



**Social Workers' experiences of forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse in
the City of Cape Town**

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Signature: Signed by candidate

Date: 19 December 2019

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ABSTRACT

The prevalent rates of sexual crimes against children in South Africa require forensic social work as a specialised field to assist the criminal justice system to respond effectively to victims' essential needs. This need has led to the employment of social workers in forensic units in the South African Police Services (SAPS) as an investigative aid under detective services to enhance service delivery in forensic practices. The initiative materialised through previous collaboration between the National Department of Social Development (DSD), tertiary institutions and the South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP), to deliberate on strategies to curb the alarming rates of crime, violence and other related social problems in South Africa. Instituting specialised forensic practice was the outcome and it provided context of this study. This study explored social workers' experiences of forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse in the City of Cape Town. Forensic social work is an emerging field of practice that requires tertiary training for social workers who want to practice forensic social work to acquire specialised knowledge and skills to practice competently. The study objectives involved;

- To explore the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
- To discover concerns involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
- To describe the social workers' decision making in their intervention in providing forensic social work services.
- To explore the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice with sexual abuse cases.

The study adopted a qualitative research approach where data was collected using a semi-structured interview schedule. The non-probability purposive sampling approach was implemented based on the researcher's judgement of the role players relevant to this study. The sample interviewed for this study comprised of twenty social workers handling child sexual abuse cases from government departments and non-governmental organisations in the City of Cape Town to explore their experiences in handling child sexual abuse victims. The data was analysed using Tesch's (1990) eight steps of data analysis. The findings revealed that collaborative partnerships are at the core of the criminal justice system and networking with relevant role-players and stakeholders allow the handling of these complex cases effectively. However, with the challenging nature and risk involved in forensic social work practice, social

workers' attrition rates were high in a field already suffering from the scarcity of human resources. Social workers in forensic practice experience various challenges with child victims, the justice system and collaborations with other role-players. All these challenges are seen as contributing factors to the delay of cases and low conviction rates of sexual offences in South Africa. There is a need therefore to improve collaborations among role players handling child sexual abuse cases for effective service delivery.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.0. Introduction

Child sexual abuse is a common problem worldwide that is damaging the healthy psychosocial development of children and adolescents (Bromberg and O'Donohue, 2013:23). A report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2012) shows that in the period 2011/2012, a total of 50 688 children were victims of violent crimes in South Africa and of these children, 25 862 were victims of sexual offences perpetrated against them. According to Artz, Burton, Ward, Leoschut, Phyfer, Loyd, Kassanje and Le Mottee (2016), in South Africa, between 18 000 and 20 000 child sexual abuse cases are reported to the police every year. Furthermore, 2013/2014 police statistics indicate that 18 524 cases of child sexual abuse were reported, deducing that 51 cases occur daily (Artz et al., 2016). However, these figures only represent those child sexual abuse cases reported to the police. Bougard and Booyens (2015) concur with Clark (2012) that South Africa is ranked as the world's highest or capital of sexual offences where young boys and girls remain at high risk of sexual victimization by people known to them and the strangers. Child sexual abuse occur in or near homes, school, other physical settings and are mostly underreported with estimates ranging from 1 in 9 to 1 in 13 cases being reported to the police (Artz et al., 2016). The underreporting of sexual offences to the police minimizes the severity of the problem. Child sexual abuse reflects a high prevalence that affects the economy in both the provision and long-term childcare and protection services across South Africa. Various bodies, both government and non-governmental, devote resources and time to assist children facing different forms of abuse in communities.

Policies and legislation have been put in place to address crimes related to children in many parts of the world including South Africa. The legislations and policies include, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 32 of 2007, the Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005, The Law of Evidence and Amendment Act 45 of 1988, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child among others. Artz et al. (2016) argue that the law has done little to shift the realities and experiences of sexual offences of victims in order to curb the alarming rates of sexual abuse and violence in South Africa. Despite all these interventions, there exists some serious challenges for social workers in assisting children who suffered sexual abuse and other violent crimes. In South Africa, studies on the experiences faced by social workers in dealing with cases related to child

sexual abuse show that the existing South African “policies, conventions and legislation do not always complement, but rather create challenges and uncertainties amongst social workers” (Schiller, 2017:1). Furthermore, Artz et al. (2016) and Schiller (2017:2) concur that both government departments and non-governmental service providers face other challenges in the service delivery process. These challenges include inadequate and controlled resources, high caseloads, absence of operational processes to ensure both integrated and comprehensive child protection, childcare services that are implemented over short and long-term periods, and unclear demarcations in terms of roles in a multidisciplinary field. The disconnection within the multidisciplinary team often results in an inadequate redress of issues related to child abuse leading to the re-victimisation of the abused child victim.

The research explored the experiences of social workers who work in forensic practice with child victims of sexual abuse and the challenges they face in providing services to these children. The research involved social workers from two government departments, namely, the South African Police Services and the Department of Social Development and one non-governmental child protection Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouevereniging (Afrikaner Christian Women’s Movement) organisation who handle child sexual abuse cases.

1.1. Statement of the problem

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delpont (2011), a research problem is a general question about two or more variables and their relations. De Vos et al. (2011), further state that problem formulation can arise from the observation of reality or from a theory or questions posed by previous researchers. The purpose of this study was to explore social workers’ experiences of forensic practices with victims of child sexual abuse. Despite the high prevalence of violent crimes against children in South Africa, there are only few forensic social workers who are regarded as experts based on their tertiary training, to handle cases relating to child sexual abuse. The practice of forensic social work services has not shared the same status as other professions such as forensic psychiatry, forensic psychology or forensic ontology (Patterson, 2013). Patterson (2013), adds that this may have been caused by a limited number of social workers practicing forensic social work in South Africa due to the underdevelopment of the practice, which is progressing slowly.

