



Title: The perceptions of the teaching staff regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social work (BSW) program at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science in Clinical Social Work

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February 2020

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2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the accomplishment of this study it is my honour to pay homage to a few special individuals that contributed to its completion.

To the almighty who is the centre of my universe, Shukr YAllah for granting me the strength to keep going whenever I felt weary. Your promise is indeed true that after hardship surely comes ease. Allahu Akbar.

To my husband Ishmael thank you for being supportive, patient and constantly reassuring me that I was capable of doing whatever I set out to. Even when I had trouble believing it myself.

To my mother Zainub and my sister Venus I can't put into words the gratitude I have towards you both. Through the tough times and the tears, you have always reminded me of my inner strength. For the constant emotional and financial support towards achieving this dream I will forever be grateful. Without you this wouldn't be possible I thank the almighty for always having you both in my corner.

To my darling friend and sister Tafadzwa, thank you for your friendship, loyalty, support and sacrifice to always lend me a helping hand this did not go unnoticed.

To the participants I am forever indebted to you all for taking the time out of your busy schedules to engage with me in this study, I thank you all.

Last but definitely not least to my supervisor Fatima thank you.

This is dedicated to my late father. You always believed in me. I hope as you look down on me you are proud. Every day I wish you were here to see this, rest well. I love you.

ABSTRACT

The Apartheid system had a tremendous effect on education in South Africa. Education occurred in segregated environments, controlled by the government. The racial differentiation in universities was a clear indication of what was occurring within the society. Post-Apartheid many reforms have been made towards ensuring equal access and redress of the past inequalities especially in education. With the huge responsibility being placed on social workers in working with vulnerable populations. The aim of social work education is to promote critical responsive practice and to train students to ensure effective service delivery. This study explores the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social work (BSW) program at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

The study investigated the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding the current selection process at the University of Cape Town, the benefits of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process, the possible challenges that could be encountered and the recommendations thereof. The study adopted a qualitative research approach where data was collected using a semi structured interview schedule. The population interviewed was the University of Cape Town Department of Social Development teaching staff. The findings of the study show that there is limited knowledge of the current selection process among the teaching staff as the university uses a generalised selection process managed by administrative staff. The results of the study reveal that implementing a specific selection process could promote a higher standard of practice and may improve the reputation of the social work profession. The findings further indicated that there could be variations between the department and the university requirements if the department was mandated to manage selection of its students therefore initiating conversations around selection could be valuable. Lastly the study recommends the need for a selection process that reflected not only on the academic ability but also the personal qualities of an applicant through submission of personal statements and motivational letters, and conducting oral and demonstration interviews

Table of Contents

COMPULSORY DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	1
1.2 Rationale and Significance of the study	2
1.3 Geographical location of the study	3
1.4 Formulated research topic	3
1.5 Main research questions	3
1.6 Research Objectives	4
1.7 Main Assumptions	4
1.8 Definition of Concepts	4
1.9 Ethical Considerations	5
1.9.1 Informed Consent	5
1.9.2 Voluntary Participation	5
1.9.3 Deception of respondents	5
1.9.4 Avoidance of Harm	5
1.9.5 Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality	6
1.9.6 Competence of the researcher	6
1.9.7 Release of publication of findings	6
1.9.8 Debriefing of respondents	7
1.10 Reflexivity	7
1.11 Structure of the dissertation	7
1.12 Conclusion	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8

2.0 Introduction	8
2.1 Policy and legislation	8
2.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa	8
2.1.2 The Higher Education Act	8
2.2 Theoretical frameworks	9
2.2.1 General Systems Theory	10
2.2.2 The Theory of Change	11
2.3 Higher Education in South Africa (pre and post-Apartheid)	13
2.3.1 Access (from equity to efficiency)	14
2.3.2 Student Transition	15
2.3.3 Student Retention	19
2.4 Social Work Education	19
2.5 Selection of students to a tertiary institution	21
2.6 Benefits of selection criteria for Social Work	25
2.7 Challenges of implementing selection criteria for Social Work	26
2.8 Different forms of selection	28
2.9 Conclusion	31
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	32
3.0 Introduction	32
3.1 Research Design	32
3.2 Population & Sampling	33
3.3 Data Collection Method	34
3.4 Data Analysis	35
3.5. Data Verification	36
3.5.1 Credibility	36
3.5.2 Transferability	36
3.5.3 Dependability	37
3.5.4 Trustworthiness	37
3.6 Limitations of the study	37

3.6.1 Research design	37
3.6.2 Sample Size	37
3.6.3 Data Collection	38
3.6.4 Data Analysis	38
3.6.5 Researcher bias in qualitative research	38
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS.....	40
4.0. Introduction.....	40
4.1 Profile of respondents	40
4.2 Framework of Analysis.....	42
4.3 Findings.....	43
4.3.1 Objective One: To investigate the perceptions of teaching staff regarding the current selection process	43
4.3.2 Objective Two: To investigate the teaching staff perception on the benefits of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process	49
4.3.3 Objective Three: To examine what the teaching staff perceive the challenges of implementing a BSW specific selection process would be.....	53
4.3.4 Objective Four: To explore the recommendations, the teaching staff, make regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work program.....	60
4.4 Conclusion	64
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
5.0 Introduction.....	65
5.1 Conclusions.....	65
5.1.1 Objective One: To investigate the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding the current selection process	65
5.1.2 Objective Two: To investigate the teaching staff perceptions of the benefits of implementing a BSW specific selection process.	66
5.1.3 Objective Three: To examine what the teaching staff perceive the challenges of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process would be.....	67
5.1.4 Objective Four: To explore the recommendations, the teaching staff, make regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work program.....	67
5.2 Recommendations	69
5.2.1 Recommendations to the Department of Social Development.....	69
5.2.2 Recommendations for the faculty	70
5.2.3 Recommendations for future research.....	70

5.4 Conclusion	71
References	72
APPENDIX A	80
A.1 CONSENT FORM	80
APPENDIX B	81
B.1 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	81

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This research explored the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work programme at University of Cape Town (UCT). This chapter discusses the statement of the problem, the rationale, the geographical location of the study, the research topic, questions, objectives and the main assumptions. It presents the clarification of concepts used in the study and ethical considerations, reflexivity, structure of the dissertation and lastly a conclusion.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Apartheid system affected the nature of educational provision in South Africa, as education occurred in segregated environments. This meant that every aspect of education was cast in a racial mould including educational budget provisions, the structure of educational administrations, the arrangement of staff and pupils in schools and universities, the nature of curriculum followed, and the philosophy prevalent in schools. Education was a weapon used to create a deeper racial divide. In the Apartheid era, large government departments controlled higher education institutions. The racial differentiation of universities was a clear replication once again of what was taking place within society as any 'non-white' race was confined to strictly 'black' universities (Bell & Mckay, 2011; Reddy, 2004). This led to some people being disadvantaged with regards to accessing quality education.

The Apartheid era was followed by an introduction of transformation agendas towards equal access and redress of these past inequalities. Such transformation of the education sector required an overhaul of the past educational order, a revaluation of the culture prevalent in educational institutions throughout the country and a shift in mentality from being undemocratic and authoritarian to being non-racial, democratic and enabling (Waghid, 2002).

Social work education is a means towards promoting a critical responsive practice that can ensure service delivery based on the needs of the service users, while creating clear and sustainable progress in the lives of people which are the conditions necessary for social justice to exist (Esau & Keet, 2014). Additionally, education is a means of developing critical and reflective capabilities in social work students to complement their practical capabilities and to promote their personal and professional socialisation (Esau & Keet, 2014). The Social Work Taskforce as cited in Hughes (2011) makes recommendations for entry into the profession

which emphasises the need for social work students to have particular personal qualities such as insight, common sense, confidence, resilience, empathy and the use of authority. This therefore, motivates the need to explore the selection process of students into the Bachelor of social work programme at University of Cape Town.

1.2 Rationale and Significance of the study

Rutherford and Watson, (1990 quoted in Maree 2002) point out that in most of the countries around the world; the number of places available in the numerous fields of study is smaller than the number of students who apply for admission. According to Collins and Van Breda (2010), students opt for social work either because other perceived demanding programmes do not accept them, or the Department of Social Development bursary makes provisions for social work study only. However, some students might have no interest in becoming social workers. They often do not have role models or mentors to equip them for learning or professional practice. Students are in some cases misinformed about what social work is and their motivation is merely to pursue higher education. This begs the question on what the teaching staff's views are on the selection into the Bachelor of Social work (BSW) program at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

A distinguishing feature of social work is its emphasis on knowledge, skills, values and processes with one of the most fundamental values deriving from person-centred principles of unconditional positive regard, validation and affirmation of all human beings that rest on a sophisticated ability to be non-judgemental in so far as personhood is concerned (South African Council for Social Service Professions, 2016). These qualities further highlight the responsibility placed on social workers in dealing with all groups of people. Social work regards both the academic ability of an individual and the non-academic qualities as well. Therefore, it is important to explore the influence of the selection process for Bachelor of Social Work program (BSW) at UCT. An, inefficient or ill-defined selection process can bring a negative impression on applicants and question applicant suitability. Having a well-documented selection process that facilitates clear articulation of important criteria, clear definition of preferences, efficiency in accurately assessing applicant profiles, and selection of a well-qualified individual contributes to the overall academic wellbeing of an institution (Grandzol, 2011).

Due to the limited availability of information regarding selection in social work education, this study explored the insights of the teaching staff at UCT regarding selection into the BSW

program. In order to gain insight on a topic that has very limited information and contribute to this area of study, the study will bring forth literature on selection process into BSW programme. The findings of the study would benefit the Department of Social Development in that it could be used to inform how applicants are selected and contribute to program development. The study would recommend on whether UCT should maintain the current selection process of students into BSW programme or improve the selection process by making the process more particular to social work in order to select students with interest in social work.

1.3 Geographical location of the study

This qualitative, phenomenological study was centred on one of the oldest universities in South Africa. The University of Cape Town (UCT) is one of Africa's leading teaching and research institutions. Social work has been taught at the university since 1924 and is offered within the Faculty of Humanities by the Department of Social Development (University of Cape Town, 2018). The department offers professional education and training in a range of social service fields with social work being the foundational professional program. In addition to social work the department offers training in numerous fields such as social policy and management, social development, probation, correctional, forensic practice and clinical social work (University of Cape Town, 2018). The staff of the department comprises of nine permanent and nineteen part time staff, two administrative staff and one field practice assistant. It offers both undergraduate and postgraduate level training with both South African and international students. The researcher was a Master of Social Science in Clinical Social Work at UCT and a part time field practice supervisor. In her work with the department it was observed that students occasionally face challenges with meeting the ethical requirements and the BSW practice demands. The researcher therefore questioned as to whether having the BSW selection process could mitigate the said challenges.

1.4 Formulated research topic

The perceptions of the teaching staff regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

1.5 Main research questions

- 1.5.1 What are the perceptions of the teaching staff on the current students' selection process for the BSW?
- 1.5.2 What do the teaching staff perceive the benefits would be of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process?

1.5.3 What do the teaching staff perceive as challenges of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process?

1.5.4 What recommendations would the teaching staff make regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work Program?

1.6 Research Objectives

1.6.1 To investigate the perceptions of the teaching staff on the current students' selection process.

1.6.2 To investigate the teaching staff perception of the benefits of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process.

1.6.3 To examine what the teaching staff perceive as challenges of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process.

1.6.4 To explore the recommendations, the teaching staff, make regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work Program.

1.7 Main Assumptions

The assumptions in this study were that some teaching staff may feel that the current selection process is working effectively. The teaching staff may also have in mind an ideal selection process model. The researcher assumes that some teaching staff would argue that because of the professional requirements of the program that selection is necessary.

1.8 Definition of Concepts

Perceptions are the psychic impressions made by the five senses and the way these impressions are interpreted cognitively and emotionally, based on one's life experiences (Barker, 2003). In this study this refers to the insights, views and opinions of teaching staff at the University of Cape Town.

Selection is defined as the act or the process of choosing, or the items being chosen (Wallace, 2009). Wallace (2009) states that selection is the practice of selecting intake of learners through testing. In this research, selection is defined as the process of choosing an appropriate candidate who meets the requirements for a specific program.

Bachelor of Social Work Degree (BSW) is the entry level of professional Social Work practice (Barker, 2003). This is a 4year degree program offered in the Faculty of Humanities within the Department of Social Development at UCT. Upon completion, students are able to register as qualified professionals with the South African Council for Social Services Professions (University of Cape Town, 2018).

Teaching staff refers to one who teaches in a school also applies in a wider context to include professionals in other educational institutions (Wallace, 2009). For this research study, teaching staff included both the academic staff and the second and fourth year field practice supervisors in the Department of Social Development. The third-year supervisors were not included, and the reasons for this will be discussed at a later stage.

1.9 Ethical Considerations

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, (2011) ethics are defined as a set of moral principles which are used in the field of social research that are implemented by an individual or group and are accepted as they offer behavioural expectations and rules needed when conducting a study.

1.9.1 Informed Consent

This is the process that entails seeking permission, provision of accurate and complete information ensuring that the subject fully understands the detail of the study and therefore individuals are able to make a voluntary, comprehensively coherent decision about their possible participation in the study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). For this research the participants were informed of the nature of the research and were asked to complete a consent form (see Appendix A).

1.9.2 Voluntary Participation

This is when the researcher is collecting consent for a study and does not force participants to sign the informed consent form. Participation in a study should be voluntary and the researcher should explain in the instructions for the consent form that participants can decide not to participate in the study (Cresswell, 2014). For this study the participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

1.9.3 Deception of respondents

According to De Vos et al. (2011), deception involves withholding information, or offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation of subjects when they would otherwise possibly have refused. The researcher clearly identified herself as UCT master's student and the participants were clearly informed of the purpose of the research.

1.9.4 Avoidance of Harm

This is when a researcher may accept that harm to respondents in the social sciences will be mainly of an emotional nature, although physical injury cannot be ruled out. Social work research projects may also force participants to face aspects of themselves that they do not

normally consider (De Vos et al., 2011). To protect participants from any harm, this study informed participants that they could withdraw from the study when they felt threatened. This was outlined in the written consent and discussed verbally.

1.9.5 Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality

Privacy is the ability to keep to oneself what is intended for others to analyse or observe (De Vos et al., 2011). It was the role of the researcher to ensure that the privacy of the participants was kept at all times. For the research the interviews were conducted in an environment that was free from disturbance and where the participants felt comfortable. Confidentiality refers to agreements between persons that limit others access to private information. Confidentiality can be viewed as a continuation of privacy, which refers to the agreements between persons that limit others access to private information (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher is registered with the South African council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP). As such, she is bound by the code of ethics of the SACSSP which has confidentiality as a core component. The researcher made use of pseudonyms for the participants to maintain confidentiality. De Vos et al. (2011) defines anonymity as complete non-identification of any of the participants by anyone who will read the report or the researcher. The transcriptions and recordings were kept anonymous as the responses were not matched to the participants. The researcher could not guarantee absolute anonymity because she transcribed the interviews thereby making her aware of what each participant communicated. She protected anonymity as far as possible.

1.9.6 Competence of the researcher

According to De Vos et al. (2011), the competent researcher has the role to design, plan and report on the information gathered in terms of the sampling procedure, the research population, the methodology used, and how the data is to be processed and written in the research report. The researcher is a Master of Social Science in Clinical Social Work student at UCT and she was receiving supervision throughout the research process.

1.9.7 Release of publication of findings

This is when report writing must have clarity and be informative to readers ensuring that they understand written work. Therefore, an ethical obligation rests upon the researcher to ensure the investigation proceeds correctly and that no one is deceived by the findings (De Vos et al., 2011). In this research, the researcher produced a final report that is accurate and clear, containing complete details of study topic, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations. It abides by ethical standards. Recognition and acknowledgement will be given to other people's work through referencing.

