of CP legislation such as the Children's Act to continue contributing to positive change in children's lives (Pösö & Forsman, 2013). These findings echo a need for more developed CPSW preparation at university. It is thus noteworthy to concur with Pack (2016) that Education and training institutions have focused much on the needs of clients compared to the needs of SWs.

4.4.4.5 Recommendations for Government

When respondents were asked about what recommendations they have for government or national CP policy and legislation, they suggested that there be justice for victims of child abuse and neglect; better working conditions for SWs; and that SWs' voices be heard by government, CP legislation, and policy makers.

4.4.4.5.1 Justice for victims of child abuse and neglect

Respondents urged the need for improved justice for victims of child abuse and neglect. They urged a national response to crime against children, and the law to tighten concerning crimes against children.

"I'll start with Mrs Dlamini; she needs to improve the law...It's like... a plastic one that we have... It doesn't ...have an impact because the perpetrators are getting away with murder all the time...at the end of the day we don't...see what we have done to change it. I don't know how are they going to do it, but they need to sit down and figure out something." [Respondent 2, Female, 52]

"These recent child killings that happened, do you think that the national response was appropriate in terms of these child murders... that would... spark suggestions... I know the local government tried to do what they can, but the national approach was not a long term solution... no national policy has...we've got a long way to go." [Respondent 14, Female, 24]

"When it comes to children, I think they must be more strict especially with...people who have neglected their children. They need to give them more jail time...there has to be more children's homes because a lot of children have been abandoned and neglected." [Respondent 16, Female, 27]

These findings reveal that SWs are experiencing a sense of despair with regards to the criminal justice system and the application of the law when children have been maltreated. The findings in this study are evidence of what Ewing (2003) reported many decades ago, that the plight of children is further aggravated by a poor functioning social and criminal justice system. Furthermore, Van Westrhenen (2017b) reported SWs frustration with perpetrators who are seldom prosecuted, and justice not being served.

4.4.4.5.2 Better working conditions for SWs

Almost all respondents urged improvements for working conditions and recognition for their profession, their safety, salary, and resources for SWs to do their work.

“The government doesn’t care about us. There is no danger allowance... the government should take care of us. They should recognise the work that we do..., our protection, because we are not allowed to carry guns for an example, but we are not safe... I asked in 2011... [for] a panic button in the GG cars, whereby you see that you are going to be hijacked or something ... you press that panic button so that the police officers [and] The Department of Social Development can pick up that you are in danger. I asked if that could be done for us at least if we can’t carry guns, then what could be done for us to show that at least they do care about us...[and]our protection.”

[Respondent 2, Female, 52]

“We are not appreciated. You get ... money that is worth nothing compared to a worker that is doing nothing. It’s not fair but you have to do it... a teacher on contract earn 21000. The teacher refers to me! Who do the piggy work? If the child is not socially or holistically looked at, how are they going to focus in school? My job is...important here. I am assisting their lives so that they can go to school...it don’t make sense at all...nationally they must look, there is an imbalance.”

[Respondent 14, Female, 24]

“They had the triangle of institutionalise approach and ... cure the child... now they’ve flipped it around to cure the child and then institutionalise so they closed down Tenterden and they’re not opening, they’re not going to open more because they’re going to force our profession into working with these kids and this is why there’s so much red tape of getting a child into a children’s home...they want to get us to do more safe care in the communities... more prevention to work with...clients to try and I don’t know prevent them from going into the system.”

[Respondent 14, Female, 24]

These findings reveal that there are basic human needs of most respondents that are not being met, and that there is a need for improvement of working conditions, namely; safety, salary and recognition. These are all aspects of work that form part of what the organisational theory grouped as Hygiene factors of the work that impact on job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). Furthermore, these findings support Oliphant (2015) that South African SWs are challenged by poor working conditions, namely, lack of resources in SW impacting negatively on SWs.

4.4.4.5.3 Inclusion of SWs in national SCPSW policy and legislation decision-making

Most respondents recommended that national road shows and conferences be held for statutory CPSWs. This is to participate in improvement of CP policy and legislation on a national level.