Forensic Social Work is a relatively emerging field in South Africa, calling for specialised tertiary training to acquire specific expertise, superior knowledge and skills of the law, legal

processes and child development (Jonkers, 2012:3). Forensic training in social work never existed in the past but it has become available recently in South Africa due to low conviction rates and because legal authorities need expert opinion from social scientists such as forensic social workers (Patterson, 2013; Mangezi, 2014). Jonkers (2012: 3) alludes that the demand for skilled professionals steered the tertiary training at masters' degree level at the University of the North-West (Potchefstroom Campus) as the only developer and provider of specialist training in forensic social work practice. However, other universities introduced specialised tertiary training, integrating FSW courses at masters' degree level. For example, the University of the Free State (Captain Le Tape FSW personal communication, 13/08/2019) and also the University of Cape Town that offers a postgraduate specialisation in Probation and Correctional Practice, the present researcher's specialization.

With the limited numbers of specialists, the number of victims per each qualified practitioner is huge. The high victim-practitioner ratio presents many challenges to practitioners due to high caseloads, hence; creating inefficiencies in the whole service delivery process. At the same time, child victims face delayed service delivery where they have to be on the waiting list for longer periods. The researcher is of the opinion that child victims may further be re-victimised in the process of trying to unravel events of the violations perpetrated against them. Therefore, in order to reduce the victim-practitioner ratio to manageable levels which proves challenging presently, generalist social workers have also been employed to fill in the gap as reinforcements for service provision. Forensic social work practice involves both criminal and civil cases, thus this research focused on social workers involved in both criminal and civil matters. However, the questions is, “ what challenges does this present to these practitioners and victims given that most of these practitioners do not have the specialised skills and knowledge to handle complex cases related to sexual abuse of children?”.

Given the above critical points, the study explored the experiences faced by social workers in forensic practice as well as their knowledge and skills pertaining to this developing domain. It was also paramount to examine some ethical concerns faced by these social workers and how these affect their decisions and the whole service delivery process. The social workers involved in this study were practitioners who have acquired a social work qualification at undergraduate level who are practicing in forensic settings and some with additional qualifications. Social workers that are tertiary trained and in possession of a master's degree in FSW and masters of

probation and correctional practice qualify to practice as forensic social workers in South Africa.

1.2. Rationale and significance of the study

The significant increase of sexual abuse perpetrated against children raises a demand for specialised forensic social workers to handle these complex cases timeously and effectively. Since the development of forensic social work practice in 1997, there has been a slow progress and recognition of this area of specialisation. Ludwig (2007) and Mangezi (2014) maintain that Forensic Social Work (hereafter FSW) is a unique and specialised area but it has not been fully recognised by the South African Council for Social Services Professions (hereafter SACSSP). Only social workers registered by the SACSSP as licensed forensic social workers qualify to practice FSW in South Africa (Mangezi, 2014). The South African Police Service (hereafter SAPS) is the major employer for forensic social workers as it aims to assist child protection units (Strydom & Ludwig, 2009). Social workers within the SAPS assist the detectives and the criminal courts in cases that involve sexual abuse of children and other violent crimes against women and children. Child protection organisations and the Department of Social Development (hereafter DSD) offer protective services in cases that involve allegations of child abuse.

It is therefore, important to explore social workers' experiences of forensic practice with child victims of sexual abuse. This study's findings can assist social workers in forensic practice, the criminal justice system and their clients by providing information that can be utilised to enhance service delivery. It may also allow counteracting re-victimisation incidents and possibly boost conviction rates in the South African courts of law. Moreover, it may inform policies in this growing field. The experiences and challenges gathered from social workers providing forensic services could help identify concerns underlying the handling of child sexual abuse (hereafter CSA) victims and build on them to enhance service delivery. The alarming and escalating cases of CSA in South Africa necessitates evaluating variations in the challenges faced by social workers in FSW practice.

1.3. Formulated research topic

Exploring Social Workers' experiences of forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse in the City of Cape Town.

1.4. Research questions

Research questions have been formulated and answers provided in a form of a scientific inquiry. The following are the main research questions of this study;

- 1.4.1. What are the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse?
- 1.4.2. What are the concerns involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse?
- 1.4.3. How do social workers make decisions in their interventions in providing forensic social work services?
- 1.4.4. What are the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice handling sexual abuse cases?

1.5. Research objectives

Research objectives identify specific issues the researcher proposes to study and it is recommended that each objective describes only one theme (De Vos et al., 2011). Creswell (2009) asserts that research objectives are the most important concepts in a research study as they give direction and focus to the study. The researcher delimits the focus of the study to ensure that it is manageable. The objectives should be specific, measurable, clear and attainable. The objectives for this study are stated as follows;

- 1.5.1. To explore the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
- 1.5.2. To discover concerns involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
- 1.5.3. To describe the social workers' decision making in their intervention in providing forensic social work services.
- 1.5.4. To explore the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice with sexual abuse cases.