1.9.8 Debriefing of respondents

This process ensures that subjects get the opportunity, after the study, to work through their experience and its aftermath, and where they can have their questions answered and misconceptions removed (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher offered debriefing however none of the participants felt that debriefing was required.

1.10 Reflexivity

Qualitative research ensures that the researcher establishes how their role in the study and their personal background, culture and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations, such as themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data (Cresswell, 2014). The researcher has been working as a third-year field practice supervisor within the Department of Social Development and through her work in the department she encountered many students who face challenges with meeting the ethical requirements of the BSW. The researcher thought that selection would possibly deal with this problem by determining the suitability of applicants for the program. This generated her interest in exploring the perceptions of teaching staff at UCT regarding selection of students for the BSW program. The researcher was mindful of her own opinion that selection is important and reflected on her own views throughout the research process and discussed this with supervisor.

1.11 Structure of the dissertation

The first chapter presented the introduction to the study, followed by the second chapter which presents the literature review and the third chapter which discusses the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study and the final chapter elucidates the conclusions and recommendations based on the study findings.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research study. This encompassed the statement of the problem, the rationale, the research topic, questions and objectives for the research. The clarification of the concepts used in the research, the main ethical considerations, reflexivity and lastly the overall structure of the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of literature pertaining to the study. It will present the policies linked to the study and the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. The chapter discusses social work education, selection as a process, different forms of selection, the benefits and challenges of the implementation of selection and lastly the recommendations that can be made regarding selection. The chapter concludes with a brief conclusion.

2.1 Policy and legislation

The following policies pertain to the study:

2.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 section 29-32 (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 1256) guarantees that everyone has the right to education including adult education. Therefore, the state through reasonable measures must make education progressively available and accessible. The Constitution further states that every person has the right to receive education in the official language or language of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably attainable (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 1256).

The Constitution declares that the state should consider all reasonable educational alternatives including single medium institutions taking into account equity, practicability and the need to redress the results of the past racially discriminative laws and practices (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 1256). This puts great emphasis for access to education to be fair and impartial, yet practical while also addressing the result of past racially discriminatory laws and practices. The majority of South Africans speak English as a second language and are required to possess a pass in English to be able to be admitted into tertiary education, and this persists today. Due to the country's political history, someone who is potentially highly suited for academia would be disadvantaged because English is not South Africa's first language.

2.1.2 The Higher Education Act

The aim of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, is to regulate higher education by ensuring the establishment, composition and functioning of a Council on Higher Education (CHE). The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 aimed to establish a single co-ordinated higher education system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based higher education. The Act restructured and transformed institutions and programmes to respond better to the human resource, economic and development needs of the Republic while additionally

redressing past discrimination. The Act seeks to ensure representation and equal access for all. Its aim is to provide optimal opportunities for learning and the creation of knowledge and promote the values which underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom, respect of freedom of religion, belief and opinion and encourage democracy, academic freedom, freedom of speech and expression, creativity, scholarship and research (South African Parliament, 1997).

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 aims to pursue excellence and promote the full realisation of the potential of every student and employee with tolerance of ideas appreciation of diversity while responding to the needs of the Republic and of the communities served by the institutions. While contributing to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with international standards of academic quality and whereas it is desirable for higher education institutions to enjoy freedom and autonomy in their relationship with the State. Within the context of public accountability and the national need for advanced skills and scientific knowledge. The Act further delineates that it is essential to establish a single co-ordinated higher education system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based higher education with the restructure and transformation of programmes and institutions to respond better to the human resource, economic and development needs of the Republic (South African Parliament, 1997: 29). However, access to university education is limited by available space and cost. This therefore entails that not every person who is qualified to attain university education has a chance of pursuing university education in South Africa.

2.2 Theoretical frameworks

Within the context of social work, a theory is “an organised set of assumptions, beliefs or ideas about particular phenomena in work the world. Theory is synonymous to a hypothesis, presumption, speculation, belief, idea and philosophy and is used to help explain or predict situations, actions and consequences.” (Teater, 2015:3). “Social work theories are foundational for social work practice as they provide an understanding, explanation and prediction of human behaviour, social structures and social interactions (Teater, 2015: 2). For the purpose of this research General Systems Theory and Change Theory were appropriate theoretical frameworks.

2.2.1 General Systems Theory

General systems theory (GST) was developed by a biologist, named Ludwig von Bertalanffy which refers to “a general science of ‘wholeness’ (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). According to Bertalanffy, it is important to look at systems as a whole, because in the past, science tried to explain observable phenomena by reducing them to an interplay of elementary units investigable independently of each other. General Systems Theory is of the notion that nothing could be understood by separating merely one part of what plays a significant role in a system and nothing can be explained by separating a component of a system. Systems theory states that individuals do not live in isolation. Rather, they exist as part of an influential social system of family, friends, peers, media, schools, and workplaces (McMahon, 2005). The theory goes on to identify that individuals live as part of an environmental-societal system containing influences such as socioeconomic circumstances, geographic location, political and historical influences, as well as that of globalisation (McMahon, 2005). The systems perspective is used to analyse systems within society.

Systems form a whole of complex units in which specific interacting relationships with mutual influences take place (Collins & Millard, 2013). Systems contain various elements that enable functionality, that also necessitate the relation of that system interacting with other systems, which may cause a change or reaction within the main system (Teater, 2015: 16). For example, systems exist within a social environment, and factors in the social environment affect the system and its outcomes and outputs. The system would further interface and interact with other systems. Thinking of the functionality of a particular system can aid in assessing the extent to which the system is succeeding in satisfying that resolve and to determine areas of weakness or dysfunction. This is informative as it highlights areas that can be strengthened to improve the organisation functions and support the individuals and subsystems within it.

In General Systems Theory, there are two different types of systems: closed systems and open systems. Closed systems are systems that are isolated from its environment, and open systems are systems that interact with its environment (Von Bertalanffy, 1968). For example, all organisms are generally considered an open system as there is import and export of material. Conversely, a closed system, is a system where no material enters or leaves it. An example of a closed system is an ethnic minority community that has limited access to cultural institutions due to active discrimination. Therefore, highlighting how closed systems are isolated from their environment. In the context of this study, an open system entails student selection criteria that

allows having specific criteria for selecting Bachelor of Social Work students at UCT. On the other hand, a closed system entails the use of one general criteria for selecting students into all programmes including BSW at UCT.

2.2.2 The Theory of Change

Theory based methods are applicable to a range of disciplines for example, education, community development and public health (Egan & Fjermestad, 2005). In the 1940s, a social psychologist called Kurt Lewin developed the Theory of Change also known as Lewin's Theory of Planned Change. It is a theory of what and how an initiative works which can be tested by measuring indicators for every step on the pathway to impact. The theory was developed in collaboration with stakeholders and adapted throughout the intervention and evaluation process. The Theory of Change provide structure for monitoring, evaluation and learning. It has pioneered studies in group dynamics and organisational development (Shirer, 2013: 69), and this had assisted in understanding change and how it could be applied to various contexts.

Lewin's Theory of Change may be explained using the force field analysis framework which "specifies 'forces' as driving (helping forces) or as restraining (hindering forces) towards a goal" (Shirer, 2013: 69). Lewin suggested that identifying the 'force' would aid in understanding why individuals, groups and organisations act or respond the way they do and be informative in revealing which forces should be strengthened or diminished to bring about change (Shirer, 2013: 69). The theory constitutes of three elements namely; (i) unfreezing (getting ready for change), (ii) moving/transitioning (change process or reaction to change) and (iii) refreezing (stabilising the change) (Shirer, 2013: 69-70).

Considering the history of the educational system in South Africa, the segregationist policies prevalent during the Apartheid era influenced the educational system and necessitated reform. The unfreezing phase is a stage that may be characterised by a desire of change, or where recognition of change is needed (Kaminski, 2011: 1). The unfreezing change is a stage in which an awareness is created to motivate for a need to have change. Post-Apartheid the educational system has sought for changes that redress past segregationist policies and move towards an integrated and inclusive educational system for all individuals in and around our communities. As the journey to change is not a distinct linear phase, it is rather a series of dynamic and continuous adaptation to the environment. The field of social work is multidimensional and requires the adaptability of individuals to changing environments. Thus, change in social work may be frequent compared to other professions. Since social work practice continuously

evolves, the underlying foundational principle stems from incorporating theory and practice. In this study, the researcher conducted an analysis to assess the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding selection process for the undergraduate BSW program at the University of Cape Town. The researcher sought to explore if there is a need for change from having a generic selection process to a specific selection process for the program.

The second stage of change entails the movement or the transition towards the change and acquainting with a new learned behaviour for the change and ensuring transparency in communication. This starts from identification and conceptualising a problem, acquiring information about relevant dynamics and developing alternative solutions. The transformation phase in change has been described as the hardest stage of change, as there may be elements of uncertainty such as the fear of unknown, achieving success or failure (Shirer, 2013: 70). According to Laing and Todd (2015: 3) “Theory of Change is a theory-based approach to planning, implementing or evaluating change at an individual, organisational or community level.” However, an assumption is made that an action is purposeful. The Theory of Change helps to explain and understand how a project or initiative is intended to achieve outcomes through actions, while taking into account its context.

During the second phase, there may be alterations in the way of thinking from what you are doing towards what it is that needs to be achieved. In an effort to ensure relevant and reliable service delivery, the Department of Social Work at UCT seeks to integrate feedback from industry placements and note the needed areas for improvement. In Lewin’s theory of change, it is necessary for individuals or organisations to be willing to make the changes knowing all the risks and rewards that may be encountered. In line with the transformation agenda of the country of South Africa, the University of Cape Town has implemented transformations across all disciplines in the institution as a way of adopting change with the increasing demand for university education and calls for changes in curriculum and teaching to respond to changes in the industry needs. To this effect, there is a need to unfreeze the current selection process for BSW so that students are well scrutinised to assess if they have interest in social work and attributes that will make them succeed in social work university education and practice within the field.

Refreezing is the last step in Lewin’s change model and demands stabilising the change so that it becomes embedded into existing systems such as culture, policies, and practices (Shirer, 2013: 70). At this stage, all stakeholders involved are required to adjust to the new practice and

develop sustainability of the change in order to adapt to the changes constantly occurring. Participation and contribution to change brings about a new dynamic, wherein, there is a higher level of performance and expectation when a new point of equilibrium is reached (Shirer, 2013: 70). In this study, the expected change is from the study's assumption that the current selection programme is too general and is concerning when selecting students hence the need to adopt a specialised selection process for Bachelor of Social Work programme.

2.3 Higher Education in South Africa (pre and post-Apartheid)

Transformation in higher education within South Africa has undergone some changes in recent years, and an understanding of these changes within the context of South Africa is needed. There is the ongoing complexity in distinguishing the nature of higher education in South Africa in past and present phases. It is difficult to explain higher education as a "system with coherence and an undifferentiated identity" (Ouma, 2004: 6). This suggests that it is a challenge to explain the complexity in higher education due to the dynamic and inter-linked factors and different contexts in which higher education institutions operate in South Africa.

Since the existence of segregationist policies were apparent and reinforced by the racist regime during the Apartheid era (1948-1990), this impacted policies and governance in the education institutions. Higher education institutions were differentiated into four exclusive groups based on the racial category designations, namely; 'African, coloured, Indian and black' (Bunting, n.d 36). By 1985, "19 higher education institutions had been designated as being 'for the exclusive use of whites', two as being 'for the exclusive use of coloureds', two 'for the exclusive use of Indians', and six as being 'for the exclusive use of Africans'" (Bunting, n.d.: 36). The existing National Party government placed legal policies that prohibited institutions designated for on racial group to enrol students from another racial group. However, such restriction could be waived in cases where there was a valid permit to state that the applicant's proposed programme of study was not available at any institution within their designated racial category. In the 1980's, the National Party government policies further distinguished educational institutions into either Universities or Technikons based on the essence of the institutions (Bunting, n.d: 36). The distinguishing criteria was the university was for science and the technikon was for technology.

Historically, white universities were differentiated based on the main medium of communication and instruction being either Afrikaans or English (Bunting, n.d). However, the divide was primarily rooted in which universities supported the National Party government

inclusive of the apartheid higher education policies and universities that opposed (Bunting, n.d.: 42). The white English-medium universities were liberal institutions funded by the government, however, they objected strongly to the policies and actions of the apartheid government (Bunting, n.d: 42). They had academic freedom and “implied they could teach what they deemed important, admit all who qualified for admission for any of their programmes and select suitable candidates as teachers” (Bunting, n.d: 42). Consequently, as these institutions were by law for whites only, they were prohibited from admitting or employing black individuals, teaching any courses that had communist ideology. Due to the ministerial permit passed in 1984, the white English-medium universities deliberately sought to admit students from other races by interpreting their applications as those not offered by their allocated universities, and by 1993, 38% of the students registered at these four institutions were either African, coloured or indian (Bunting, n.d: 42).

Post-apartheid, higher education has been undergoing change in various stages to necessitate transformation in the higher education sector (Badat, 2009: 2; Heleta, 2016). In 2008, the Department of Education stated that epistemological transformation would entail the reorientation from colonial or apartheid knowledge system, in which the curriculum was a tool for exclusion, into a democratic curriculum inclusive of all human thought (Department of Education, 2008: 89, as cited by Heleta, 2016: 2). The Department of Education further stated that the willingness to implement the transformative policies differ across institutions and this may contribute to the slight shifts in the structure and content of the curriculum (Department of Education, 2008:90, as cited by Heleta, 2016: 2).

The preceding section has presented a historical perspective of higher education in South Africa. The next section presents literature on access to higher education, students transition and student’s retention in South Africa.

2.3.1 Access (from equity to efficiency)

Within the South African context, access to higher education has undergone various changes. During the apartheid era, the policy of ‘separate development’ intensified segregationist policies that translated to the denial of ‘black’ majority to access learning experiences and well-resourced institutions of higher learning meant for ‘white’ people (Boughey, 2002: 65). Only those with access to well-resourced institutions would be at an advantage than previously marginalised/disadvantaged students. Thus, inevitably prepares the ‘white’ students for tertiary study and further widen the divide with ‘black’ students. After the democratic elections in

1994, there is avid effort to address and resolve these problems, however, it has proved to be a challenge to eradicate the past inequalities in school systems based on quality of learning experiences available to them (Boughey, 2002: 65).

The earliest attempts at equitable dispensation with regards to access in higher education were located at historically 'white' liberal institutions that admitted a small number of 'black' students due to loopholes that existed in the laws (Boughey, 2002: 66). However, these students were believed to possess the potential to succeed at tertiary level, provided that 'appropriate support' was offered, inclusive of additional classes in study skills, language and tutorials (Boughey, 2002: 66). It was assumed that problems related to access provision would be addressed in an adjunct manner (Boughey, 2002: 66/). Thereafter, shifts from addressing disadvantage at individual level towards institutions as they were thought to be constructing the disadvantage based on curriculum and teaching methodologies (Boughey, 2002: 66). Following the democratic election in 1994, educational reform was one of the first priorities aimed at improving education systems in South Africa (Boughey, 2002: 68). "South African Qualifications Act established the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) administered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The NQF was established in order to standardise, assure the quality of qualifications across educational systems" (Boughey, 2002: 68). This entails that access to higher education underwent democratisation or liberalisation for every deserving student to have access to higher education there by ending the restrictions of having special schools for whites and schools for blacks.

2.3.2 Student Transition

The aspect of student transition within an academic context has been considered multidimensional and necessitates the development of coping strategies to address academic, social and emotional demands (Baker & Siryk, 1989 as cited by Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson & Strauss 2003: 107). It is a multi-faceted concept that applies to any individual's evolution from one stage to the other. Similar to developmental changes from birth to adulthood, they are developmental milestones that one must overcome, and the same may be applied in academic phases. Various adjustments occur from before preschool, preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education, wherein each transition phase has challenges. These challenges necessitate an individual's ability to respond to change in order to succeed in transitioning between the phases. The adjustment from secondary (high school) to tertiary (university) is often challenging for first generation students (Sennett et al., 2003: 107).