“Policy developers need to consult SWs when they are writing... legislation because some of it...is not always the same as the legislative one.

[Respondent 16, Female, 27]

“Each Social Worker has a different experience... you can never have a perfect policy or...legislation...my recommendation is that...government ...conduct road shows or have conferences with SWs and form committee...hear what...SWs are going through...on that level have people from the National [Government] who is formulating these policies ... because at the end of the day we are on the ground, we are the persons that work with these people [clients] and we understand first-hand what’s going on. So take from us, and let us guide the future processes and future legislation.”

[Respondent 7, Female, 26]

The findings reveal that most respondents felt the need for their voices to be heard by those responsible for CP policy and legislation making. According to Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959), policy is an aspect of work that forms part of what motivational theory grouped as Hygiene factors of work that impact on job satisfaction. In the findings, it is evident that respondents are of the view that there is a need for CP policy improvement so that beneficiaries of it can experience maximised benefit.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study. The framework for analysis followed a profile of respondents. The discussion followed the main themes, categories and subcategories that emerged from the data analysis. The findings were discussed in light of theory and research highlighted in the literature review.

Chapter Five presents main conclusions and recommendations proposed by the researcher

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations for SCP Service Delivery

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five presents the main conclusions drawn from this study. It makes recommendations for SW Practice, SW Education and Training Institutions and Government. Furthermore, a call for well-directed research, based on this study, is also presented in this chapter.

5.2 Main conclusions

Main conclusions are discussed following the study's main research objectives.

5.2.1 Objective 1: To explore the daily roles and responsibilities of SCPSWs

This study revealed that the roles and responsibilities of SWs are embedded in the context of SCPSW, as perceived by the respondents. Respondents discussed their perceptions of main social issues as identified by SWs, namely; poor parenting, substance misuse, gangsterism, domestic violence, school dropouts, unemployment and teen pregnancies.

Respondents reported on the main interventions applied in addressing social issues, namely; early intervention, statutory intervention and after care services. Respondents anticipate and respond to crisis intervention on a daily basis, this can be experienced as emotionally traumatic. They find it frustrating when clients and collaborators do not cooperate. Daily tasks include high volumes of administrative work, and planning, which make the nature of SCPSW unpredictable.

In this study, all respondents apply their roles and responsibilities with the guidance of legislation, such as the Children's Act No 38 of 2005, as amended in 2010 for their SCPSW interventions. Their statutory processes and interventions are mandated and guided by this legislation.

The main collaborators of SCPSW are various government departments (DSD, Health, Justice, SAPS, and Education) NGO's, and the children and their parents or caregivers.

5.2.2 Objective 2: To ascertain what experiences are perceived as most challenging by SCPSWs

The findings revealed that there are intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of work that were perceived as challenging the basic needs of respondents. The main extrinsic aspects discussed as challenging was poor working conditions, namely concern for safety, lack of resources, high caseloads, poor salaries, and collaborative challenges that can be frustrating.

Respondents reported aspects such as clients bypassing security and demanding services at their offices to the extent of vandalising their offices. Furthermore, respondents reported on danger in the community such as angry clients on substances, gang violence and shootings.

Most respondents reported their dissatisfaction with the lack of resources (cars, placement facilities, office equipment and stationery) that is disempowering them in their CPW. Furthermore, respondents reported that high caseloads are another challenge impacting negatively on their overall wellbeing.

Another huge challenge respondents reported on was poor wage for potentially dangerous work. Noteworthy is the finding that SW's with the same qualifications are earning different salaries at various organisations. As a result of having poor income, respondents reported that they are limited in terms of being able to afford housing individually as well as a car, and if not for financial support received from partners, they would be extremely financially challenged.

This study echoes the importance of collaborative work in CPW. The main collaborative challenges are experienced with SAPS and Health departments regarding role

clarification and responsibilities, as well as the disagreements with the courts regarding recommendations.

The main intrinsic aspects of work are that the majority of respondents found most challenging were: lack of recognition and acknowledgment from collaborators, the public, and government.