1.6. Main assumptions

The main assumption of the researcher is that social workers in forensic practice may inadvertently re-victimise victims of sexual abuse because of a lack of expertise in forensic social work. The assumption is based on the view that the progress of FSW is slow in South Africa since its development in 1997. Also, generalist social workers are being used to do FSW

based on work experience among other factors without considering tertiary training in the specialisation of FSW.

The second assumption is that social workers may face ethical challenges in forensic practice, thereby hindering service delivery to victims. The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) does not have a specific code of ethics to regulate and licence forensic social workers practicing under this specialisation. Should the SACSSP regulate FSW practice, forensic social workers will adhere to the guidelines and ethics of their specialisation, ensuring effective service delivery to child victims of sexual violence.

The last assumption is that generalist social workers in forensic practice do not have expert knowledge and skills to handle CSA cases. This assumption is based on the researcher's opinion of the required specialised knowledge and skills for forensic practice that supersede having only work experience in the forensic field without specialist tertiary training.

1.7. Clarification of concepts

Social Work - refers to a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2013). Social work is concerned with individual and personal problems but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2013). A social worker is a duly registered person authorised in terms of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 to practice the social work profession. Social workers need to have qualified and be in possession of a Bachelor of Social Work Degree (SACSSP, 2008).

FSW or Forensic practice refers to a professional field in the field of social work that focuses on the interface between societies, legal and human services systems (Barker & Branson, 2014; Prescott, 2013). SAPS FSW Procedure Manual (2011:1 in Jonkers, 2012:14), FSW is, “a specialized field of social work practice that is characterized by the social worker's primary function of providing expert testimony in courts of law. Its focus is on the interface between the legal system and the human service system by means of: assessments; court reports; expert witness”. A forensic social worker is a duly registered person authorised in terms of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 to practice the profession of forensic social work. A forensic social worker needs to have qualified with a Bachelor of Social Work Degree and a

Master of Social Work Degree in Probation and Correctional Practice (SACSSP, 2009 cited in Mangezi, 2014) and a Master of Forensic Practice to be able to practice competently in South Africa.

Child - refers to a person under the age of eighteen years old according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Constitution, RSA, 1996). This study focuses on cases involving children below eighteen who are victims of sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse - Child sexual abuse refers to “any child (under the age of eighteen years) who has been violated in terms of incestuous acts they do not comprehend, and cannot consent to legally. Various acts constitute a sexual offence such as child pornography, sexual penetration, and sexual violation, self-masturbation, displaying genital organs or anus and using stimulations for various reasons even for stimulation of a sexual nature” (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act of 2007). Therefore, a victim is defined as any person who has suffered physical, emotional or mental harm because of another person’s actions. A country’s civil and constitutional law covers the victimisation of a group (Holtzhausen Hesselink, Schoeman, Oliphant, Roestenburg, Gxubane, and Pavlic, 2012:76).

Experiences - are defined as threads that connect moments into events and stories connecting one incident with another introducing a strategy and organisation in daily life (Battarbee, 2004). Experiences involve learning and observing from others or undergoing a certain feeling or process leading to individual interpretation and creation. It is a challenge to define the term “experience” in academic terms due to its dynamic nature.

1.8. Ethical considerations

Ethics are standards that form the basis of the researcher’s evaluation of his or her conduct being aware that participants are never coerced and or indulged to participate (Strydom, 2011). The ethics considered in this research include, anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary and informed consent, no harm to participants, actions and competence of the researcher, the release and publication of findings, and debriefing of the participants.

1.8.1. Voluntary participation and Informed consent

According to Strydom and Delpont (2011), informed consent refers to informing the participants of the purpose of the study so that they make an informed decision regarding their

participation and the value it could contribute to clients and knowledge generation. Informed consent ensured that the participants participated in the interviews knowing the risks and benefits of being part of the study. Therefore, informed consent was both verbal and written as administered prior to conducting the interviews and which both the participants and the researcher signed as an agreement. The researcher did not coerce participants to be part of the study, thus the researcher emphasised voluntary participation.

1.8.2. Anonymity and confidentiality

The right to confidentiality and anonymity of the participants is of paramount importance. The information given by participants was anonymous to ensure privacy and the information was handled in a confidential manner (Strydom, 2011). Rapport building emphasised the importance of confidentiality and anonymity to ensure that participants respond effectively to the instruments used in the study. The researcher conducted and handled participants' information in a private and closed manner. Codes and pseudonyms were used to differentiate one participant from the other on the transcripts and the quotations extracted from the interviews (Hennink et al., 2011). Participants' personal information such as full names were not required in this study. The usage of data and its analysis was explained to the participants respectively. The audios recorded during the data collection process and the soft-copy transcripts are password protected and will be deleted after external examination of this research.

1.8.3. Actions and competence of the researcher

The competence of the researcher is the utmost aspect for the researcher to be able to conduct the study in an ethical manner. De Vos et al. (2011), Mnisi (2012) ascertain that the researcher has an obligation to abide to the ethics to ensure competency and adequate skills to undertake the study. The researcher has knowledge about research interviews and was confident that her skills were sufficient for this study and took the necessary precautions to buffer shortcomings of the whole research process.