Sennett et al (2003: 107) stated that “within the South African context, first generation students are most likely to be black African, whose disadvantaged educational and socioeconomic circumstances, brought about through the inequalities of apartheid.” Post-apartheid, desegregation of the institutions has occurred with resources being allocated more fairly (Sennett et al., 2003: 108), however, some individuals are educationally disadvantaged. Those that reach university either perform poorly or drop out (Sennett et al., 2003: 108). It has been argued that the underlying reason why they are low success rates or underachievement scores is due to the poor quality of education of the ‘black African’ students received (Hall, Rex, & Sutherland, 1995; Honikman, 1982 as cited by Sennett et al., 2003: 108).

Nel and associates (2009: 975) stated that students are increasingly underprepared for higher education studies (Tinto 1993; Foxcroft and Stumpf 2005; Kivilu 2006 as cited by Adam & Nel, 2009: 975). The resultant disconnects or divide between school and university transition impacts the level of academic success in the first year (Mumba, Rollnick & White 2002; Adam, 2006 as cited by Adam & Nel, 2009: 975). The highest drop-out from higher education occurs in the first academic year (Nakasa 2003; Thomas & Quinn 2007 as cited by Adam & Nel, 2009: 975) and this varies from few months to a year or university have been exacerbated by inequalities that still exist in the South African secondary school system (Mji 2002; Hay & Marais 2004, as cited by Nel et al., 2009: 975). However, the concern raised not only stems from the school system producing inadequately prepared students, but this is exacerbated by the universities that are ill-equipped to accommodate the learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (Maxakato 1999; Jones et al., 2008 as cited by Adam & Nel, 2009: 975).

Foxcroft & Stumpf (2005) as cited by Adam & Nel, (2009: 975) urged universities to develop partnerships with schools and become actively involved in preparing learners for further studies. Thus, there is a need to develop, a holistic and integrated pre-university intervention whereby universities facilitate a smoother transition from school to university Adam & Nel, 2009: 975). This may be done through career guidance or online assessment (Adam & Nel, 2009: 986). Bangeni & Kapp (2005: 2) state that research in Britain, United States of America and South Africa focused on student experiences in higher education has been done, however, they have not tracked students’ perceptions over time. They argue that a students’ ‘felt experience’ changes with time and is non-linear (Bangeni & Kapp, 2005: 3). It is often believed that students from ‘marginalised communities’ are alienated from institutional cultures and fail to aggregate into those systems (Bangeni & Kapp, 2005: 3). These students often are

underprepared for the transition in tertiary education, and they experience anxiety, alienation and are insufficiently prepared with key concepts and tools to cope (Warren 1997 as cited by Sennett et al., 2003: 108). The environment wherein the student comes from may influence the capacity for one to adapt to factors such as trauma, financial strain, familial/personal stress may play a significant role (Sennett et al., 2003: 108).

Within the South African context, the term ‘first generation students’ frequently used in literature; this term is used to define students whose “parents have no further education after high school (Dumais & Ward 2010) or as students of parents who have not graduated from a tertiary institution. The latter definition implies that the parents could still have some higher education experience, even though they did not graduate (Jehangir, 2010). First generation students depend on their parents for financial aid as much as second and third generation students whose parents have higher education experience (Adam & Nel, 2009: 986). However, the first-generation students state that their teachers had assisted them in obtaining information on studies and bursaries, whilst the latter cohort, had assistance from parents’ finances (Adam & Nel, 2009: 986). This highlighted the issue of having effective support systems to help during the academic endeavour. Additionally, another concern is despite the many financial bursaries available tailored to assist prospective first-generation students, they are not effectively utilised (Adam & Nel, 2009: 986). These students are not acquainted with bursary application procedures and tend to miss deadlines for application (Adam & Nel, 2009: 986). This may be due to inaccessibility to reliable internet access to complete the electronic forms, despite the technological advancements in the country (Adam & Nel, 2009: 986).

Within South Africa, higher education research is shaped by specific national, local and individual factors and these are summed up in two requirements, namely ‘context and paradigm’ (Strydom & Fourie, 1999: 155). Firstly, it is understanding context and institutional operation with change over time (Strydom & Fourie, 1999: 155). The second is the development of research agenda that requires a ‘paradigm’. Paradigm is defined as the overall conceptual model of how higher education systems and institutions operate (Strydom & Fourie, 1999: 156). Strydom & Fourie (1999: 156), stated that South African higher education does not have a strong tradition of institutional or systematic research. The limited research may be due to inadequate funds, material resources and expertise to engage in those projects (Strydom & Fourie, 1999: 156).

According to Badat (2010: 7), the greatest challenge in the context of higher education is the mediation of competing goals, such as values and goals in the higher education system. Government and universities have sought to pursue social equity and redress of past inequalities simultaneously, whilst under difficult political and social dilemmas (Badat, 2010: 7). The main concern raised was the inadequate public finances and academic development initiatives to support under-prepared students, who tend to be largely black and of working class or rural poor social origins (Badat, 2010: 7).

Negative implications with the lack of these initiatives compromises the production of high-quality graduates with the requisite knowledge, competencies and skills, and adversely affects economic development (Badat, 2010: 7). It has been acknowledged that cultural factors may impact a student's ability to transition from school to university especially in a South African context. Student from previously disadvantaged schools, often from the 'black' population group may experience 'culture shock' due to challenges associated with adapting to 'white', Afrikaans campus such as Stellenbosch University (Adam & Nel, 2009: 987). These include difficulties that stem from language differences, social preferences, activities as well as traditional cultural norms. Albeit, challenges in cultural diversity and adaptability apply to any individual who enters a university with a dominant culture which is different from his/her own (Rendon 1992 and cited by Adam & Nel, 2009: 987). Thus, it is important to encourage students within school or universities to be receptive to cultural diversity (Adam & Nel, 2009: 987).

Although the various factors are interdependent, previously disadvantaged student expectations in transitioning from school to tertiary education link to the students feeling underprepared or unprepared (Adam & Nel, 2009: 987). There is the apprehension that students have unrealistic expectations about maintaining their school academic performance at university, specific subjects and career options (Adam & Nel, 2009: 987). This perpetuates the anxiety students feel when they fail to attain their academic goals/grades they were accustomed to obtaining in high school. This may be misinterpreted as the students' inability to cope with the changes in learning systems for example from spoon fed to self-directed learning since they were not previously exposed to it. Adam and Nel (2009: 987) suggest that institutions ought to provide a more realistic picture of the academic challenges that learners may encounter, so that they will be adequately prepared for any anticipated changes that may likely occur during transition phases.

2.3.3 Student Retention

Research has found that student experiences fluctuate within their field of study over the duration of undergraduate academic course (Kennedy, Long, Jolivette, Cox, Tang & Thompson 2001), and this may impact the overall student attrition at the institutions (Lourens & Smit, 2003). It has been previously noted that National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE 2001 as cited by Lourens & Smit, 2003) indicated that the reasons for the decline in retention rates in South Africa are not clear and require investigation (Lourens & Smit, 2003) again there are more recent sources. There has been a concern that during the academic journey, there is the possibility and potential drop-outs from programmes. Academic withdrawal amongst full time students is characterised by three primary causes namely, a mismatch between students and their choice of field of study, financial difficulties and bad student experience which refers to the "quality of the teaching, the level of support given by staff and the organization of the program" (Yorke, 1999 as cited by Lourens & Smit, 2003). All in all, not all students enrolled in higher education programmes complete their studies due to financial challenges and other students failing to meet the academic requirements to complete their studies as such being withdrawn on academic grounds.

The above section discussed higher education and the following section will focus on social work education more specifically.

2.4 Social Work Education

Social work as a profession is defined as a professional occupation that utilises values, knowledge, skills and processes to focus on issues, needs and difficulties that arise from the interaction between individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities (South African Council for Social Service Professions, 2016). It is a service recognised by society aiming to develop the social functioning of people, while empowering them, ensuring a mutually beneficial interaction between the individual and society with the aim of improving the quality of life as indicated by Potgieter (1998, quoted in South African Council for Social Service Professions 2016).

Social work education, is not restricted to the passive acquisition of knowledge but must also focus on the personal and professional development of skills and values and the application of that learning to the person's practice. The aim of social work education is to improve the quality of the workforce through the development of competent, confident, self-aware and reflective practitioners who are able to cope with the pressures, demands and risks of the work whilst

maintaining a professional value base which places service users and carers at the heart of the process (Hughes, 2011: 688).

Social work education in South Africa aims to equip students to be able to challenge inequality, poverty, oppression, discrimination and exclusion while ensuring the promotion of social justice and preservation of human dignity (Esau & Keet, 2014; Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2014: 455). Students are equipped with knowledge of human behaviour social systems and the skills to intervene where needed, thereby leading to socially just practice. Social workers need to be educated to be critical, responsive, reflective, observant and inquisitive in practice. Social work being a professional degree is governed by values principles and ethics that have to be strictly adhered to. After completion of the 4-year degree a student is registered with the South African council for social service profession's (SACSSP) to be able to practice (Esau & Keet, 2014, Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2014) these requirements highlight the extent of responsibility that is put on social work education to be able to serve the vulnerable population competently.

According to Earle (2008: 7), The minister of the Department of Social Development refers to 'shortages' among social workers by making reference to the first announcement of social work as a 'scarce skill'. She argues that in light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and extensive poverty in South Africa developmental work needs to be undertaken on a massive scale. This will require not only an increase in the numbers of social workers, but also an increase in the numbers of other relatedly trained professionals. Additionally, during the president of South Africa's State of the Nation Address of 9 February 2007, Thabo Mbeki, highlighted the need to 'accelerate the training of family social workers at professional and auxiliary levels to ensure that identified households are properly supported and monitored'. In a study conducted by De Jager (2014: 471), regardless of the training, many social workers were leaving the field due to issues such as safety concerns, poor working conditions, burnout as well as to pursue other careers. Khunou et. al, (2012), further suggests that, in order to maintain the much needed diversity in the recruitment and retention of social workers, there is a need for the improvement of salaries, working conditions and the general status of the profession. In addition to that, the values used for recruitment should not only focus on increasing numbers in the profession but rather an effort should be made to develop a recruitment plan that attracts both women and men who have a high regard for the profession (Khunou et. al, 2012).

This not only affects the social workers themselves but the vulnerable populations they serve as they will not receive the support they need. This begs the question what initially motivated one to study social work and what may have changed along the way and how can this be addressed? Were the applicants adequately knowledgeable to make an informed decision based on the reality of the profession and its demands? Should training institutions offering Social work adopt different and applicable selection criteria for selecting students into bachelor of social work programmes?

Social work should similarly make an effort to make their curricula content informed by social work practice (De Jager, 2014: 479). In a nutshell, the student is being selected trained and will practice as a professional and therefore needs to obtain accurate knowledge and skills to ensure they begin and complete education and be able to meet the expected industry practice for social work jobs.

Social justice and human dignity are core components of social work principles and ethics therefore social work education should lead to socially just practice. Social workers ability to practise in a socially just manner relies significantly on their ability to reflect on the influence of their personal and professional socialisation and the structural inequalities that influence the lives of service users (Esau & Keet, 2014: 455). It is evident that the aims of social work and the role of education are very similar in that they both seek to promote social justice and responsive practitioners.

2.5 Selection of students to a tertiary institution

According to Zaiman, Van der Flier and Thijs (1998, quoted in Maree, 2002), the main aim of selection is usually to identify students who will flourish in a specific programme. In the wider South African context, selection was traditionally aimed to address the issue of equity, in the light of the unequal educational systems for different cultural groups under the political regime of Apartheid. Therefore, criteria development and the subsequent development of prediction models has concentrated on the identification and selection of learners with the potential to prosper, based on their results on a number of alternative tests, that is, alternative to matriculation performance Delvare, (1996 quoted in Koch & Foxcroft, 2003).

Selection into higher education in South Africa has been influenced by the history of the country. While institutions still need to maintain a high academic standard, they too need to ensure that they are accessible for all. According to a study conducted by Van der Merwe et al. (2015: 80) in the selection process carried out at 8 institutions in South Africa that offer medical

training, they emphasised that those admitted needed to successfully complete their studies and display competent, ethical behaviour in practice. Therefore, each university had a unique selection process however they were a combination of both academic and non-academic proficiency. Demographic factors such as race and gender influenced selection at different institutions.

At the University of Cape Town (UCT) for example it is the role of the senate to approve targets by population group for school leavers there are no targets conversely for gender. Students from rural areas are given special consideration with slightly lower cut-off points (Van der Merwe et al., 2015: 78). The University of the Free State similarly selects based on a parallel medium language policy which is represented by a 60:40 English and Afrikaans students and a similar ratio of female to male numbers in a bid to allow for minority representation (Van der Merwe et al., 2015: 78). While emphasising the academic results and national benchmark tests (NBT) in subjects such as maths, physical science and language. The non-academic criteria examine a variety of measures such as extracurricular activities such as leadership, community service, cultural and sporting achievements. The region of origin is a selection tool in some instances and considering indices of disadvantage as it is a form of redressing the past inequalities by allowing access to those previously disadvantaged. Several of the 8 institutions regarded the biographical questionnaire, personal reports and interviews as part of selection (Van der Merwe et al., 2015: 79).

In a study conducted by Wadee & Cliff (2016) which viewed the role that pre admission tests play in preparing medical students for first year study. They identified that generally in South Africa medical students are admitted into tertiary study based on final mark grading and pre admission tests for example the Placement Test in English for Educational Purposes (PTEEP) and the Mathematics Achievement test (MACH). All of these which highlight that the medical fraternity requires a level of academic achievement for selection into any institution. Wadee & Cliff (2016), emphasise the importance of selection processes being reliable and valid so as to ensure prospective student success. Hence the adoption of the pre admission tests that are the Health sciences placement tests (HSPTS). This University of Witwatersrand (WITS) study showed an interesting aspect that students from private schools did better than their counterparts from public schools. This highlights how important selection is because without the introduction of the HSPTS many students who are from previously disadvantaged backgrounds would not have access to university. This suggests that students may be redirected

and enrolled into social work programmes yet the students do not have prior knowledge of social work as a career. This may have an effect in the students' academic journey as they do not have keen interest in social work leading to self withdraws and withdraw on academic grounds for failing to meet academic requirements for completion of social work degree programme.

Wadee and Cliff (2016) observed that there is progress towards transformation in the medical field while still maintaining professional standards. Lastly the outcome of the HSPTS allowed room to develop additional support that addresses the needs of disadvantaged students. The study highlighted the value that evaluation of programs and services play and encouraged it especially in the helping professions such as medicine. A study conducted by Ebesson and Jacobus (2003) looked at the selection of prospective dentistry students at the University of Pretoria it identified that selection needed to be done via a scientific valid selection process to ensure that the course and the profession met the standards for training and career practice.

The study by Wadee and Cliff (2016) highlighted the current selection criteria being solely on grade 12 results. It gave prominence to the negative side of solely quantitative methods that were taking place at the university. It did not allow previously disadvantaged student's access. It argued that using grade 12 as an indicator of success at tertiary would be unreliable as learners were coached in high school to memorise and reproduce work so this would not be a suitable predictor for success at tertiary institutions. This was challenged as other aspects of the student were not recognised such as personality and motivation of an individual. In the same study partnered with a university in Glasgow to identify their selection procedure. The university highlighted their selection being both academic and non-academic in nature. After selection on academic achievement, interviews were conducted. They looked at personality traits, biographical information and testimonials. This study emphasised the need for the revision of selection criteria to be researched further and inform selection at the institution (Ebesson & Jacobus, 2003). With the scarcity of information on selection in social work it would be beneficial to apply these steps in selection for social work as it is a human service profession.