5.2.3 Objective 3: To ascertain what experiences are perceived as most rewarding by SCPSWs.

This study revealed that there are intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the work perceived as rewarding by respondents. Extrinsic aspects perceived as rewarding related to adequate support from SW supervisors and good working relationships with clients and colleagues.

Respondents reported that support received from supervisors is extremely valuable, added to teamwork and support from colleagues. Most respondents expressed a sense of belonging when referring to colleagues as work family.

Rewarding aspects revealed in this study, that motivate the respondents to do SCPSW are related to the intrinsic aspects of the work such as respondents' perceptions of achievements at work, recognition from others (clients and collaborators) for what they do, reasons that motivate them to do their work including interesting work, and personal and professional growth experienced in their work.

Perceptions of achievements experienced at work include training, incentives, success with challenging cases, safeguarding children, helping parents and building positive collaborative relationships.

Most respondents reported that they are motivated to remain in their work as their reason for doing SCPSW includes aspects such as an opportunity to contribute to change and making a difference in the lives of others especially children and their families, safeguarding children. Interesting aspects include seeing, ongoing learning, and

stimulating work. It appears that most respondents are driven by compassion for the work, which contributes to their job satisfaction and resilience to remain in SCPSW.

Other positive aspects respondents reported on was their personal and professional growth, learning from clients and challenging cases, and being able to understand people better. Most respondents reported that they have grown both personally and professionally, and that SW has improved their resilience.

5.2.4 Objective 4: To ascertain what recommendations SCPSWs would make for the improvement of SCP service delivery.

All respondents had recommendations for improvements of service delivery with regards to SW practice (in terms of Self-Care, Employers), Collaborators, Educations and Training Institutions, and for Government as discussed next.

With regards to self-care, most respondents recommended various coping strategies such as spa treatments, retail therapy, spirituality, exercise, taking leave from work, spending time with significant others, adequate supervision, debriefing about the work with each other, with significant others or with a professional counsellor. Such aspects are regarded as protective factors against burnout.

Respondents suggested recommendations for SW employers. These recommendations pertain to their wishes for better resources, consistent and effective supervision and support. They expressed that they felt more motivated when they are acknowledged, valued, and given recognition at work.

The study revealed that good working relationships with collaborators are crucial for effective CPW. Respondents recommended that in order to achieve this, they would like to see forums, networking, and regular meetings with other collaborators so that the roles and responsibilities can be clarified, relationships strengthened and ultimately CP service delivery be improved.

Respondents revealed that SW education and training institutions should provide practical training in SCPW while students are at university. This is so that they may be better prepared for CPW, before entering the profession. Most emphasised and proposed the importance of the Children's Act to be taught as a thorough module at university.

With regards to recommendations for government, respondents revealed that they wish justice for victims of child abuse; perpetrators to receive stricter sentences, better working conditions for SWs and a professional voice in the drafting of CP policy and legislation.

Main recommendations are discussed next.

5.3 Recommendations

The main recommendations for SCPSW professionals, employers, SW Education and Training Institutions, Government and future researchers are discussed next, as it were derived from the main findings and conclusions of the study.

5.3.1 Recommendations to SCPSW professionals

- SWs should prioritize self-care strategies, namely quality time and social support from significant others, time off, relaxation treatments, and spirituality in order to cope with the demands of the stress of SW.

SCPSWs are encouraged to engage with Employee Wellness Practitioners and Clinical Supervision apart from the usual SW Supervision, so that their personal and professional wellbeing may be supported through regular debriefing and management of their own mental health.

5.3.2 Recommendations to Employers of SCPSWs

- The findings of this study showed that respondents are motivated by social support, and training received at work. For the improvement of work morale and

team spirit, SCPSWs should have access to workshops, further training, and regular teambuilding activities in their place of work.

- Good working relationships with SW collaborators should be fostered by employers as it makes a difference to motivation as perceived by respondents. Furthermore, it may be beneficial for productivity and efficiency of SCP service delivery. This can be explored in forums, committees and networking meetings with collaborators.
- Stress can affect cognitive abilities and lead to poor performance, poor decision-making, poor concentration and absenteeism. Respite care and time off work is useful for SWs health and in coping with stress. Thus, the mental health of SWs should matter in the workplace and should form part of company policy. The concept of a Mental Health Day should be introduced in the workplace for SWs.