1.8.4. Release and publication of findings and debriefing of the respondents

The study findings are introduced to the public in written form otherwise even a highly scientific investigation will mean very little and will not be viewed as research (Strydom, 2011:126; Nemajilili, 2016:15). The researcher informed participants that the data gathered

and analysed would become part of the University of Cape Town student research and placed in the library for public use. The availability of this information to third parties gives directions for future research in this emerging field of study. On reporting and publishing the study, confidentiality was maintained by securing and protecting the collected data in a confidential and anonymous manner (Babbie and Mouton, 2010). Debriefing sessions were conducted at the end of the interviews with participants to work through their experience of the research interviews to assist participants to debrief and to minimise harm. The copies of the final research will be made available to the SAPS as per conditions set out in their approval documents from the National Head Strategic Management, Pretoria and the Western Cape Provincial Commissioner of the SAPS, the DSD, and ACVV Head Offices.

1.9. Outline of chapters

The research report is presented in five chapters sequentially. Chapter 1 presents an introduction of the topic, the problem statement, the rationale and significance of the study, and ethical aspects of this research. Chapter 2 includes the literature reviewed and also presents a theoretical, policy and legislative framework relevant to this research. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology employed conducting the study. Chapter 4 consists of the data analysis, presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings linked to research questions and objectives. Chapter 5 is the final section discussing and concluding the main findings and recommendations essential.

1.10. Chapter summary

The chapter gave background information to the problem, focusing on South Africa. The rationale and significance of this study was discussed with the main research questions and objectives. The researcher clarified the key concepts relevant to the study to ensure that the information of the wider context of the research is clear and understandable.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

The chapter provides an overview of the policy and legislative framework relevant to FSW in South Africa. The theoretical framework employed in this study is presented and important literature related to the experiences of social workers in forensic practice handling cases of CSA is explored. The literature includes information on the challenges, knowledge and skills relevant to forensic practice in South Africa.

2.1. Policy and legislative framework

Social workers play a fundamental role in the courts of law and this research focuses on the social workers' experiences of their role in CSA allegations. The functions of social workers in forensic practice involve investigations, assessments, compiling forensic reports and being expert witnesses in court (Stutterheim and Weyers, 1999:4; Prescott, 2013:466). The FSW's functions are distinctively for social workers in forensic practice, giving them the authority to work with women and children in need of protection. Social workers' individual experiences may have effects on forensic service delivery to child victims. Due to the expertise required in this field, it is paramount for social workers in forensic practice to be knowledgeable of the ethics, policies and legislations governing their work. The national policies and legislation that provide the framework for social workers in forensic practice to fulfil their roles within South Africa include the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, the Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007, and the Social Services Act 110 of 1978 as national regulations. Reference to international frameworks is integrated into the discussion.

2.1.1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is the supreme law that supersedes all other laws implemented within the Republic. The constitution embraces the protection of all fundamental human rights of the South African citizens such as all forms of discrimination and injustice. Chapter 2 of the constitution declares rights entitled to South African citizens as the right to life, human dignity and security from violence, the right to be equal in front of the law, have his or her case heard, and have access to public services and to receive information (Campher, 2014). The Department of Social Department (2018) asserts that it is the government's mandate to put appropriate measures in place to ensure that human rights are

respected. The SAPS and DSD form an arm of service providers handling CSA allegations. Child victims of sexual offences have the right to receive quality services from the service providers irrespective of age and other circumstances around the offence. South Africa has ratified international conventions and a regional charter to fit its context. These ratifications include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990).

2.1.2. The Children's Act, Act No. 38 of 2005

The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 defines a child as a person under the age of eighteen years old. This Act outlines provisions of children in need of care and protection including children suffering from abuse (Campher, 2014). The provisions of the Children's Act consist of common threads embedded in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). Children's cases are converted to the children's court as inquiries if they do not qualify as criminal cases allowing children to receive other essential services as per the Children's Act provision. This provision offers protection from harm and the provision of other services necessary for the child to move on with life irrespective of the establishment of a criminal case.

The Children's Act (2005) Section 150 (1) (i) makes provisions for maltreated, abused and neglected children to be removed from the environment while Section 152 makes provisions for the perpetrator to be removed from the environment of the child for safety. The best interest principle is a priority in all cases involving children. Stakeholders have to be cognisant and trained on all relevant legislations pertaining to children's care, safety and protection in the environment. Services are not rendered to children in isolation but there is involvement of families, thus the Act outlines parental rights and responsibilities in the helping process, thereby promoting a holistic approach to the well-being of children. The referral process of child victims requires collaboration and clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

2.1.3. Criminal Law (The Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, Act 32 of 2007.

This piece of legislation hereafter, the Sexual Offences Act (2007), comprises of various forms of sexual offences committed against all children inclusive of special groups such as those living with mental challenges. The Act further specifies that children below twelve cannot consent to any sexual acts (Sexual Offences Act, 2007). Artz (2017) affirms that the

abolishment of the common law creates new statutory offences that criminalise all forms of sexual abuse and gives adequate recognition to the needs of survivors of sexual offences.

The Sexual Offences Act (hereafter SOA) (2007) outlines procedures for the South African Police Service (hereafter the SAPS) on charges relating to alleged CSA within South Africa. Therefore, the SAPS has the authority to handle CSA cases following all procedures outlined by the Act and relevant police Acts linked to the SOA (2007). The legislations overlap with each other and the SOA overlaps with the Criminal Procedure Act, hereafter, CPA 51 of 1977. The SOA (2007) relays a provision for the training of social contexts concerning sexual offences (hereafter SOs) to ensure uniformity of norms, standards and procedures in handling cases relating to CSA and for forensic interviews of child victims. The CSA requires service providers to understand its complexity in order to execute their roles effectively. Artz (2017) argues that should one stakeholder not cooperate in the helping process, it can cause secondary victimisation hence collaborations and networking are paramount in the FSW field.