In South Africa, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been adapted as a move toward transformation in higher education. It's being introduced to ensure previously disadvantaged students' participation in higher education increased. While keeping up with the interest of global competitiveness in improving the knowledge and skills base of individuals (Osman &

Castle, 2002). According to Moore and Van Rooyen (2002), RPL is a process that enables people of all ages, backgrounds and attitudes to receive formal recognition for the skills and knowledge held as a result of formal training, work experience and or life experience. This is an alternative route that prospective students may use to enter higher education.

The selection of students in the international context has similarities to that of South Africa the difference however is the history of Apartheid that influence's the selection process. A study by Campbell, Campbell and Dias (2012) showed the Bachelor of Social Work admission process to involve students applying through the United Kingdom application system (UCAS). Applicants were then asked to complete a 600-word statement explaining why they were interested in social work. A standardised scoring system is then used to assess the written statement. The successful applicants are then required to undergo an interview process. This displays the different aspects of an individual being analysed. The aim of the study was to evaluate the admission process and determine how effective it had been. Many of the participants felt that having the statement allowed for them to express themselves but also to be able to reflect upon why it is they wanted to study this program it gave them the opportunity to introspect allowing them to be certain about enrolling. The interview process was felt to be ideal as it was conducted in a relaxed environment and did not give applicants anxiety as there had been a meaningful rapport developed between the interviewers and candidates. The last aspect that was looked at was the communication process during the admission process they felt it was satisfactory. When asked to evaluate the overall process the participants conveyed, they were most satisfied by the selection process being done. This study underlined the value that engaging in such dialogue and undergoing these types of research will open up important conversation to be able to maintain with the changing world (Campbell, Campbell & Dias, 2012).

A study conducted in the United Kingdom by Dillion (2012) outlined the key requirements in higher education by the Department of Health. With the introduction of the social work undergraduate program the acknowledged key skills in English, mathematics equivalent to GSCE, the ability to communicate clearly in spoken and written English, a criminal record check and lastly a demonstration of personal and intellectual qualities to be a social worker were delineated. Due to the various contexts social workers for example work in the statutory environment where a report would determine if a child is removed from their home. The responsibility and accountability of the social worker was highly underlined. However, in the

study an analysis of a report from the social work taskforce showed great dissatisfaction with the selection process as it felt that the selection was not rigorous enough in assessing candidates to ensure if they have the right mix of intellectual and personal qualities to succeed as a social worker (Dillion, 2012). The recommendations on the revision of selection were taken forward however the issue was on how it was easier to access academic potential and personal characteristics and yet other social factors were difficult to gauge and assess. The study concluded that it was the role of the social work educators to train students as far as possible so that once the academic doors close behind them, they are personally suitable, academically and professionally competent. This underlines the great responsibility that higher education institution selection panels have to ensure that selection criteria are not only valid but consistent, appropriate and impartial (Dillion, 2012).

2.6 Benefits of Selection Criteria for Social Work

Social work education and social work as a profession has very definite requirements about what the individual's capabilities need to be. According to Ross (2010), selection to tertiary institutions would ensure that an applicant is observed and understood by identifying what motivates the student, their enthusiasm for learning about social work and their compassion which involves being able to feel concern and warmth for others. According to Dillon (2011) the main argument for selection was that increased competition for Social work education placed an overemphasis on academic qualifications and credentials and may have had some unintended consequences for less privileged students. Dillon (2011) further advocates for the introduction of a new national Social Work admission criteria which would emphasise equal weighting to academic and non-academic skills related to life course experiences and other skills denoting personal suitability for social work. Dillon (2011) acknowledges the high proportion of black minority ethnic students and asserts that institutions are not assessing candidates enough to ensure they have the right mix of intellectual and personal qualities for success as social workers. Selection allows previously disadvantaged groups of people to get the chance to be a part of an institution, which they previously were unable.

According to a study by Street McGregor and Cornelius- White (2019) involving stakeholders they asserted that social work admission should be selective to assess candidates' professional suitability (also match or fit) with the profession, described repeatedly as one's "heart" for social work. All stakeholder groups expected a social work department's admission practices to reflect high educational quality in the program. By requiring admission criteria, social work programs are setting standards of excellence for the social work program and the profession.

With admission standards and academic rigor that continues throughout the BSW degree, social work programs contribute to the credibility and legitimacy of social work as a profession. A theme to emerge for social work admission was the expectation that applicants will engage in a process of self-selection for the profession. All stakeholder groups strongly endorsed the practice of social work applicants' writing personal statements, which provides important opportunities for self-reflection on students' fit with the profession, their personal motivations, and how they interpret professional values. Demands of social work practice are high. Employers trust that faculty will provide a quality educational experience for students and rely on social work programs to ensure that graduates have been screened for basic skills and social work competence. One employer noted, "We're really counting on the schools to vet people for us." Ideally, selective admission practices result in better employees. Stakeholders supported expanded representation in the social work admission process and noted several benefits in providing current perspectives from the workplace and profession. Greater objectivity might be attained as field instructors and social service employers would be unlikely to have interacted with students prior to their BSW admission (Street et al., 2019)

Stakeholders also noted that admission practices set the tone, quality, and standards of professionalism in a social work program. Positive admission interactions with clear, consistent, and timely communication contribute to pride and ownership among students and alumni. Miscommunication and confusion create uncertainty and insecurity and have a negative impact on students' and practitioners' confidence in a social work program.

2.7 Challenges of implementing selection criteria for Social Work

The challenges of selection within the Social work program is that the general approach to selection are made as a generic approach, whilst fields such as Social Work require specific characteristics due to the vulnerable populations social workers engage with. Although the process of incorporating academic and non-academic approaches have been met with mixed success it remains a challenge to have tailored criteria. The variation in institutional policies with regards to diversity and inclusivity is dynamic and not consistent (Van der Merwe et al., 2016, Essack, Wedeleind & Naidoo, 2012).

The introduction of a generic selection process for the Social Work program may require adaptability and revision to cater to the specific university and may accumulate administrative costs to teachers and departments involved (Essack et al., 2012). Some processes in the non-academic criteria may not apply to disadvantaged individuals. In South Africa, previously

marginalised individuals are still at risk of being disadvantaged by both academic and non-academic criteria. Individuals may not meet automatic admission based on cumulative academic score requirements, these individuals will still lose points as they may not have had non-academic preconditions such as leadership opportunities due to a lack of resources to obtain information (Essack et al., 2012; Van der Merwe, 2016; Enslin, Button, Chakane, Degroot & Dyson, 2006). International research evidence indicates that academic criteria may not be a linear relationship thus, weighting for academic contribution solely in selection may need to be revised (Essack et al., 2012).

Admission testing also referred to as selection has seen many deserving low income and minority students disadvantaged in the selection process. Thereby raising issues of fairness and equity (Atkinson & Geiser, 2009). Selection mechanisms are perceived to exclude people instead of include them. There is hardly any clarity on whether selection predicts academic success as accurately as one would want (Maree, 2002). While alternative means of testing have managed to include students from previously disadvantaged groups access to education the throughput and success rates of students from educationally disadvantaged circumstances have not increased concurrently (Watson, Foxcroft & Koch, 2003).

While refined, broadened admissions criteria alone cannot address all the issues related to throughput, pass and graduate rates, it is essential at admission to assess the learner's level of preparedness for university education, so as to identify areas that require development, if one is serious about equity and redress (Watson, Foxcroft & Koch, 2003). To achieve this, it is important to create performance standards on the admissions measures used, in order to competently identify learners who are not yet proficient enough to be successful without support, but who will benefit from development, as opposed to those learners who probably will not benefit, or who are not in need of development (Watson, Foxcroft & Koch, 2003).

According to a study done by Manthorpe, Moriarity, Hussein, Sharpe, Stevens, Orme, MacIntyre, Lister et al, (2010) the admission process was seen as important but increasingly complicated and consuming process. They described tensions over maintaining departmental control over admissions levels in order to protect the quality of the programme and the higher education institutions desire to increase overall student numbers. One of the higher education institutions resorted to agree to appoint an administrative worker to help the social work department with admissions and placements in light of the extra numbers of students that had placed 'huge' demands on the social work lecturers. Social work educators, in common with

their counterparts on all professional qualifying programmes, do not make selections on the evidence of applicants 'academic credentials alone, but also on the grounds of their 'suitability' for a programme leading to a professional qualification. The evidence presented here shows that these responsibilities were taken very seriously and that the overwhelming majority of programmes appeared to set stringent selection procedures in which applicants were tested and scrutinised in several different ways (Manthorpe et al., 2010).

Assessing professional suitability for social work practice remains a difficult task due to the lack of well-defined criteria and the lack of empirical validation of the underlying construct (Tam, Coleman & Boey, 2012). In some cases, individuals may challenge the potentially subjective and changeable nature of the content of an approach to the selection of students for social work courses that foregrounds an assessment of their moral character. Clark (2006 as cited in Holmstrom, 2014) argues that it is highly likely that selectors hold mental images of what makes for 'good' and 'bad' applicants that may affect judgment. Therefore, transparency about the requirements of such assessments goes a significant way to ensure fairness. Entry requirements, including non-academic aspects such as the skills, qualities and aptitudes indicating potential to succeed on each programme used to underpin selection decisions must be made known to applicants (Holmstrom, 2014). The fundamental values and goals of practice characterize the profession's identity of social work and provide a blueprint for social work programs to develop their curricula and for professional regulatory bodies to define their standards of practice (Tam et al., 2012).

An additional challenge is that of the curriculum as it is one of the most significant matters in higher education. However, little attention has been given to the evolution of curriculum and its review and transformation in the institutions (Oliver & Hyun, 2011). Institutions face challenges when attempting to engage in comprehensive curriculum reform including time and cooperation. Time is one of the constraints to whole curriculum reform. Adequate stakeholder participation in the curriculum review process takes time (Oliver & Hyun, 2011). Historically Higher education curriculum has been considered the work of the faculty. These higher education institutions must address the organisational influences that affect the educational change process and the degree of collaboration (Oliver & Hyun, 2011).

2.8 Different forms of selection

There are different forms of selection into an academic program within institutions for example, the admissions criteria for prospective applicants for the Bachelor of Social Work

program at the University of Cape Town include, National senior certificate (NSC) endorsed for degree study, Faculty point score (FPS) 380 with Academic Literacy National benchmark tests (NBT) score at Intermediate Level, 50% for English Home Language or 60% for English First Additional Language. Applicants may additionally be required to attend an admissions interview and demonstrate successfully that they will meet the professional requirements of the South African Council for Social Service Professions (University of Cape Town Undergraduate Prospectus, 2019). In other institutions for example the University of Pretoria overall performance in the matriculation examinations, as well as performance in Grade 12 Mathematics, form part of the admissions criteria employed to admit students to their faculties (Watson, Foxcroft & Koch, 2003). Aptitude tests or intelligence testing has been criticised in South Africa as it has been viewed as providing a limited assessment of intellectual ability, because most tests measure only the kind of ability that is regarded as important in Western society (Maree, 2002).

South Africa has been impacted by historical events that occurred, which were inclined to policies and legislation of the Apartheid regime. Education systems were affected and in present day, issues of redress have been raised to bring about change and ensure equal access to education for all individuals (Van der Merwe et al., 2016; Essack et al., 2001). Consequently, various tertiary institutions have personalised their selection process, to accommodate students of different racial groups, age, gender, educational and socioeconomic background (Van der Merwe et al., 2016). Some institutions have a consistent ratio for admitting students within specific demographics mentioned above, whilst others run the selection process by targeting their institutions plans for inclusivity and diversity (Van der Merwe et al., 2016). Due to the variety in selection procedures at various universities such as the inclusivity of students within the Health Science programs they aim to ensure that the selection process is representative of diversity of the country's population (Van der Merwe et al., 2016; Essack et al., 2001).

Selection criteria for students wishing to pursue a profession within the Health Sciences field has been commonly practiced worldwide. In the local South African context, tailored selection processes within the Health Science undergraduate programs have been applied in variable forms (Van der Merwe et al., 2016). Some institutions have implemented the selection process that applies to the Social Work program, however, most have been generally applied to Health Science programs (Van der Merwe et al., 2016; Essack et al., 2001). The selection process is inclusive of academic and non-academic criteria.

Academic criteria mostly used across different tertiary institutions in South Africa include the standardised National Senior certificate (NSC) in combination with National Benchmark Tests (NBT) (Van der Merwe et al., 2016). Universities such as University of Kwazulu Natal (KZN), Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), Walter Sisulu University (WSU) do not require NBTs in their selection process; other institutions require both aspects in weighted contribution (Van der Merwe et al., 2016). NSC popularly known as matriculation exams have been used as a measure of academic achievement of merit-based selection tests, indicating mandatory levels of achieved or acquired knowledge, academic readiness and thinking ability needed for one to succeed (Essack et al., 2012). Some scholars raised concerns that such an approach may not apply to previously disadvantaged or marginalised minority group and aptitude tests were introduced. Aptitude tests were considered to be a theoretic measure of fundamental ability of a person irrespective of quality of education (Stringer, 2008 as cited by Essack et al., 2012). This aptitude test would create reasoning ability and allow an individual to develop skills and adaptability in processing various logical components.

Conversely, non-academic criteria have been used in context of alternative admission for individuals that may not meet automatic admission (Essack et al., 2012, Van der Merwe et al., 2016). It is frame worked into various tools that include extracurricular activity, regions of origin, disadvantage index, alternative test, biographical questionnaire (BQ), and personal report and interviews (Essack et al., 2012; Enslin et al., 2006; Cope et al., 2017). The inclination towards individuals to be empowered by self-representation reflected in leadership positions or sport achievements (Enslin et al., 2006). Biographical questionnaire tests give candidates an opportunity to present themselves as active subjects with a capacity to transform, rather than as objects of a 'test' as candidates present a narrative of the context of their life history (Enslin et al., 2006). Biographical questionnaire assesses level of disadvantage and qualities of applicant and the assessors supply recommendations of the candidates after student consultations of subject choices prior to registration (Enslin et al., 2006). Personal statements or reports have been an alternative form of presentation of an individual's life history, often applied to postgraduate studies and few undergraduate programs. Interviews have been incorporated although adopted from traditional context, specific interviews have been tailored to ensure a non-threatening approach and adjunct with personal statements and academic criteria (Van der Merwe et al., 2016, Enslin et al., 2006).

There is however very limited information on other forms of selection and how it relates to helping profession's such as social work. Therefore, looking at the valuable work undertaken by social workers there is a need to research further. Hence there is value in recognising the insights of the teaching staff at UCT as this will shed more light on a very limited subject.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed literature relating to the topic. The chapter has presented the historical timeline and key developments for higher education in South Africa. The literature review has discussed higher education issues of accessibility, students transition and student's retention. The chapter has discussed the social work education in South African. It has reviewed the current selection process for higher education with the merits and demerits and the need to have selection criteria for social work programmes. The next chapter presents the methodology which outlines the research methods adopted in the study in terms research design, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The assessment in empirical research has been done with the use of numerous methods and techniques that researchers have employed. These methods vary according to tasks they perform such as techniques of sampling, data collection methods and methods of data analysis. The selection of methods and their application are always dependant on the aims and objectives of the study, the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and the underlying theory of expectations of the investigator (Babbie & Mouton, 2012).

This chapter describes the methodology that was undertaken in this study. It includes the research design, the sampling procedure and the data collection approach, data analysis and verification as well as limitations of the study. Concluding remarks will complete the chapter.

3.1 Research Design

A paradigm is the fundamental model or frame of reference used to organise observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2010). According to De Vos et al. (2011), there are two well-known and recognised approaches to research namely: qualitative and quantitative paradigms. These two approaches differ distinctly from one another. De Vos et al. (2011) defines qualitative research as a multi-perspective approach to social interaction aimed at making sense of and interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that subjects attach to it. This process of the research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Cresswell, 2014).