5.3.3 Recommendations for SW Education and Training institutions

- SCPSW should be offered as a specialized field of study at SW education and training institutions, for those interested in CP.
- Preparation at tertiary level for SWs should include thorough Children's Act training and opportunities to apply the legislation.
- SW students could be placed at SCPSW agencies, to complete internships and to obtain SCPSW exposure that will prepare them if employed by SCPSW agencies.

5.3.4 Recommendations to Government

- Parenting issues are a critical social issue in SW. Government should relook at allocation of funding to Departments of Health and DSD to ensure that the relevant departments receive adequate funding for resources to be used in parenting and preventative programmes.

- There should be changes made to CP policy legislation that include improved implementation of social responsiveness. Responsiveness could be implemented by SAPS and Department of Justice and keeping perpetrators of children accountable for their actions and crimes against children.
- There should be advocacy for shared responsibility across all members of society for the safety and wellbeing of the country's children. Subsequently, this could affect SWs not bearing the brunt and placed at risk of burnout managing caseloads above national norms and standard requirement.
- The study revealed that SW can be a potentially dangerous job and the potential risk to SCPSWs physical and psychological health as result of exposure to danger. Thus a safety allowance for SCPSW should be considered.
- SW is an essential skill that requires qualified, skilled and professional interventions. Thus, it is of paramount importance that SW salaries be revised not only to attract prospective SWs, but to also ensure that SW salary disparities are addressed and that these professionals are paid on par with other professionals with similar professional qualifications. Ultimately, revised salaries would contribute to retention of skilled workers.

5.3.5 Recommendations for future researchers

- Further in-depth research into perceptions and experiences of not only SCPSWs, but also SWs in Departments of Health, Education, and Justice in South Africa is required.
- In-depth comparative studies about resource allocation, salaries, and levels of job satisfactions of government and non-government SWs in South Africa are needed.
- In terms of advocacy and lobbying for the SW profession, the professional voices of SWs should be heard through ongoing research so that their rights can be advocated for their basic needs to be met.

- Due to stress and secondary trauma SWs are exposed to, more research focusing on coping and wellbeing of SWs in South Africa is critical.
- Many researchers conduct studies at organizations without providing constructive feedback to organizations. These findings could be employed to bring about positive changes in CP services and ultimately the future of SCPSW.

5.4 Concluding statement

Chapter five concluded the research with its main conclusions of the study as well as recommendations for improvement of SCPSW service delivery. The findings reveal that SW is a profession proven to be in relationship with all aspects of life, and depth and creativity with both rewards and challenges. It takes courage engaging in this profound and essential work. If we are to evolve towards a compassionate and honourable society then we are to heed the voices in this study and dedicate more resources to unlock the value which these profound people, and their thankless profession, positively bring about constructive change in South Africa today

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter requesting permission from Social Work organisation

To whom it may concern

December 2016

MASTERS DEGREE RESEARCH INTERVIEW SESSIONS

The purpose of this letter is to request permission to conduct the above-mentioned partial research for the qualification of the Masters in Clinical Social Work Degree at the University of Cape Town. It is hoped that this research may contribute to the body of literature and research in the Child Protection field. The data will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity and the findings of the research could be availed to the participants and organisation after completion.

The researcher wishes to conduct interviews with random social service practitioners in Child Protection who are available for participation in the study at the time of the research, and who are volunteering to participate and contribute to Social Work research. The interviews will be not more than an hour long depending on the pace of the participant and can be done at any time convenient to the employer or respondent.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have queries regarding the above.

Sincerely,

Georgina Atkins (Ms)

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

AN EXPLORATION INTO STATUTORY SOCIAL WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THEIR CHILD PROTECTION WORK

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. These questions are part of a study that seeks to understand the experiences, and perceptions that Statutory Social Workers hold of their Child Protection work. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the Child Protection social work body of literature. The interviews are also being conducted as part of the fulfilment of the researcher's Masters in Clinical Social Work at the University of Cape Town. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. No one in your organisation will ever know how you answered the questions. The study is voluntary. If you do not want to answer any of the questions, you do not have to. No one else will know your decision.