2.1.4. The Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977

The CPA 51 of 1977 provides procedures of cases leading to criminal convictions. Social workers in forensic practice are involved in forensic interviews and assessments of child victims, thus this Act provides detailed procedures for these interventions. However, the CPA has in-depth interpretations of criminal charge provisions when compared to the SOA and the Children's Act. Social workers in forensic practice need tertiary training in this specialised field to ensure effective interventions that include incorporating various sections of the available legislations implemented in South Africa. The Act has a major role in convictions based on the evidence given by competent witnesses. Therefore, social workers need to be knowledgeable, skilled in forensic practice and competent as they act as expert witnesses in courts where child victims of sexual abuse are involved.

2.1.5. Social Services Act 110 Of 1978

The Social Services Act, hereafter SSA, regulates the ethics and standards for all social service professions in South Africa to ensure that the practicing persons are registered and licensed under the title used in practice as per the qualifications. The SSA 110 of 1978, Section 27 (1) (a) contains a provision for the enactment of the social work code of ethics outlining the professional standards as guiding principles of professional service delivery. The social work code of ethics further ensures that clients receive professional services and social workers have

an obligation to articulate the established values and ethics of the profession (Social Service and Professions Act, 1978; SACSSP, 2017). FSW is interested in the legal regulation of professional practice, professional licensing and credentialing and other provisions for public accountability (Baker and Branson, 2014:3). In South Africa, social workers practicing FSW should be acquainted with the Social Services Professions Act, Section (27) relating to the enactment of the profession's code of ethics. Social workers in forensic practice were employed as an investigative aid to assist the SAPS detectives to provide services to victims incapable of accessing specialist FSW services (Jonkers, 2012:3). However, the South African Council for Social Services Professions, hereafter SACSSP, has no guidelines regulating FSW as a specialisation.

2.1.6. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

South Africa ratified an international instrument, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, hereafter UNCRC, to ensure its pertinence to the local context. United Nations Children's Fund, hereafter UNICEF (2018), states that the UNCRC outlines the rights of a child, for example, the right to survival, protection against abuse and exploitation and right to protection from harm. Thus, service delivery's goal is to ensure protection and safety of children at home and the community at large. Social workers and stakeholders involved in handling SO allegations have an obligation to uphold the best interests of the child in their decisions and interventions. South Africa has experienced low conviction rates in cases of alleged sexual abuse (Campher, 2014). The researcher is of the opinion that this glitch emanates from the entire management of cases and thus determines whether the case is successful or unsuccessful.

2.1.7. United Nations Declaration of Basic Principle of Justice for Survivors of Crime and Abuse of Power

The declaration is an international instrument that recognises the rights and needs of survivors of crime and violence, based on the belief that survivors should be identified and treated with respect and dignity (Department of Social Development (DSD), 2008). The criminal justice system and relevant stakeholders are expected to ensure that justice is served for both victims and perpetrators and to also allow healing from the aftermath of sexual abuse. Adequate training and education of professionals working with victims promotes protection and sensitivity when handling child victims of sexual abuse (United Nations, 1985). Professionals

have an obligation to advance their knowledge and skills through research, formal trainings, coupled with private trainings to better service delivery. The SACSSP (1978, 2017) promotes continuous professional development (CPD) for social service providers to keep the knowledge of best practices and evidence based practices abreast.

2.2. Theoretical framework

2.2.1. The Ecological Systems Theory (EST)

The ecological systems theory (hereafter EST) was established by Bronfenbrenner and this theoretical framework has been widely adopted to study and understand ecological contexts (Neal and Neal, 2013:722). Bronfenbrenner (1979 in Neal and Neal, 2013: 722-723) describes the EST as a model with different levels nested within one another. However, Neal and Neal (2013:723) argue that the EST should be conceptualised as “networked” with each system defined in relation to social relationships surrounding a focal individual and the relationship of systems at different levels in an overlapping but non-nested way. This theory was relevant to study and understand the direct or indirect ecological functioning of social workers in forensic practice and their experiences with victims of CSA. Jack (2012) asserts that an ecological perspective provides a holistic framework within which one has the ability to locate all different elements of a person’s life and the connections between them.

The ecological theory is an extension of the systems approach thus, this study refers to it as the ecological systems theory to allow the exploration of the influence of systems connected to a wider circle. The theory explores a wider circle of systems and their influences alongside environmental forces and how they influence things. The theory focuses on the interconnections and relationships between people and their environment (Jack, 2012; Tracy and Brown, 2011). This holistic theory stresses that individuals and their environments cannot be understood autonomously. Forensic practice encompasses a number of government departments, policies, individuals and non-governmental service providers. The systems approach further argues that individuals exist within a social context and hence, to best understand the effects of a phenomenon such as CSA, it is significant to consider the effects in context at various levels of the process (Doyle, 2012; Sincero 2012; Muridzo, Chikadzi and Kaseke, 2018: 453). Therefore, the ecological perspective is paramount in this study as a valuable lens through which to examine it. In FSW practice, the decisions made at one level are most likely to have an impact on other systems. Thus, the interconnection of systems involving the child victims, their families, communities and the socio-economic political

context cannot be ignored and reflect the importance of the EST and the person in the environment.