According to De Vos et al. (2011), a research design refers to the options available to researchers to study certain phenomena according to selected formulas suitable for their specific research goal. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The researcher interviewed the teaching staff and asked questions such as what the current selection process was, the benefits and challenges of implementing a specific selection process and lastly the recommendations. One type of qualitative research is phenomenology. Phenomenology works from the participant's specific statements and experiences and is suitable because it describes what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2007:252). In the present study, the qualitative phenomenological framework was adopted as

it explored the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding selection for the BSW at the University of Cape Town.

De Vos et al. (2011: 95) highlighted that exploratory research arises out of a lack of basic information on a new area of interest or in order to get accustomed with a situation. Exploration therefore allows the researcher to familiarise themselves with a topic from which they are interested or when a topic is relatively new (Babbie, 2010: 133). The paucity of research on selection for the BSW was therefore an exploratory study as it undertakes to understand the perceptions of the teaching staff at UCT regarding selection for the BSW.

3.2 Population & Sampling

The study population is that group of individuals about whom conclusions are drawn. One is unable to study all the members of a population due to factors such as time and accessibility constraints. It is then when a sample from among the data that might be collected and studied is selected. (Babbie, 2010). In this study, the sample included the University of Cape Town Department of Social Development teaching staff and the researcher made use of non-probability sampling. Nonprobability sampling includes any technique in which samples are selected in some way not suggested by probability theory. Examples include reliance on available subjects as well as purposive, quota, and snowball sampling (Babbie, 2010: 193). Purposive sampling is a deliberate choice of participant due to the qualities they possess. It is a non-random technique that involves identification and selection of individuals that are proficient and well informed with a phenomenon of interest (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones would be the most useful or representative (Babbie, 2010: 195). Babbie & Mouton (2012: 166) state that it is sometimes appropriate to select a sample that is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research aims thus, selection is based on the researcher's judgment and purpose of the study. It is with this background that the researcher made use of the qualitative approach to explore and understand the meaning that individuals ascribed to a human problem. The participants were therefore selected deliberately due to how well informed they were with the phenomenon of interest. Participants provided their insights regarding the selection of students for the BSW at UCT.

The inclusion criteria were that the participants should have studied social work, be employed by the Department of Social Development at UCT, both in a permanent or part time capacity.

The participants were identified as teaching staff wherein, they were either lecturers and or supervisors. Lastly the participant's availability and willingness to participate. The researcher excluded the third-year supervisors as she had worked with them at the time of study and wanted to avoid there being any form of bias. The exclusion criteria further excluded teaching staff with whom the researcher was working with directly such as her supervisor, as well as the head of department. This was done to avoid the possible creation of a power imbalance as the supervisor and head of department could be viewed as figures of authority and possibly influence the study. Therefore, there was a total of twenty-four potential participants who were approached. There was a return rate of seventeen participants, two declined to participate as they had prior commitments, while five did not respond. Permission was obtained from UCT and was granted. The researcher approached the head of the Department of Social Development to notify him about the nature of the research topic. The researcher then sent out emails to all the teaching staff in the department informing them about the study. The teaching staff interested in participating responded and were then approached. A date, time and venue to conduct the interview was then set up.

3.3 Data Collection Method

Data collection is defined as a series of interrelated activities that are aimed at gathering high quality information to answer emerging research questions (Cresswell, 2014). Creswell (2014: 239), states that data collection steps include setting the boundaries of the study; collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured observations and interviews; documents and visual materials as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. For this research, the researcher conducted interviews to allow direct interaction with participants expected to possess knowledge that is appropriate for the study. the method of data collection used was semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted in an environment in which the participants felt comfortable and lasted approximately one hour respectively.

In general, researchers use semi-structured interviews as a data collection instrument in order to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic (De Vos et al., 2011: 343). The method gives the researcher and participant much more flexibility. The researcher can follow up interesting avenues that emerge in the interview and the participant is able to give a complete picture. An interview schedule or guide was used during the interview session to guide the interview and it had open ended questions that would allow the participants the freedom to respond in a way they felt most comfortable. (See appendix B). This provided the researcher with a set of predetermined questions that were

used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the narrative (De Vos et al., 2011:252).

Permission to use a tape recorder was obtained as the use of a tape recorder allowed an extensive record of the interview. The researcher was granted permission to record the interview by all participants. The researcher was able to concentrate on how the interview was proceeding and where to go next (De Vos et al., 2011:359). The interviews were later transcribed and analysed. Participants were given the choice of the venue of where they preferred to be interviewed. The researcher allocated an hour for each interview.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the data gathered from the data collection process (De Vos et al., 2011: 397). Data analysis is further described as the reduction of raw information through sifting and identification of outstanding patterns at the end to construct a framework that reveals the essence of what the data reveals (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher transcribed the interviews individually as recorded from the tape recorder. The researcher examined the information with the use of Tesch (1990) as quoted in Cresswell (2014: 248) 8 steps of Data Analysis namely:

The researcher began by transcribing all the interviews. After the transcriptions the researcher read all the transcripts vigilantly to get a good sense of the whole and jotted down any ideas as they developed.

One interview was selected and examined with questions like “what it is about?” being asked, to be able to think about the hidden meaning of what the respondent communicated. The substance of the information was not important. The researcher went through the interview; the thoughts of the researcher were written in the margin.

The researcher went through all the respondent’s interviews closely and similar topics were then categorised. These topics were then positioned into major topics, unique topics and left-over topics. Each theme was colour coded.

The remaining transcripts were read carefully following the process mentioned above. Ensuring the introductory organising scheme was being used to identify whether new categories and codes emerged.

The researcher identified the most descriptive wording for the topics, and these were turned into categories. Topics related to each other were also grouped into categories. Related categories were highlighted to show their interrelationship.

The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and put in alphabetical order these codes.

Data material belonging to each category was assembled in one place and a preliminary analysis was performed.

The researcher had step by step analysis of the data.

3.5. Data Verification

Babbie & Mouton (2012), explain data verification as a process of verifying the validity of the data you have collected. Lincoln & Guba (1999, quoted by De Vos et al., 2011: 419), propose the following four constructs they believe reflect the assumption of qualitative research more accurately:

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility is the alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. The researcher looks at whether there is a match between the research participant's views and the researcher's reconstruction and representation of them (De Vos et al, 2011: 419). Based on the literature presented in Chapter two, there are similarities between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the participants and those presented in the literature review. The research study focused on the perceptions of teaching staff at UCT regarding selection for the BSW. The researcher approached the University Human Resource Department and the Department of Social Development explaining the research and its purpose. Permission was granted to the researcher to conduct the study. A letter of consent was then given to all participants explaining the research and seeking their permission to participate. The researcher's data collection method and instruments were reliable where audio recorders were used to record the answers given by the respondents and then transcribed thereof.

3.5.2 Transferability

Transferability is when the researcher reflects whether the findings of the research can be transferred from a specific situation to another (De Vos et al., 2011: 420). It is an alternative to external validity or generalisability, in which the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context Guba & Lincoln (1999, quoted by De Vos et al., 2011:

419). The qualitative researcher does not maintain or claim that knowledge gained from one context will necessarily have relevance for other contexts or the same context at a different time (Babbie & Mouton, 2012: 277). This study made use of thick descriptions. The researcher collected detailed description of data and reported them with sufficient detail and precision. This allowed for judgements about transferability to be made by the reader Guba and Lincoln (1984) as cited in Babbie & Mouton (2012: 277). This study additionally made use of purposive sampling as proposed by Guba & Lincoln (1984) as cited in Babbie & Mouton, (2012: 277) to be one of the strategies in dealing with transferability.

3.5.3 Dependability

Dependability is the alternative to reliability, in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study, as well as changes in the design created by increasingly refined understanding of the setting. This is to ensure that the enquiry may be logically replicated Guba (1999, quoted by De Vos et al., 2011:420). In this research, the researcher ensured that her supervisor conducted an enquiry by examining the process of data collection, analysis and results of the study. Thereby, confirming accuracy of findings.

3.5.4 Trustworthiness

An additional approach towards the clarification of objectivity as it's manifested in qualitative research states that the key to good qualitative research is found in the notion of trustworthiness and neutrality of findings Lincoln & Guba (1985) as quoted in Babbie & Mouton (2012: 276). The researcher recorded the interviews and transcribed them. The researcher had both electronic and hard copy data. The interviews were conducted in venue chosen by the participants and away from all disturbance. The data was then analysed and themes and patterns were identified. The researcher received supervision throughout to ensure this was completed objectively.

3.6 Limitations of the study

The limitations pertain to;

3.6.1 Research design

The drawback of qualitative research is that findings are not generalisable. The information collected is the subjective view of these participants (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher was aware of this however; the purpose of the study was directed specifically to the UCT.

3.6.2 Sample Size

The sample size for this research was small. According to (1999, quoted by De Vos et al., 2011), there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what

you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful and what can be done with available time and resources. The researcher was cognisant of this and the researcher regarded specifically the insights of the teaching staff within UCT.

3.6.3 Data Collection

Data collection involves the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews presents both advantages and disadvantages. The value of such an approach is that it allowed the researcher to lead the conversation and probe when necessary to encourage the respondent to share in-depth information (Cresswell, 2014). The challenges however, lie in the time constraints; developing rapport, remaining unbiased and eliciting unbiased answers (Cresswell, 2014). The researcher has had extensive experience in conducting interviews and she is confident about her ability to probe and obtain information.

3.6.4 Data Analysis

The possible limitations of the qualitative research approach is the possible biases of the researcher and participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Qualitative data analysis is time consuming and the researcher could miss key aspects. The researcher made use of regular supervision for assistance with the data analysis.

3.6.5 Researcher bias in qualitative research

The role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study (De Vos et al., 2011: 399). Reed and Procter (1995) explored how the researcher's relationship with her research environment can impact on the research participants. They identified three positions namely, outsider, hybrid and insider. In the context of this study the researcher could be considered as an 'insider' as the study involved colleagues in her setting. Jootun and McGhee (2009) suggests that the challenge of the 'insider' position is that the researcher may have certain preconceived assumptions of the student's and colleagues and the sharing of information by the participants may be influenced by their perception of the researcher. Knowing that the researcher was employed within the Department, she was aware that she had her own views on selection. However, based on the researcher's self-reflective ability and acknowledgement of possible bias; this was mitigated by close supervision.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the overall methodology to be applied in this study. With emphasis on population and sampling, data collection methods, data analysis, data verification and lastly

the limitations of the study were also discussed. The preceding chapter includes a presentation and discussion of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented and discussed with reference to the literature outlined in chapter two. The profile of the respondents will be indicated, and the findings will be presented within a framework of analysis. The findings will be discussed using the research objectives as headings. A conclusion will complete the chapter.

4.1 Profile of respondents

Participant No	Age	Gender	Qualification	Position at University	Duration of employment at UCT.
1	39	Female	Bachelor of Social Science Hon	Supervisor	3 years
2	24	Female	Bachelor of Social Work Hon	Supervisor	1 year
3	38	Female	MA Clinical Social Work	Lecturer	3 years
4	33	Female	PHD in Psychiatry	Supervisor	3 years
5	49	Male	MA Clinical Social Work	Lecturer	10 years
6	33	Female	MA Social Policy and management	Lecturer	2 years
7	58	Female	MA Clinical Social Work	Supervisor	11 years
8	49	Male	PHD Social Work	Lecturer	13 years
9	37	Female	MA in Social Science	Supervisor	3 years
10	45	Female	MA Social Work	Supervisor	15 years
11	34	Female	Bachelor of Social Work	Supervisor	1 year
12	39	Female	Bachelor of Social Work	Supervisor	5 years
13	25	Female	Hon Social policy management	Supervisor	3 years
14	33	Female	MA Social Policy and management	Supervisor	1 year
15	26	Female	Bachelor of Social Work	Supervisor	2 years
16	25	Female	Bachelor of Social Work	Supervisor	2 years
17	47	Female	Bachelor of Social Work in Social Development	Supervisor	2 years

(Table 1)

The participants in this study were aged between twenty-four and fifty-eight years old and they are all employed as teaching staff within the Department. The majority of the staff are female so the fact there were only two males is in line with the gender distribution in the staff complement. Social work among any other professions has been traditionally viewed as feminine and as a result fewer men enter into this profession as opposed to women (Khunou, Pillay & Nethononda, 2012). According to Khunou et al. (2012) the issue of gender within the

social work profession is closely linked to issues of low salaries, poor working conditions and the cultural constructs of masculinity and femininity. Additionally, the poor public image and lack of respect shown to the profession has an impact on the low numbers of men. The participants' qualifications ranged from Bachelor's degrees to PhD degrees. The duration of employment at UCT ranged from one year to fifteen years.

4.2 Framework of Analysis

	Themes	Categories	Sub categories
4.2.1	Perceptions of the teaching staff regarding the current selection process	Limited knowledge of current selection process	
		Improved access for students	Diversity of applicants
		Selection based on academic ability	Excludes personal qualities of an applicant
			Student motivation for study
4.2.2	Benefits of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process	Promotes a higher standard of practice	Awareness of professional conduct
		Improve the reputation of the profession	Enrolment of suitable candidates
			Core elements of a specific selection process
4.2.3	Challenges of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process	Inadequate staff resources	Limited staff capacity
			Time constraints
		Difference between the department and university requirements	
		Issues of fairness around selection	Staff responsible for assessing suitability of applicants
			Maintaining objectivity of selection
			Non-discrimination of new selection process
		Financial implications for the university.	
4.2.4	Recommendations regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work Program.	Support of the introduction of a specific selection process	Suggested forms of selection
		Collaboration between the department and university	
		Feedback and or conversations about selection	Feedback and Knowledge of agency requirements and needs

(Table 2)

4.3 Findings

4.3.1 Objective One: To investigate the perceptions of teaching staff regarding the current selection process

The researcher sought to investigate the perceptions of the teaching staff with regards to the current selection process. There were three areas that emerged under this objective namely; limited knowledge of the current selection process, improved access (increased enrolment) for students and that the current selection process is based on academic ability. These areas will be discussed below.

4.3.1.1 Limited knowledge of current selection

The majority of the participant's responses conveyed that they were not entirely sure what the current selection process entails however they had views about the outcomes of the current selection process. Some participants were uncertain about how the selection was conducted and who is responsible for the selection of students. Some of the participants indicated that the current selection process focused solely on attaining a pass in the general subjects. The participants showed a high level of uncertainty around whether interviews were conducted with the applicants for entry into the BSW.

“I'm not entirely sure actually what they do. I assume that students apply, and I assume they pass the entrance exam qualifications and I do not think the department has anything to do with the selection of students. I think it's done by humanities or whatever system the university has in terms of eligibility for particular degrees” (Participant 7)

“Oh, I'm not actually sure I'm not even sure if they do interviews, I don't think that they do besides the sort of normal registration process etc and making sure that they have the right qualifications for it. I'm not sure if there is one, now you are making me doubt if there is actually a selection process.” (Participant 3)

“So I don't understand it in full. I mean if I think back to the criteria that's listed on the website and within sort of the course handbook, it speaks to ascertaining a pass within your core subjects so your maths, your languages, Afrikaans and English interestingly enough, there was no mention of isiXhosa...and there was no mention of, you know, social emotional skills being a people's person. You know, some of the more emotional, intelligent aspects which I think contribute to making you a good practitioner” (Participant 15)

The responses indicate that there is limited knowledge among social work programmes staff on the current selection process into the BSW. The responses suggested that the social work staff have reservations on how social work students are selected into the programme using the general university selection criteria. In a study conducted by Hughes, (2011: 688) he indicates that social work education, is not restricted to the passive acquisition of knowledge but must also focus on the personal and professional development of skills and values and the application of that learning to the person's practice. The aim of social work education is to improve the quality of the workforce through the development of competent, confident, self-aware and reflective practitioners who are able to cope with the pressures, demands and risks of the work whilst maintaining a professional value base which places service users and carers at the heart of the process (Hughes, 2011: 688). In South Africa social work education aims to equip students to be able to challenge inequality, poverty, oppression, discrimination and exclusion while ensuring the promotion of social justice and preservation of human dignity (Esau & Keet, 2014 ;Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2014: 455). This agrees with the respondents that the general selection criteria seem not sufficient for social work student's selection.