Signing this document indicates an agreement to the terms above as well as providing consent to take part in this study. Thank you for your participation.

I _____(name) agree to participate in the research project identified above being conducted by Georgina Atkins, in completion of her Masters in Social work at the University of Cape Town.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project has been explained to me and is clear.
2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate. I have the right not to answer any of the questions. I understand that I have the right to opt out at any part of the research.
3. Participation involves being interviewed by Georgina Atkins.

4. The interview will last approximately 45 to an hour minutes depending on answers provided.
5. I allow the researcher(s) to record the sessions and take notes with the understanding that my identity remains confidential to anyone other than the researcher herself.
6. I have been given the explicit guarantees that, if I wish so, the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Respondent's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

For further information, please contact:

Researcher:

Georgina Atkins

ginaatkins@gmail.com

Research Supervisor

Cindee Bruyns

cindee.bruyns@uct.ac.za

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview schedule

PARTICIPANT CHOSEN NUMBER:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Georgina Atkins, and I would like to interview to you about your Statutory Child Protection Social Work. The interview should be between 45 minutes and 1 hour long depending on the length of answers, that will be provided.

1. THE PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

1.1 Personal

- 1.1.1. What is your preferred language?
- 1.1.2. Is it the same as your clients' language?
Does this impact on the work? If yes, how?
- 1.1.3. If you do not mind me asking, what is your age?
Does a Social Worker's age impact on their work?
If so, how?
- 1.1.4. What gender do you identify with?
Does a Social Worker's gender impact on the work?
If yes, how?
- 1.1.5. What race do you identify with?
Does a Social Worker's race impact on the work?
If yes, how?

1.2 Professional/Educational information

- 1.2.1. What is your educational qualification, and where did you study?
- 1.2.2. What was your major (stream, if applicable)?
Do you feel it prepared you sufficiently for your work?
How/how not?
- 1.2.3. How many years of Social Work experience do you have, and how many of those years are Child Protection work?
- 1.2.4. How long are you working at the present organisation?

2. PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES/PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CPSW

- 2.1. What does a typical day for the Statutory Child Protection Social Worker look like?
- 2.2. (Explore) Tell me specifically about your statutory roles and responsibilities?
(Probe) How do you feel about it?
- 2.3. What time do you start, and end work?
- 2.4. Do you have to work overtime?
(Explore) How often?
- 2.5. If yes, how do you feel about that?

- 2.6 Can you tell me how the pay is generally for the work?
(Explore) Do you feel the pay of fair for the work?
(Probing) Does the pay cover all your basic needs?
- 2.7 Tell me, what are your most rewarding or positive experiences of your Child Protection work?
(Explore) Why are these most rewarding?
(Explore) How does it make you feel?
- 2.8 Tell me, what are your most difficult experiences of your Child Protection your work?
(Explore) Why is it difficult?
(Explore) How does it make you feel?
- 2.9 How often do you have to manage child abuse and neglect cases?
(Explore) Describe the process of managing a child abuse case?
(Explore) What parts of this process is challenging (do you struggle with) structurally and emotionally?
(Explore) What parts of this process is easier for you?
- 2.10 What sort of feelings is experienced by you during that process?
(Explore). How do you manage these challenges?
(Explore) How does it impact on you personally?
And professionally?

2.11 Work / office environment

- 2.11.1 Please describe your office environment
(Explore) How do you feel about your office environment?
- 2.11.2 Do you have enough resources to do the work in your office?
How do you feel about the resources available to do your work?
(Explore) What resources are lacking?
(Explore) What resources are sufficient?

2.12 Describe the context of the community where you work

- 2.12.1 (Explore) How far do you travel to the community?
- 2.12.2 How does that impact on you?
- 2.12.3 (Explore) What are the main issues within this community?
- 2.12.4 Does it impact on you?
- 2.12.5 If yes, how?
- 2.12.6 How do you feel about working in this community?
- 2.12.7 How secure do you feel in the community?

3. PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF Child Protection Social Work

- 3.1 What motivated you to become a Statutory Child Protection Social Worker?
- 3.2 What motivates you to remain a Statutory Child Protection Social Worker?
- 3.3 How does Statutory Child Protection Social Work make you feel; (explore) Personally?
And professionally?
- 3.4 Is statutory Child Protection work what you expected it to be?

- (Explore) How? / How not?
- 3.5 Is the work interesting for you?
(Explore) In what way?
4. **Perceptions of personal and professional growth**
Does the CP organisation offer sufficient room for growth?
(Explore) How have you grown in this organisation/profession?
(Explore) What sort of achievements have you experienced in your work?
5. **Perceptions of Clients**
- 5.1 Describe your clients?
- 5.2 What impact does your clients have on you (explore)
Personally?
And professionally?
- 5.3 How do (you think) they view you?
(What is your perception?)
- 5.4 Do you feel they recognise what you do?
- 5.6 How do you feel working with your clients?
(Explore)
6. **Perception about recognition received**
Do you feel that society recognises what SWs do? How?
Do you feel that government recognises what SWs do? How?
7. **Perception about Legislation**
- 7.1 What legislation do you apply in your statutory CPW?
Did you receive training on it?
- 7.2 What is helpful about applying the legislation and why?
- 7.3 Is there anything challenging about applying the legislation (if yes, why?)
- 8 **Perceptions about training experienced at work**
- 8.1 Have you received any other training (on the job) for your CPW?
(Explore) What sort of training?
(Explore) How do you feel about the training?
9. **SYSTEMS / EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS**
- 9.1 **Personal**
- 9.1 What and who are your main support systems?
(Explore) How?
- 9.2 **Home and family**
- 9.2.1 Who do you live with?
- 9.2.2 Do you talk to your friends and family about your work?
- 9.2.3 Keeping confidentiality in mind, is it positive or challenging talking about work
(debrief) to those at home?

- 9.2.4 Taking into account that others do not always understand or are able to handle what we experience in our work, what are their opinions of your work and how does it make you feel?
- 9.2.5 So when you debrief at home or use support systems, what are your main sources of coping with the emotional demands of the work?

9.3 Work environment

What and who are your main support systems at work?
Is it sufficient?
How, and with you do you debrief from your work?

9.4 Describe your team members?

- 9.4.1 (Explore) How do you get along with your team members?
- 9.4.2 (Explore) What are the positive aspects about your team?
- 9.4.3 (Explore) What are the negative aspects about your team?
- 9.4.4 Do you feel supported by them?
How?

9.5. Tell me about supervision? (If not mentioned by respondent above)

- 9.5.1 How often do you receive supervision at work?
- 9.5.2 Is it sufficient?
- 9.5.3 (Explore) Do you feel supported?
- 9.5.4 (Explore) Why? / Why not?

9.6 Perceptions of the multidisciplinary / interdepartmental collaborators (stakeholders) of statutory CPW

- 9.6.1 Who are they?
- 9.6.2 (Explore) Describe your daily interactions with them?
- 9.6.3 (Explore) How do you feel about working with them?
- 9.6.4 (Explore) What are the positives working with them?
- 9.6.5 Are there any difficult experiences of working with these collaborators?
- 9.6.6 (Explore) Do they recognise what you do?

10. PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 In your view, what can be done to improve Child Protection service delivery?
 - 10.1.1 What recommendations do you have for other Social Workers?
 - 10.1.2 At work /within the agency
 - 10.1.3 What recommendations do you have for Social Workers' interdepartmental collaborators/ role-players?
 - 10.1.4 What recommendations do you have for statutory Child Protection Social Work education and training?
 - 10.1.5 What recommendations do you have for statutory Child Protection legislation?
 - 10.1.6 What recommendations do you have for national improvements to Child Protection laws and procedures?

11. **Conclusion**

11.1 Where do you see yourself in the future?

11.2 Do you feel like there is anything you still want to say that was not covered yet, but that you feel is important?

11.3 Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your time and contribution to the research!