2.2.2. Rights Based Approach

A rights based approach is a framework backed by international laws (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi (2004). Schiller (2017:349) asserts that social workers providing services to victims of CSA need to facilitate their investigations in a way that protects the child against re-victimisation and to empower him or her through age appropriate participation in the service delivery process. This process may conflict with police investigations, court proceedings and the legislative mandate reiterated (Schiller, 2017). Therefore, collaborative partnerships in this case are encouraged to deal with emerging conflicts at all levels of service delivery. The approach is an element to transform development focusing on the identification and for meeting the needs to enable individuals to recognise and exercise their rights fully (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). The rights based approach calls for the government to be accountable for its citizens that are accessing services and the protection of their rights. However, with the limited numbers of tertiary trained social workers in forensic practice, the system may be perceived as detrimental to traumatised children. The government is accountable for ensuring that service providers have the necessary skills, knowledge, training and continuous professional development to maintain quality services to victims of CSA.

2.3. Themes linked to the literature

2.3.1. Demand for FSW practice in South Africa

The major societal trend that is shaping the future demand and introduction of FSW is the increasing demand for law in social work practice (Baker and Branson, 2014:3) and the philosophical and multifaceted social welfare problems confronting the social work and the legal professions (Prescott, 2013: 466). According to the statement above, the researcher is of the opinion that FSW in South Africa was developed due to the escalating rates of violent crimes perpetrated against children and other vulnerable groups. FSW is designed to respond to investigations of crime and to provide services to offenders and victims in courts as well as in communities (Rosenberg, 2009; National Organization of Forensic Social Work, 2014; Prescott, 2014). However, the context of this study focused on social workers' experiences of forensic practice with victims of CSA in Cape Town, South Africa. Thus, the adoption of FSW intensifies social and justice outcomes.

Mazibuko (2013) narrates that the development of FSW practice assists in fighting against issues such as domestic violence and sexual abuse, prioritising vulnerable groups such as women, children and the mentally challenged victims. In SOs, women, children and the mentally challenged are sexual offenders' main targets. Consequently, children and the mentally challenged victims' statements and evidence are mostly doubted by the justice officials because they are believed to be incompetent. Mazibuko (2013) argues that the lack of evidence presented in court leads to the case ultimately being dismissed as the offender is not sentenced. The ineffectiveness of FSW practice in South Africa causes serious impacts on the functioning of the entire criminal justice system. Therefore, countless criminal cases, sexual offences included, are not successful within the justice system, leading to low offender conviction rates and continuous cycles of sexual violence and other related social issues.

The establishment of FSW in South Africa provides services which enable thorough preparations of victims of sexual crimes for trials and thorough offender assessments mostly in cases involving minor perpetrators (Mangezi, 2014). Mazibuko (2013) further argues that FSW is in demand in South Africa since the practice will effectively look into the background of the victim and the offender, which in return will hopefully prevent recidivism. FSW can assist the courts to serve justice to the perpetrator and concerned parties (Wilson, 2010). Rosenberg (2009) states that recidivism and re-arrests can be reduced through treatment and early identification and intervention into the risk factors of how social problems emerge. These risk factors may include excessive alcohol and drug abuse, dysfunctional families, child abuse and a history of past criminal behaviour (Hesselink, 2013). Low convictions of perpetrators in South Africa are evident due to the challenges experienced by social workers and other professionals in providing the necessary professional inputs in legal and police procedures and processes (Campher, 2014).

2.3.2. Development and context of FSW in South Africa

At an international level, according to the American National Organization for Forensic Social Work (NOFSW, 2014:1), FSW is the application of social work to questions and issues relating to the law and legal systems. It is based on specialised knowledge drawn from established principles and their applications, familiarity with the law, and painstaking evaluation and objective criteria associated with treatment outcomes (NOFSW, 2014:1). In South Africa, FSW is a specialised field of social work that focuses on the interface between the society's legal and human systems and characterised by the social worker's primary function of providing

expert testimonies in courts of law with the primary client being the judiciary system (SACSSP, 2008:1; Ntlantleng, 2011). According to the SAPS FSW Procedure Manual (2011:1 in Jonkers, 2012:14), defines FSW as,

“...a specialized field of social work practice that is characterized by the social worker’s primary function of providing expert testimony in courts of law. Its focus is on the interface between the legal system and the human service system by means of: assessments; court reports; expert witness”.

For the purpose of this research, FSW embraces these aspects as well as investigating and interviewing clients, and also the context of the social worker’s practice environments including their ability to apply a specific knowledge base within the legal context. Iffley (2012:29) indicates that FSW was established due to a high-pitched growth in cases of CSA and a shortage of tertiary trained social workers to assist the courts in boosting conviction rates. The social worker in forensic practice assists the judicial system to understand the victim or witness of crime’s psychosocial issues and presenting all facts to the court in a neutral and objective manner to enable sound decision-making or judgement (Jonkers, 2012:14). The court relies on social workers to present complete, accurate and objective reports with relevant facts for all sexual offences at hand, hence there is an obligation to the child victim, the accused, the community and the court to ensure that justice is served for both victims and perpetrators.

The act of eliciting reliable and detailed information from a child victim and collaterals about the allegations of abuse is a complex process that requires specialised skills in forensic interviewing (Powell, Wright and Clark, 2010). In the process of assessing the truthfulness of CSA allegations, social workers and law enforcement professionals who evaluate the evidence will in part make a decision about the veracity of a child’s allegations by reviewing statements provided by the child during the forensic interview protocol (Duron, 2018:5). Therefore, the forensic social worker or interviewer serves a critical role of gathering pertinent information that afford a fundamentally comprehensive analysis in form of a forensic report.