As argued in the literature review, social work students are equipped with knowledge of human behaviour social systems and the skills to intervene where needed, thereby leading to socially just practice. There is a need for social workers to be educated to be critical, responsive, reflective, observant and inquisitive in practice. Social work being a professional degree is governed by values principles and ethics that have to be strictly adhered to. After completion of the 4-year degree a student is registered with the South African council for social service profession's (SACSSP) to be able to practice (Esau & Keet, 2014, Lombard, Grobbelaar & Pruis, 2014). The literature argues that social work education is extremely important because it needs to train people who are professional, practice ethically and are knowledgeable. The researcher argues that it is of concern that the participants' had a limited knowledge of the current selection. The respondents' views agree with the arguments presented in literature review which suggested that social work programme is more focused on having the heart for social service for individual, community and national development. As such, students enrolled into social work programmes must have the interest and prior understanding of what social work is and be ready to cope with the demands for the programmes such that the participants did not have much knowledge of the selection process as they perceive it as a more generic selection process.

4.3.1.2 Improved access (increased enrolment) for students

A number of respondents indicated that the current selection process improved access for students into the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) due to the minimum entry requirements which has led to an increase in number of students who meet the minimum entry requirements. This suggest that by using the generic selection criteria with general minimum requirements, it does not make social work a restrictive programme with its own selection criteria which other students are able to meet the minimum entry requirements for entry into social work programme.

4.3.1.2.1 Diversity of applicants

Majority of the respondents indicated that the current selection process admits students from various backgrounds, thereby promoting applicant diversity within the program. It is apparent from the respondents' quotes when they mentioned that the current selection criteria cast a wide net as it is focused more on academic ability. Therefore, the current selection process attracts a huge number of applicants from different communities who are able to meet the general university requirements. The participants' views were expressed as follows;

“For the department probably that it spins a wide enough net you know you get a huge number of respondents. You can have an applicant from anywhere. And so I think that's good to have a wide net” (Participant 14)

“Okay, I think the benefit of that would be that anybody who has the academic ability to study at the university according to the university requirements will then be able to apply and be accepted in social work” (Participant 17)

“Well I think the selection process is quite inclusive because if you take most people that have passed their matric or anyone who's passed a matric then you actually make the program open to a lot of people. So you can actually get a lot of different people to study social work which is what we need in the different communities” (Participant 4)

These findings concur with the study by Van der Merwe et al. (2016), underlining how various tertiary institutions have personalised their selection process in order to accommodate students of different specific demographics such as racial groups, age, gender, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. This is in accordance with institutional policies to promote inclusivity and diversity to ensure that the selection process is representative of diversity of the country's population (Van der Merwe et al., 2015; Essack et al., 2001). However, in as much

as the current selection process attracts diversity of applicants, some of the participants had a negative view of the current selection process as they believed, the current selection criteria made social work a programme for redirecting students who have not been selected into programmes that are mostly selected by the majority of students. The participants' expressed these opinions below;

“I feel that like sometimes a social work or social development for that matter. It's treated like a dumping ground by other faculties when people come here with aspirations of being engineers and when reality hits them in the face, that in actual fact matric mathematics, it's got nothing to do with what you want to be. If you want to be a scientist, you want to be a doctor. You'll find that you are going to be excluded. And the only option is to come into humanities. The place where they end up is always where, social work..... And the department in itself needs to kind of like lift its image and not take itself as a dumping pit for underperforming students. Because if we tolerated that behaviour, we need to put an image that it is a department. It is a faculty that is producing quality people, people that do a very, very good and needed job, the service within the community, within mankind. So if we're just going to continue to be treated as a dumping ground and it just damages that image.” (Participant 9)

“Social work is bringing in so many students and therefore and I also just think that social work is like a dumping ground for anyone who wants to go to university but can't get in. Yeah it's a dumping ground..... My argument is why would that be the dumping ground, social work and not filter them in other degrees. So I think the entry requirement needs to be reconsidered by the department of social work.” (Participant 12)

Some of the issues that the Task Force is particularly exploring in initial training include how to attract the right people into initial training, including through appropriate entry criteria.

4.3.1.3 Selection based on academic ability

The above category consists of two sub-categories namely, the exclusion of personal qualities of an applicant and being cognisant of the student's motivation for studying the BSW degree.

4.3.1.3.1 Excludes personal qualities of an applicant

Most of the participants indicated that the current selection process was academically focused and therefore, excluded personal qualities of the applicants. It became apparent from the study findings that participants were of the opinion that, the current selection process was observed as being too general because it only focused on meeting the general academic requirements. The participants felt that the selection should not only focus on marks but, also include personal qualities of the applicants such as personality and social skills. To support these findings participants echoed that;

“It would be very much around, not just academics. It would be a more holistic selection process. And if you look at a more holistic set of criteria, not just academic but social impact, psychosocial, it would go into background, not just academic background, but social background” (Participant 10)

“I don't think academic achievement is the primary necessity. It is important but to be a social worker is also about the person...the person might academically meet the criteria to enter the university but once they get into the social work program, they might not have the personhood. So when it comes to their personalities their social skills their ability to interact and relate to people who are really facing struggle. So the person part of the formula that makes up being a good social worker is firstly you're the tool you're the person that's being crafted and shaped into a social worker” (Participant 5)

“So I really think they should be more that should be put into the selection criteria rather than just marks” (Participant 16)

The study findings echoed that the selection criteria should include more than academic abilities as supported by Van der Merwe et al. (2016), and even though that study focused on medical students, the researcher would argue that because social work is also a professional program the findings of the study are relevant to the current study. Moreover, both social work and medicine are helping professions thus, the value of including academic and non-academic qualities of an applicant is of paramount importance. This is to ensure that students admitted to these programmes have the potential to successfully complete their studies and display competent and ethical behaviour in practice as reinforced by van der Merwe et al., (2016:76). In addition, a study conducted by Dillon (2011: 1478) highlighting the findings of the Social Work Task Force which emphasised that a specific selection criterion should be clear and

consistent for entry to social work programs. The report highlighted the importance of testing and interviewing candidates maintaining a balance between academic and personal skills to ensure students are of a high calibre (Dillon, 2011:1478).

4.3.1.3.2 Student motivation for study

It is interesting for the researcher that one of the areas that emerged was the concern that the current selection process did not examine the applicants' motivation to study the BSW. Most participants were of the opinion that knowledge of this motivation would highlight the student's dedication towards achieving the degree. The reflection of these findings are articulated below;

“I mean personally I think that students should have motivation letters. I think some kind of interest in the fields and just as you do in the health sciences would actually be helpful to the profession” (Participant 7)

“I think just basically the quality and the dedication of students that the type of person that you put into the field, are these young social workers really in it to make a difference? And what is the quality of their work going to be? Are they willing to go the extra mile? What is the motivation level? Why are they doing this? Are they may be thinking it's an easy job” (Participant 17)

“I feel like if there was a more rigorous process to get in. People would almost have to prove themselves to get motivated to work hard during their first year and there would be lower dropout rate and smaller classes so it would be easier for the department and I don't know maybe more focus on the students who are interested and are willing to work hard. And a high academic standard” (Participant 13)

The participants observed that the current selection criteria exclude motivational aspects of students enrolling for the BSW program. This current selection criterion allows students to apply for the program and their motivation being unknown. According to Ross (2010), there is a correlation with the findings of the study that selection in tertiary institutions seeks to ensure that an applicant is observed and understood by identifying what motivates the student, their enthusiasm for learning about social work and their compassion which involves being able to feel concern and warmth for others. The use of general selection criteria suggests that there are some students who apply for the social work programme to get access to university education but do not have interest in social work career.

In summary, the responses discussed under objective one revealed that the participants had limited knowledge around the current selection process. Despite their limited knowledge, the participants indicated that due to the general nature of the existing criteria, it improved access for students. Thus, it promoted having diverse applicants admitted into the program. Additionally, participants communicated that the current selection process was focused on academic ability and excluded non-academic qualities. Participants proposed that aspects such as student motivation for admission should be included in the selection process. In study conducted by Campbell et al. (2013), the extended use of the personal statement to select candidates for interview was to provide the applicant with the opportunity to expand upon their motivation for social work, to indicate their knowledge of social work role and function as well as their understanding of social work.

4.3.2 Objective Two: To investigate the teaching staff perception on the benefits of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process

The participants indicated that the possible benefits of implementing a specific selection were that it could promote a higher standard of practice and may improve the reputation of the profession.

4.3.2.1 Promotes a higher standard of practice

There are two sub-categories that emerged under this category namely, awareness of professional conduct and clarification of the scope of the BSW programme. Below are detailed discussions with verbatim quotes from the participants.

4.3.2.1.1 Awareness of professional conduct

The participants revealed that a specific selection process for the BSW would be beneficial as it would raise an awareness that the students entering the BSW program will be cognisant of the professional conduct required in the field. The participants mentioned that a specific selection process will attract the students who will be best suited for the program because they will be mindful of what the program entails and what is expected of them. Furthermore, a specific selection process would promote higher standards of practice thereby producing quality graduates.

“I think it's about making sure that you have the right students in the degree students who can actually manage the degree because it is more difficult to marry theory and practice. So we are expecting quite a lot from our students but in the course of the three years that they do practical they've actually got to be practice fit to go out there and be able to compete on the job market” (Participant 7)

“So I think a higher academic standard and then just higher expectations. Students would feel more motivated because they got in after a rigorous process. They'll feel more motivated to work hard to get their assignments done on time to be more appreciative of being in the program.” “There needs to be a higher standard. And yeah I think that starts from the application process” (Participant 13)

“I think it could possibly ensure that they are a better quality, social worker gets produced at the end of the day. That’s because they know from the start through the selection process, they already get to know what is required of them and what is expected of them. So, before they make their final decision to get into the program. So, in the end they can produce better quality social workers” (Participant 17)

A study conducted by Hughes (2011: 688), concurs with the study findings where he mentions that social work education aims to improve the quality of the workforce through the development of competent, confident, self-aware and reflective practitioners. These practitioners would be better suited to cope with the pressures, demands and risks of the work whilst maintaining a professional value. The findings reiterate what has been outlined in the UCT prospectus that articulates that as part of the current selection process for the BSW applicants may be required to attend an admissions interview and demonstrate successfully that they will meet the professional requirements stipulated by the governing South African Council for Social Service Professions (University of Cape Town Undergraduate Prospectus, 2019). This statement highlights the importance of maintaining professional standards and conduct in the field of social work however, the fact that the interview may be required and isn't a definite requirement is therefore of concern. It is essential to ensure that the students admitted into the program are equipped, knowledgeable and practice professional conduct.

The participants' views can be related to the Theory of Change that highlights and specifies 'forces' as driving (helping forces) or as restraining (hindering forces) towards a goal" (Shirer, 2013: 69). Lewin suggested that identifying the 'force' would aid in understanding why individuals, groups and organisations act or respond the way they do and be informative in revealing which forces should be strengthened or diminished to bring about change. The implementation of a specific selection process has been seen to be of benefit in promoting a higher standard of practice as the current selection can be seen as selecting some students into

social work programme when the said students may in some instances not have an interest in pursuing a career in social work.

4.3.2.2 Improve the reputation of the profession

With reference to this category there are two sub categories that emerged namely, the enrolment of suitable applicants and having expectations for the program outlined through engaging the applicants. Two main areas that emerged are discussed in detail below;

4.3.2.2.1 Enrolment of suitable candidates

The participants indicated that the benefit of the implementation of a specific selection process would be that it could improve the reputation of the profession by enrolling suitable applicants. Most participants indicated that if the applicants knew what the selection was they would apply if they believed that they could meet the requirements. Applicants who may be adaptable and responsive to what social work is in dealing with vulnerable people and working in community settings. This specific selection process could appeal to responsible, genuine and passionate applicants who want to contribute positively to the profession. These views were expressed further;

“Are you finding the right fit? So for me I think that's a big thing. Like it's the fit. Is this going to be, is this an adaptive individual who deals well with iteration and flex and high levels of stress? Is this somebody who can manage in a space where they have to manage someone else's emotions and their own, will this person be able to use whatever it is that they have in their personal experience and bring it to this in a valuable way or is it going to be triggering and actually impacting negatively. And so they won't be able to cope so I think it's about a finding that right fit and the right person. And also the real serious people. Yes. You know find out who's going to be serious about this because essentially as the programme is set up, we are affecting real people's lives” (Participant 14)

“I think that would be amazing... it would filter out people who are not genuinely interested and wanting to do the profession.” (Participant 2)

“I think it was just I think it would just give an idea of who's passionate about it and who's in it and for the reasons why people are doing social work” (Participant 16)

The views of the participants emphasised the importance of a specific selection process as a process that filters the applicants to allow admission of suitable candidates. The suitable applicants are referred to as students' who would learn from the program and contribute to the educational process, have potential for practice, and effectively use communication and personal skills in the educational experience. As supported by Coyle et al. (2011) highlighting the importance of a specific selection criteria in assessing suitability to promote the protection of vulnerable populations from unethical behaviour and ascertaining the emotional and physical capacity of the prospective professionals to provide adequate care to vulnerable populations.

4.3.2.2.2 Core elements of specific selection process

This sub category emerged focusing on core elements of a specific selection. The participants expressed their view that including motivational letters, interviews and information outlining the program expectations could be valuable. The participants viewed the mentioned elements as fundamental in helping applicants make an informed decision as to whether social work was for them or not. Similarly, these elements would improve and uplift the image of social work by aiding the applicants to consider what they bring to the program and be willing to be moulded to be quality professionals in the future.

“I know a motivational is like a simple thing but like it literally gives you know gives usually lecturers an idea of where this person is it at and where they want to go... Also it would give the lecture as a form of sense, Okay. This is how people will see that SW is all about and then we give them an opportunity to address some of those issues and perceptions and allow them to address it or change it. It may be to implement some of them because it's a good value that should be enhanced is in the social work department” (Participant 16)

“I think that while one of the values is that it helps students that are considering the profession to more clearly come to a decision and a more informed and a more detailed and nuanced decision... I think we could possibly help students earlier on possibly make the decision that no this is not for me or it can entrench and affirm that this is definitely for me which I think could up the motivation of the students earlier on in the program” (Participant 5)

“I think it would need to be that they that the student themselves get more information from the Department or the person interviewing so that they can

integrate that into their answers so they can see that they can actually go through what is being asked of them to do” (Participant 3)

“The image of the Department, the image of Social Work in itself needs to be uplifted, it needs to change, taken seriously even at this level to say, “We are not going to be just a dumping field”. We are going to tighten up our processes in letting people that feel that they are not cutting it in other Departments and not just land here because we feel sympathy, because they need to just walk out at UCT with a degree at least. It mustn’t be like that” (Participant 9)

A study by Street et al. (2019) supports the current research findings on recommending a specific selection that includes the use of written personal statements or motivational letters which provide an opportunity for students to self-reflect on the profession and how they interpret professional values. A specific selection process promotes higher standards of practice as supported by the social work council’s code of ethics stipulating that educators should provide knowledge and competence within their areas of expertise thus evaluating students’ performance in a fair and respectful manner (Social Services Act, 110 of 1978). Moreover, employers trust that faculties will provide a quality educational experience for students and rely on social work programs to ensure that graduates have been screened for basic skills and social work competence asserts (Street et al., 2019).

With the aim of exploring the second objective, findings relating to the benefits of implementing a specific selection process for the BSW program. The participants communicated that the benefits of this specific selection process would be the promotion of a higher standard of practice. This would be due to the awareness of the professional conduct requirements in the program and the profession. Simultaneously, participants indicated that there would be an overall improvement in the reputation of the profession because of the enrolment of suitable candidates and implementing core elements in the specific selection criteria. The challenges of implementing a specific selection process are discussed below under objective three.

4.3.3 Objective Three: To examine what the teaching staff perceive the challenges of implementing a BSW specific selection process would be.

The participants identified the challenges of introducing a specific selection process namely; having inadequate resources, a reduced number of applicants and financial implications to the university. The mentioned categories will be discussed in detail below;

4.3.3.1 Inadequate staff resources

The study findings highlighted the possible challenges of resources such as the staff to implement this specific selection process. This category consists of two sub categories that emerged from the study findings, below is a detailed discussion;

4.3.3.1.1 Limited staff capacity

Some of the participants expressed the limitation of manpower to conduct the specific selection process for BSW. Participants reflected that this specific selection process could be laborious and time consuming given the shortage of staff in the department. In addition to the numerous responsibilities the staff were accountable for.

“The challenges would be time and resources so it would be an added task and responsibility on the shoulders of the academic staff that you will have the responsibility of doing the selection interviews. So, it's yeah. So, time and an effort on the part of the added responsibilities to the staff that have to do it” (Participant 5)

“Its labour intensive. Each lecturer or about a group of lecturers will have to go and scrutinize each and every applicant. First, the applicant probably on paper and then have interviews, maybe with the applicants. So, it could be it is labour intensive and it's time intensive. It will take time to get through all of this. And lecturers have a huge workload already. So, do they really have the time and the energy and the manpower to go through this process” (Participant 17)

“So, I think for the university it would obviously be a capacity thing. It would be an administrative challenge because do they have enough human capital to ensure that the people that actually capture all these responses or even from the department's side it's almost like they now need to put a panel together to sit and sift through these applications” (Participant 4)

The findings of the research agree with the study completed by Manthorpe et al. (2010), indicating an example of a higher education institution that resorted to appointing an administrative worker to help the social work department with admissions and placements in light of the extra numbers of students that had placed huge demands on the social work lecturers.

4.3.3.1.2 Time constraints

Some of the participants were concerned that time constraints could be encountered in the process of implementing a specific selection process. Participants reflected that a specific selection process is essential but, time to work through the administration involved in this selection process would be a challenge. These findings are reflected in the following quotes;

“It’s that time is a huge problem... And, yeah I think adding an additional layer of selection would be quite a lot for staff to take on. I think logistically it would be difficult” (Participant 6)

“What will happen now is that there will be time constraints if you doing a selection process that’s more tedious now you have steps to put in” (Participant 14)

“...time and I can’t think of anything else” (Participant 13)

The findings of the study correspond with a study done by Manthorpe et al. (2010) that underlines that the admission process was seen as important but increasingly complicated and being a time consuming process.

4.3.3.2 Differences between department and the university requirements

The participants indicated that there could be variations between the department and the university requirements for selection into Bachelor of Social Work programme. These variations were in relation to the university considering perhaps the quantity of applicants and the department considering the quality of prospective students enrolling into the BSW. The participants indicated that there should be a balance between the requirements of the department and the university in terms of who is being accepted in the program. As these differences in requirements could have an effect on the numbers of applicants who then are accepted and enrol into the programme. These views are expressed in the quotes below;

“The department says, but we only found some suitable candidates through selection and the university said that’s not on we need the numbers on this. Yeah, because it is a numbers thing as well. So how to strike a balance between what the department requires and what the university requires that could be a challenge” (Participant 17)

“That might actually limit the number of applicants that you get... So, I think you might end up getting smaller numbers of people that are registering” (Participant 4)

“That all needs to come together to kind of look at criteria for students and whether that would mean a drop-in number, and would that mean a drop-in subsidy” (Participant 7)

“I think the numbers will go down and therefore obviously that's a financial thing. I definitely think the numbers will go down drastically for this degree” (Participant 12)

The study by Manthorpe et al. (2010) reflects the above findings by describing tensions over maintaining departmental control over admissions levels in order to protect the quality of the programme and the higher education institutions desire to increase overall student numbers. Ideally, the number of students admitted into social work programmes in tertiary institutions is influenced by the capacity of recruitment and exiting resources to support the intake. In past years, social work was declared to be a critical scarce skill and there was a pertinent need to have the skill set in the country. According to Lombard (2015), universities sought to increase intake numbers to address the national need to have skilled social workers in South Africa. Thus, the government provided low entry-level scholarships that subsequently allowed applicants with a minimum of 50 percent average to be admitted. Lombard (2015) further stated that the limited or absent selection criteria for the scholarships may have had serious implications to the quality of the programme. However, Lombard (2015) stated that despite the low entry level scholarships widely available, there could be possible financial implications for the university if student's numbers decreased. Therefore, the university would receive limited government financial support.

4.3.3.3 Issues of fairness around selection

The category cannot discover issues around the fairness of the selection process leading to the emergence of the sub categories namely: the staff responsible for assessing suitability of applicants, the maintaining of objectivity in the selection process and how this selection process will be non-discriminatory. The sub categories are discussed further below.

4.3.3.3.1 Staff responsible for assessing suitability of applicants

The participants' opinion around the selection of staff members that would be responsible for assessing the suitability of applicants. The need to identify who would work through all the administration related to the selection was raised as a concern. The participants stated that;

“I don't believe that you can recruit just anybody from outside to do the screening process. I still think it should be more than one person” (Participant 17)

“Probably who's going to run it and the admin behind it because it's going to be how many applications one is going to have to read through ...who's going to run all the admin behind...?” (Participant 16)

“I think number one, it would be working things. You will have to have people who know what they are looking for and what is required. And people who know how to do the proper assessments” (Participant 17)

The expressions by the participants concur with a study conducted by Campbell et al. (2013) that focused on students in the United Kingdom (UK) applying for social work through the university application system (UCAS). The significant amount of administration that these interviews could possess would be a burden for the staff that are responsible for this selection. The study further expressed that this process of the selection would need to be done by people who know what they are doing and what they are looking for in determining suitability of the applicants. The researcher is of the opinion that this study by Campbell et al. (2013) is relevant to the current study findings indicating the challenges that could be associated with the implementation of a specific selection process, as this specific selection process could be a very laborious task.

4.3.3.3.2 Maintaining objectivity of selection

In the findings of the study the participants expressed their concern regarding maintaining objectivity of selection as a possible challenge of implementing a specific selection process for the BSW. The participants expressed concern about how this specific selection may be viewed in the wider university context and by the applicants themselves. The participants' opinion was that this specific selection process could be viewed as subjective in nature and therefore a disadvantage for applicants. Furthermore, the participants' felt that they wouldn't want the selection process to exclude applicants but similarly would want those applicants best suited for the program to be selected without being biased. These views were expressed further in the following quotes;

“So that would be the challenge it’s measuring that. It’s how you would actually put these things into place and of course it would be how it gets interpreted in the wider university context or even in the students themselves. Do you open yourself up now for critic around you being unfair this is so subjective that there’s so much space for you to be disadvantaged because it depends on the selector to determine whether you meet these criteria?” (Participant 10)

“Yeah, we don’t want to exclude, we want to include, but we also don’t want students that aren’t meant to be Social Workers, if you bring any other dynamic it’s going to be a problem but obviously, there are specific boxes that need to be ticked in terms of the University. So, that might be... play as a factor as well. I don’t know the semantics of that” (Participant 1)

“So I think that’s actually a good way to go about it but then you also have to think about the admin and who is going to do it to show that they not being biased” (Participant 16)

Admission testing also referred to as selection has seen many deserving low income and minority students disadvantaged in the selection process. Thereby raising issues of fairness and equity (Atkinson & Geiser, 2009). Selection mechanisms are perceived to exclude people instead of including them. This concern correlates to the view raised by the participants in the study. The participants were cognisant of how this specific selection process could be viewed in the wider university context and how applicants could perceive it. The issue of fairness in many aspects such as selection could be immense.

4.3.3.3.3 Non-discrimination of new selection process

The possible challenges of implementing a specific selection process that was raised by the participants was how this specific selection process will be non-discriminatory towards the applicants. Most of the participants were of the view that with a specific selection process, there needs to be a level of sensitivity towards the possible exclusion of applicants as indicated in the following quotes:

“I mean literary that’s what happens and so I think having a selection process you have to be sensitive to those things non-discriminatory and needs to be gentle enough to be able to manage these dynamics” (Participant 14)

“Maybe there might be some conversations around black students and redress and all of that”, “I think there should be some sort of effort though, around drawing in all ethnic groups so that the social work degree profession remains in the hands of everybody around you know” (Participant 12)

“I feel like that should still be applied in social work but on the side the challenges would be excluding people who could be amazing social workers on the basis of their environment status, their lack of privilege whatever the term is, they could be seen as excluding the population and in a way setting up a bias” (Participant 13)

The findings of the study resonate with studies of various researchers who deduced that a specific selection criteria focusing on the non-academic criteria may not apply to disadvantaged individuals hence, exclude these applicants from enrolling for the program link unclear. For example, the studies conducted by Essack et al. (2012); Van der Merwe (2016); Enslin et al. (2006). These researchers further emphasised that in South Africa, marginalised individuals are still at risk of being disadvantaged by both academic and non-academic criteria. Individuals may not meet automatic admission based on cumulative academic score requirements. Therefore, such individuals will still lose points as they may not have had non-academic preconditions such as leadership opportunities due to a lack of resources to obtain information (Essack et al., 2012; Van der Merwe, 2016; Enslin et al., 2006).

4.3.3.4 Financial implications to the university

Majority of the participants were of the view that the university would experience increased financial expenditure with the implementation of a BSW specific selection process. This may force the university to charge raise the application fee for entry into BSW programme. In addition, the participants expressed that this specific selection could be viewed as demanding and therefore less applicants would meet the requirements and be accepted into the program thereby having an effect on overall numbers. Participants echoes these findings in the following quotes;

“How do you get to that refined thing and maintain equity numbers for the university and maintain enough people that are paying fees and that are getting sponsored fees because remember there’s also a financial element to it right so when you are selecting your students having to balance your debt” (Participant 14)

“And also, if making stricter criteria, selection criteria to get into the BSW if that's going to deter other potential students that's a potential loss of money because all of a sudden five students who were considering going to do BSW at UCT are not going to choose something different” (Participant 2)

“If it's really done rigorously and maybe that's not what they want to hear because they want the numbers” (Participant 12)

The variation in institutional policies with regards to diversity and inclusivity is dynamic and not consistent (Van der Merwe et al., 2016, Essack et al., 2012). The introduction of a generic selection process for the social work program may require adaptability and revision to cater to the specific university and may accumulate administrative costs to teachers and departments involved (Essack et al., 2012). The need for the university to spend more money in the special selection process for BSW relates to the expected costs for change as espoused in the theory of change. Therefore, a change from generic selection to specific selection process for BSW entails increased cost for the selection activities such as the oral interviews. The university must be ready to shoulder the cost as a result of adopting the change or indeed transfer the cost to applicants by charging a special application fee for BSW.

In summary, the participants discussed under objective three the likely challenges associated with implementing a specific selection process. Firstly, participants indicated limited manpower and time required to conduct the specific selection could affect the implementation of a special selection process for BSW. Secondly, the participants predicted the potential drop in applicant numbers due to differences of department and university requirements for student admission. Additionally, issues of fairness were raised by the participants, particularly with regards to the staff responsible for assessing applicant suitability, maintenance of objectivity and having a non-discriminatory process. The last challenge was the financial implications for adopting the special selection process.

4.3.4 Objective Four: To explore the recommendations, the teaching staff, make regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work program.

Three categories emerged under this objective and these categories are discussed below.

4.3.4.1 Support of the introduction of a specific selection

The majority of the participants were inclined towards the introduction of a specific selection. This category consists of one sub-category that emerged from the findings looking at the suggested forms of selection.

4.3.4.1.1 Suggested forms of selection

Most of the participants supported the introduction of a specific selection process which would include aspects such as personal statements, interviews and motivational letters. The participants further indicated that there is a need for strict and rigorous selection process that reflects both academic and non-academic abilities of the applicants. Below are the participants' verbatim quotes in support of the findings.

“Yeah and I mean if we are able to do a more stringent selection process and something that's more specific to students and looking more in depth maybe something like writing or in addition to a motivation letter perhaps some sort of reflective paper that they can write you know to show us that they have done some sort of inner reflection explaining why they think they would be a good fit in this department” (Participant 6)

“I think we definitely need to be stricter for the BSW they need to look out for beyond basic, meeting basic requirements in terms of academics they actually need to look for personality yes that fit the field... I would do some sort of test or assessment of the key skills that I spoke about” (Participant 2)

“The introduction of social work specific selection of interviews... so they can include interviews as well” (Participant 8)

These findings concur with a study by Campbell et al. (2012) that showed the Bachelor of Social Work admission process to involve students applying through the United Kingdom application system (UCAS). Similarly, a study conducted by Street et al. (2019) revealed that the writing of personal statements provides an opportunity for the applicants' self-reflection on how they view themselves fitting into the program, the profession, and their personal motivations and how they interpret professional values. Systems Theory is relevant in this finding as it focuses on an individual as a whole as well as other aspects that affect the well-being of this individual. The suggested forms of selection involving the use of interviews, personal statements would provide an impression of who the applicant is and how they would function as part of a much larger system. Applicants are therefore observed in their total life situation in attempting to understand problems in social functioning. Using the specific selection process would make the university more assured that the selected students in the BSW will excel academically. The students are well scrutinised at entry level of their attributes to excel in social work study and career.

4.3.4.2 Collaboration between the department and university

The category looked at the need for closer collaboration between the department and the university. The participants' mentioned the need for university support in terms of departmental decisions around applicant selection. The participants highlighted the need for additional staff because the participants feel overworked. The participants identified the need for cooperation between the university and the department. These findings are reflected in the following quotes;

“I think they need to support that decision because at the end of the day and I know and I say that because I know it's going to be a numbers thing for the university. But if the university's wanting to maintain the standard that it wants to maintain. I do think by not being supportive to the departments around its criteria it's bringing the department down” (Participant 12)

“We are overworked; we are not coping. We feel we need more hands and the university is not getting more people. We need more hands” (Participant 8)

“So, I'm not very aware of things on a macro level but I would recommend that the university pay more attention to the Social Work department resources development department and help with resources. We will look at other departments and a lot of resources they have. It would be amazing to have the funding for maybe an extra staff member or computers or something for students maybe tutors or something” (Participant 13)

The study findings are in accordance with the study conducted by Estermann and Pruvot (2011) indicating a broad agreement between stakeholders that institutional autonomy is important for modern universities. Therefore, collaborations and agreements in decisions between the department and the university is imperative in selection. Estermann and Pruvot (2011) further established that financial autonomy is most closely correlated with universities' capacity to attract income from additional funding sources. For example, in many European countries universities are gaining greater flexibility in dealing with staffing issues, as staff are being paid and or employed directly by the university rather than by the state (Estermann & Pruvot, 2011). However, in the African context autonomy has its limitations because the universities rely immensely on state funding. This wave of change would need to be addressed for the university to offer support, whether increasing staff numbers, allowing for curriculum development, releasing resources to facilitate in the selection or feedback to improve the admission policy.

4.3.4.3 Feedback and or conversations about selection

The category became apparent from the study findings around the necessity of the discussions involving the staff, students and agencies on matters around selection. Three main areas emerged under this category namely; information exchange between students, staff feedback regarding curriculum content and feedback and knowledge of agency requirements and needs. This consultative process was viewed to be of benefit as it would open up conversation and allow for a flow of ideas on how selection can be implemented.