South Africa established the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit within the South African Police Service hereafter SAPS FCS (Jonkers, 2012). The SAPS FCS is a specialised unit operating according to a set of specific guidelines to provide a professional service to victims of sexual offences (SAPS National Instruction 22/1998 in Jonkers, 2012:14).

Given the high points of the above definitions, the SAPS FCS units were established to ensure immediacy of investigations and assessments of sexual violence cases committed against children. The Unit ensures collaborations between the investigating officers and the social workers dealing with sexual offences.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007 describes a sexual offence as an act including incest, rape, sexual assault, contravention of any offence in terms of Chapters 2, 3, 4 and Sections 55 and 71 (1), (2) and (6) of the mentioned Act. Jonkers (2012) states that sexual abuse occurs when an adult lures a child into a sexual relationship based on coercion and dominance. Artz, et al. (2016) found boys and girls to be equally at high risk of being sexually violated or victimized. The perpetrator's authority and power enables direct coercion of the child into sexual compliance thus, Jonkers (2012:15) concludes that a child sexual offence involves any kind of physical and non-physical acts with or without the child's consent by an adult or older person for sexual gratification.

Effective FSW requires an integrated two-pronged approach that addresses well-being (psychosocial) and justice (law and policy) to help individuals, families and communities (Maschi and Killian, 2011:13). This approach is described as an integrated approach to practice emphasising on forensic practice integrating specialised knowledge and skills in policy and practice surrounding forensic, legal issues, multi-disciplinary collaborations, clinical, case management and community practice. Social workers should use a type of double vision to examine interactions between individuals and their environments added (Maschi and Killian, 2011). In the same vein, social work has adopted a strength-based approach to social work where social workers strive to ensure access to relevant information, services and resources to the clients. Moreover, Van Wormer, Wells and Boes (2000:178 in Iffley, 2012:33) emphasise that a strength-based perspective postulates that social workers' efforts are aimed at helping service users realize and examine their strengths to accomplish their goals. The act of eliciting reliable and detailed information from a child victim about sexual abuse is a complex process that requires specialised skills in forensic interviewing (Powell, Wright and Clark, 2010). Due to the complexity of sexual offences, social workers willing to practice FSW should be tertiary trained to acquire relevant specialized skills and competences in sexual abuse and the legal field to enhance service delivery to children victimized by sexual crimes.

2.4. Functions of FSWs

FSW functions under discussion involve investigations, acting as expert witnesses in court, acting as advocates, evaluating individuals for the purpose of compiling reports, providing recommendations to courts, acting as mediators testifying about professional standards of social work, acting as educators to colleagues and maintaining relationships with their clients (Mangezi, 2014, Jonkers, 2012; Baker and Branson, 2014).

2.4.1. Investigations

Social workers in forensic practice interview victims and witnesses, and they provide the information to investigators and to courts of law; they also consult with lawyers about the kinds of juries that would be optimal to their cases (Baker and Branson, 2014; Powell et.al, 2010). For example, a social worker assesses victims of crime and conducts collateral sources to gather evidence on sexual abuse allegations under investigation, consults with the justice system role-players and delivers expert testimonies in the court of law. Social workers practising FSW are appointed for sexual abuse investigations due to the increasing numbers of CSA in South Africa. Truter (2010) asserts that social workers in forensic practice assess cases of the alleged victims of sexual abuse to determine the occurrence of sexual abuse, thus forensic interviewing is an instrument that is used in Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations. Forensic interviews involve a social worker interviewing a child victim to gather as much information as possible about the alleged sexual abuse to ascertain its occurrence. Therefore, the investigations conducted should ensure that the evidence gathered is admissible in the court of law.

2.4.2. Expert witness

An expert witness is described as a professional person with the skills by virtue of education, training, or experience who testifies to an opinion that will aid a judge in resolving a question that is beyond the understanding or competence of a layperson (Malatji, 2012). An expert witness is regarded as a professional person with special knowledge and expertise in a particular field, knowledge and skills beyond that of an unprofessional person. This study refers to an expert witness in forensic practice as a social worker with scientific and specialised knowledge, skills, training and education and experience in FSW, who provides the court of law with impartial and factual evidence, and also, objective and professional opinions based upon appropriate assessment methods on a specific psycho-social-legal matter in order to assist the court in making a fair and just decision (Malatji, 2012:12). An expert witness may deliver

expert evidence from the field of their expertise and that involves professionals such as licensed social workers, medical practitioners and psychologists, psychiatric nurse or practitioners and others and not just lawyers (Dana and Prescott, 2018: 383-385). Social workers submitting expert evidence or opinions within the legal systems are required to be knowledgeable about all forensic aspects of the investigations, for ethical and objective service delivery. A forensic social worker should possess skills and experience when presenting expert witness statements in court. Communications skills are paramount when dealing with children to ensure that sufficient information is gathered when prosecuting the case. Forensic social workers are often involved in investigating crimes such as child abuse, rape, compiling forensic reports submitted to courts and preparing for court as expert witnesses.