4.3.4.3.1 Feedback and knowledge of agency requirements and needs

According to the participants there was a necessity for feedback from agencies regarding their requirements for future social workers as this could inform selection. The participants thought that these agencies were in a better position to highlight the needs relevant to practice as training institutions prepare students for professional practice. The agencies are informed on what constitutes to a well-rounded practitioner and this could be channelled through selection. To corroborate this finding participants stated;

“So, I think the university needs to speak to social workers in the field and the organisations who are going to be employing social workers about what the selection criteria should be looking at because ultimately we are preparing workers for that work field and that conversation needs to be on going” (Participant 15)

“Getting input from Social Workers in the field who’ve had students in their placements...because they are probably in the best place to tell us whether or not we are bridging the gap and those Social Workers, cause it is, it’s a big task to take on when you’ve got your own work, plus you’ve now got to be supervising students” (Participant 1)

“To find out from the field, “What sort of Social Worker they are looking for? Because how do we then bridge the gap in terms of practice?” (Participant 1)

This viewpoint from the participants relates to the one expressed by Street et al., (2019) which highlighted that employers trust that faculty will provide a quality educational experience for students and rely on social work programs to ensure that graduates have been screened for basic skills and social work competence. Furthermore, Street et al. (2019). The study noted that employers relied on the school to assess the applicants as selective admission practices result in better employees. The participant’s responses emphasised that there is value in engaging

agencies so as to get a clearer representation of what they require from the future social workers and this would inform the requirements for the program. This could contribute positively towards developing selection criteria.

The Systems Theory states that individuals do not live in isolation. Rather, they exist as part of an influential social system of family, friends, peers, media, schools, and workplaces (McMahon, 2005). The theory goes on to identify that individuals live as part of an environmental-societal system containing influences such as socioeconomic circumstances, geographic location, political and historical influences, as well as that of globalisation (McMahon, 2005). Therefore, facilitating these feedback sessions would be helpful as the students, staff, university, agencies are systems. These components have an effect on one another. This specific selection could have an influence on all that are involved, directly and indirectly.

The recommendations with regards to selection for the BSW program were investigated under objective four. Participants were in support of the idea of introducing a specific selection process by suggesting different forms of selection. The participants proposed that there exists a collaboration between the department and the university, wherein there is the incorporation of university support to the selection process. Participants also advised that feedback may be incorporated to gain knowledge of agency requirements and needs. These were some of the recommendations made with regard to selection.

4.4 Conclusion

The findings clarify the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding selection for the BSW. The teaching staff communicated having limited knowledge of the current selection for the BSW. The participants welcomed the introduction of a BSW specific selection as they were of the opinion that this would be of benefit however, they voiced the challenges that might develop. They were able to give recommendations that could be advantageous for both the department and the university with regards to the selection for the BSW program. The final chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations for the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The final chapter highlights the conclusions and recommendations reached based on the research findings. The conclusions will be discussed under each research objective. The recommendations will be made in relation to the University of Cape Town, the Department of Social Development as well as recommendations for future research.

5.1 Conclusions

The conclusions are presented below using the objectives as headings.

5.1.1 Objective One: To investigate the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding the current selection process

In line with the perceptions of teaching staff on the current selection process, it can be concluded that there were different views about what the current selection process included. Some of the points raised was that selection is based on attaining a matric pass, meeting the required point system used by the university and it was also evident that some of the teaching staff had no vivid knowledge of what the selection process entailed. The findings of the study further revealed that the current selection criteria focus heavily on the academic ability of the prospective applicants. The findings revealed that due to the academic requirements being general an advantage of this was that this current selection process improved access for students. These selection criteria would attract a diversity of applicants, as all applicants needed for entry in the program was to attain the minimum academic requirements. There were no specific requirements that could limit applicants from meeting the selection criteria and therefore this promoted diversity among applicants.

An additional issue of concern that emerged from the study is that because the selection process is so general the selection process does not take into account the student's motivation to study social work specifically. The findings of the study pointed out that these selection criteria would therefore, attract a diversity of applicants, as all applicants needed to do was to meet the general requirements for acceptance into the program. The study further revealed that the current selection criteria is considered to be general because it focuses on the academic suitability of the applicant which is deduced from their matriculation score and the national bench mark score. There is therefore a concern that the selection into the social work program

does not focus on the personal qualities of the applicant such as the motivation to study social work specifically and the concern linked to that is that it is very difficult to determine whether the applicant is suited for social work. One can therefore conclude that a main concern that emerged from the study was that with the current selection process being more academically inclined not enough information about the applicant would be known to ensure suitability for the social work program.

5.1.2 Objective Two: To investigate the teaching staff perceptions of the benefits of implementing a BSW specific selection process.

With regard to teaching staff perceptions of the benefits of implementing a BSW selection process, it can be concluded that there is an overwhelming support for an introduction of a specific selection process for the BSW. The benefits of this specific selection process were argued that that it could possibly promote a higher standard of practice and improve the reputation of the profession by attracting students who would be well-informed about the social work profession. The results of the study further indicated that applicants interested in the program would need to cope with the theoretical and practical demands of this professional degree and the ideal way this could be delineated would be through the first point of entry which is the selection process. The findings further highlighted that the current selection process is general as applicants need to simply meet the academic requirements of the degree and this has led to the program being easily accessible to all. However, this unspecific selection process was viewed as inadequate because not much is known by the applicants from the start regarding the program and the expectations around it. This then makes it difficult for applicants to make an informed decision regarding their interest in the BSW. The findings of the study further emphasised that the selection process for the BSW needed to be more specific and holistic. Having a special selection process would require sensitisation of the applicants on the selection process for BSW which in turn would help publicise the BSW programme against other programmes.

Lastly, the findings of the study highlighted the benefits of the implementation of a specific selection process that included interviews or motivation letters as this would provide a better understanding of the applicant and assess their suitability for the program. One can therefore conclude that the benefits of the specific selection process were that expectations regarding the BSW would be clear for applicants from as early as selection and would encourage students who are prepared to work hard, be responsible and focused in attaining the degree to apply.

5.1.3 Objective Three: To examine what the teaching staff perceive the challenges of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process would be.

It can be concluded that although there was a positive view of the implementation of a specific selection process. The finding of the study highlighted that with the benefits came the challenges. The challenges of implementing a specific selection process were the potential inadequacy of staff resources, the possible reduction in applicant numbers and issues of fairness around selection were raised.

The findings of the study concluded that implementing a specific selection process would be an additional task for department staff that are already overwhelmed with the many tasks they are currently responsible for. The view was that this specific selection process could become labour intensive and the concern was that there would be an issue surrounding the lack of the staff capacity to complete this specific selection process. An additional concern was regarding possible time constraints that may be associated with implementing a specific selection process as this specific selection process was viewed as possibly being laborious. The findings further revealed that there was a possibility of a drop in numbers of applicants due to the implementation of a specific selection process as this specific selection would target only those applicants who could meet the specific requirements. This decline in numbers would have financial implications for the university because when it is all said and done the university is concerned about meeting their financial objectives whereas the department is responsible for training students to graduate and become professionals. This difference in objectives could be further intensified with the implementation of specific selection process.

With education in South Africa having been used as a further divide during Apartheid, selection in Social Work education could be a potentially contentious issue. The findings of the study further highlighted concern about upholding fairness in selection. The additional concern raised was about which staff member would be responsible for assessing suitability of the applicants and how this staff member would maintain objectivity in the selection process. In conclusion the selection process needed to allow for diversity and be unbiased. This was a great responsibility and great consideration of who would be best suited for this was emphasised strongly.

5.1.4 Objective Four: To explore the recommendations, the teaching staff, make regarding selection for the Bachelor of Social Work program.

Based on the findings of the study, recommendations regarding selection for the BSW were highlighted. The findings of the study showed an overwhelming support for the introduction

of a specific selection process. The findings highlighted suggested forms of selection that the specific selection process could include such as personal statements, interviews and motivational letters. The findings further highlighted the need for a thorough selection process that reflected not only academic ability but also the personal qualities of an applicant.

Furthermore, an emphasis on the need for a closer collaboration between the department and the university was outlined. The concern was that the university needed to support the department with regards to decisions around selection. A further issue of concern was the need for additional staff as the participants communicated feeling overworked. Therefore, the findings highlighted the need for cooperation between the department and the university in meeting both their objectives.

A further recommendation from the study was around the necessity of feedback or conversations around selection. These discussions involving staff, students, and agencies would be beneficial as it would allow for a platform where a flow of ideas on selection may be expressed. The view was that the feedback and knowledge from agencies with regards to their requirements for future social workers could inform selection. The agencies were believed to be in a better position to highlight the needs relevant to practice. The department needed to speak up and take responsibility for what selection into the BSW should entail as the department is in the best position to outline what the degree requires and be able to facilitate this selection in determining applicant suitability. The goal of training institutions is to prepare students for professional practice. In conclusion these agencies were viewed as informed on what constitutes to a well-rounded practitioner and this could be channelled through selection.

The participants indicated that there needed to be dialogue, feedback and information exchange amongst stakeholders. This open discussion would allow for views around selection, curriculum and agency requirements. The participants believed that this feedback would be instrumental in planning around selection. The current students would be able to share their experiences around what they hoped they had known before applying and the teaching staff would be able to give feedback on challenges experienced in working with students and how this could have been highlighted earlier on, the first point of entry being selection into the program. These conversations can create room for improvement in selection while highlighting the importance that selection has in social work. The department needs to be proactive in maintaining the training of future social workers.

The participants thought that getting feedback and knowledge of agency requirements would be an advantage as they were in a good position to highlight what type of social workers they are looking for. This exchange of ideas around what the selection criteria could look like would help in establishing suitable selection criteria for the BSW. The world is changing rapidly and keeping up to date with the professionals in the field would be valuable.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations are made to the University of Cape Town, the Department of Social Development and for the future research in this field.

5.2.1 Recommendations to the Department of Social Development

Social work is a professional degree which comprises of both theoretical and practical training. Therefore, a dialogue aimed at evaluating the current selection process through engaging with numerous stake holders such as agencies, high schools and universities would be beneficial. This would consider how selection is currently being conducted and how this aligns with the departmental goals, university goals and professional goals. This would entail the faculty and the department possibly start a joint task force that could look at selection and the issues around it. The task force could include representatives from the department, the faculty, admissions and agencies. This could be done by looking at previous enrolment and applications for the BSW and also engaging with alumni to explore their careers at present.

The researcher recommends the implementation of a specific selection criteria for the BSW. This specific selection process could include the added assessment of personal qualities of an applicant. Currently applicants need to meet the academic requirements as set out by the university. These general academic requirements are very important as social work is a professional degree. However, the recommendation of incorporating personal qualities in addition could be beneficial as social work involves students working with very vulnerable people in society. Social workers routinely carry out assessments of risk and potential to change in practice. Arguably then, social work staff are well placed to design and operate selection processes for the social work degree and to have confidence in these. The department staff is in the best position to implement this specific selection as they are social work professionals and know the reality of the social work field and are capable of determining applicant suitability.

A further recommendation is that due to the time and resource problem the department could consider developing assessment tools for students entering the BSW programme so that the selection is standardised. This would be beneficial in maintaining objectivity and avoiding bias.

As the department staff has an incredible work load currently these standardised assessment tools could save on time and resources. When drafting these assessment tools the department must remain cognisant of legal implications and seek counsel accordingly to curb threats of legal action.

Group selection interviews could be used in addition to the student meeting the general requirements needed to apply to university. It could be costly due to pressures of time and staffing available to interview large numbers of applicants and therefore group interviews would be advantageous. Group interviews enable more social work focussed discussion to take place using an actual case study and the applicants may be observed on how they address this in groups. A panel of about three staff members from the department may manage this and this would allow for objectivity and fairness to be maintained. This would only happen once a year before applicants are accepted into the program and so the issue of availability of time from the staff conducting the group selection may be planned for in advance to ensure this responsibility is known and the workload can be distributed to other staff members. The venue could be chosen within the department such as halls on campus. These would be available as this would occur before the start of the semester.

5.2.2 Recommendations for the faculty

The researcher makes recommendations to the faculty as the researcher is aware that if a specific selection process is implemented this would involve alterations in university policy and she is cognisant of the fact that this may not be possible but this is something that the faculty could consider.

5.2.3 Recommendations for future research

There is very limited research on the value that selection has in social work. Therefore, further research in this field would be beneficial because of the limited sample used in this research study it would be difficult to ascertain if this research would illicit the same responses for a larger sample. Therefore, for future research other universities offering the BSW program can engage in a similar research so as to gain an understanding of issues around selection.

Research may also be conducted with the students studying the BSW to determine their perceptions of the selection process they endured. The purpose of this would be to establish if they have any feedback regarding the selection process. As well as exploring what they may have hoped to know in applying for the program. This could help in informing the way selection

is done and what it would entail. This would be a cost effective study as it could be undertaken within the department and the students would be participants.

5.4 Conclusion

This research explored the perceptions of the teaching staff with regards to selection for the Bachelor of Social Work program at UCT. The conclusions of the participant's responses highlighted the short comings of the current selection process. The benefits of the implementation of a specific selection process were expressed. However, the challenges of this specific selection were underlined. The recommendations on how selection may be approached were outlined. Lastly recommendations for the department, the faculty and for future research was communicated.

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APPENDIX A

A.1 CONSENT FORM

Introduction

I am Latifa Khan a Master's in Clinical Social Work Student in the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town. I am conducting research on teaching staff's perceptions of the selection of students for the Bachelor of Social Work Program

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to look at the perceptions of teaching staff concerning selection of students for the Bachelor of Social Work program, at the University of Cape Town. This research aims to explore the different views surrounding selection of social work students at the University of Cape Town.

Voluntary Participation and Duration

I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any time without reason or consequence whether before or during the study. The interview will take approximately one hour.

Confidentiality

The interview will be conducted in an environment of my choice. All information gathered during the interview is confidential and will be used for the intended purpose of the study only. The researcher will make use of an audio recorder to record the interview. The transcriptions and recordings will be kept confidential and the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

Release of publication of findings

The researcher will produce a final report that is accurate and clear and that contains essential information. The researcher has been granted ethical clearance to conduct this study by the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town.

I _____ therefore freely consent to engage in this research and I am aware of the purpose of the study.

APPENDIX B

B.1 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE **DEMOGRAPHICS**

AGE	
GENDER	
QUALIFICATION	
POSITION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPETOWN (UCT)	
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING AT UCT?	

What are the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding the current selection process?

1. In your understanding what is the current criteria for selection into the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program?
2. In your opinion what are the positive aspects of the current selection process for the department?
3. What are the positive aspects of the current selection process for the university?
4. In your opinion what are the negative aspects of the current selection process for the department?
5. What are the negative aspects of the current selection process for the university?
6. What are your perceptions on how the current selection process possibly influences the student's performance within the program?

What do the teaching staff perceive the benefits of implementing a BSW specific selection would be?

1. What could the value be of introducing a specific selection process for the BSW for the department?
2. What are your thoughts around whether a BSW specific selection process may or may not influence the type of student entering the BSW program?

3. What do you think the effects of introducing a specific selection process for the BSW could be for social work as a profession?

What do the teaching staff perceive the challenges of implementing a Bachelor of Social Work specific selection process would be?

1. What would the challenges be of implementing a specific selection process for the BSW program for the department?

2. What would the challenges be of implementing a specific selection process for the BSW program for the university?

3. How do you feel these challenges could be addressed if at all?

What recommendations would the teaching staff make regarding selection of students for the Bachelor of Social Work Program?

1. What recommendations would you make to the department with regards to the selection process for the BSW?

2. How would you suggest that the department meets these recommendations?

3. What recommendations would you make to the university with regards to the selection process for the BSW?

4. How would you suggest that the university meets these recommendations?