Therefore, a social worker qualifies as an expert witness by educational qualification or specialised understanding and greater knowledge about a case than any lay person. A forensic social worker provides the courts of law with expert testimonies by providing relevant information pertaining to cases after conducting thorough investigations with collaterals and in-depth assessments with child victims. Expert witnesses should prepare themselves thoroughly before standing in court ensuring that every relevant detail of the crime is gathered and compiled in the report to maintain confidence and composure contributing to the success of cases. Thus, the power to give an expert opinion using social science rather than physics or chemistry to opine on primary residence or visitation or apply other social science literature is judicially and legislatively authorized (Dana and Prescott. 2018: 387).

2.4.3. FSW's recommendations to the court

FSW's recommendations to the courts of law and other legal authorities are useful in passing suitable judgements for perpetrators and victims. Baker and Branson (2014:3) and Mangezi (2014:26), assert that FSWs' recommendations contribute to alternative ways of resolving, punishing and rehabilitating perpetrators. FSWs' testimonies in the courts of law and the recommendations they provide help the courts to make rational, objective and appropriate decisions or sentences. Therefore, FSWs' recommendations are valuable for the court's decisions, thus in-depth and meticulous information gathering and report-writing skills cannot be overemphasised in forensic practice.

2.4.4. Knowledge about professional standards of FSW

The SACSSP (2009; 2017) states that FSWs must be well versed in professional standards and the social work code of ethics. The code of ethics guides social workers in their official duties when dealing with clients, communities and relevant role-players. Forensic social workers testify about professional standards of social work and facilitate cases of possible malpractice and unethical conduct (Baker and Branson, 2000; 2014). Social workers can be sued for malpractice so they need to be knowledgeable about practice and functions in court (Baker and Branson, 2014:3; Mangezi, 2014:27). Therefore, social workers need to be acquainted and knowledgeable about the professional ethics and standards to maintain the boundaries of their functions.

2.4.5. FSW maintenance of relationships and as educators to their colleagues

Continuous education is imperative in the field of FSW. It is important to note that one of the FSW's functions is to educate their colleagues such as the police, magistrates and prosecutors on issues relating to social work and the law, promoting cooperation and networking in order to boost conviction rates of the devastating crimes perpetrated against children. The NOFSW (2014) maintains that forensic social workers educate colleagues on issues of the influence of law in social work, teach courses and give workshops on the legal aspects of social work practice. Since the FSW practice is emerging in South Africa, professionals such as social workers, the police, prosecutors, magistrates and probation officers need intensive training or education (Mangezi, 2014:28) for standardised and effective service delivery to the respective client systems. Social workers must be able to connect with other individuals, that is, professionals from the criminal justice system and the civil justice who may have relevant information regarding the victim or the offender (Maschi et al., 2009). Networking is an indispensable skill required by social workers to make relevant contacts and to have access to reliable sources of information to authenticate the information gathered from relevant professionals. The maintenance of relationships with clients and networking with colleagues requires rapport building as a core element in FSW practice. This function allows respect and confidentiality of clients and colleagues.

2.5. Knowledge and skills required for FSW practice

Knowledge and skills are specialised training needs required by social workers to practice FSW competently within South Africa. The legal environment can be very challenging for social

workers to navigate through it, thus developing specialised knowledge and skills common to the work that FSWs encounter is essential in the South African legal system. Practitioners need knowledge that informs the practitioner about the clients' experience and context, knowledge that helps the practitioner to plan appropriate interventions and knowledge that clarifies the policy and organisational context in which the practice takes place (Mnguni, 2011). Below is a discussion of the knowledge required in forensic social work, namely, criminal justice and legal aspects, knowledge of courtroom procedures, human rights, legal regulations and therapeutic jurisprudence.

2.5.1. Criminal justice and legal aspects

Social workers practicing FSW within South Africa require enrolment in a collective of courses to synthesise their knowledge. These courses involve criminal justice, legal and FSW courses as pre-requisites to provide a knowledge base for practice (NOFSW, 2013). Therefore, FSW requires an understanding of criminal justice, social work and other systems such as psychiatry, psychology, interpersonal, familial, law, ethics and community settings. The NOFSW (2013) further encourages channelling internships within forensic settings such as the South African Police Services for professional exposure.

The criminal justice system involves the law enforcement agencies such as the police, the courts and corrections. Social workers and other role players within forensic practice collaborate with the criminal justice system when executing their official duties (Maschi et al., 2009). FSWs collaboration with other professionals is fundamental to the investigation of CSA as evidence is collated from a variety of sources during investigations. Furthermore, in order to determine the best interest of the child, evidence must be obtained and coordinated in a manner that minimises the risk of trauma arising from children's involvement in the legal process (Powell et. al., 2010). FSWs' knowledge of the justice system, the law and legal settings enhances the effectiveness of services rendered to the clients, decision-making and legitimacy of the social worker's role within the multidisciplinary team. Social workers that are knowledgeable in these aspects demonstrate the ability to engage with the court team, police and the corrections as experts in the service delivery process.

It is imperative for social workers to know the general procedures in courtrooms, and also knowing their place and what is expected of them in court with regards to aspects such as criminal justice and legal aspects. Gxubane and Holtzhausen (2012) note that forensic social

workers need to know about opinion testimony, admissibility of evidence in court, process of giving testimony, making recommendations, appearance and dress code for court and how to address the court. FSWs earn respect from court officials when they know what is expected of them at court and to act accordingly. It is vital for forensic social workers to make initiatives to keep abreast of the current knowledge and skills so as to avoid malpractices and for effective service delivery.

2.5.2. Human rights

Human rights are central in forensic practice, thus it is essential for social workers to be equipped with knowledge regarding this aspect. Human rights knowledge assists social workers in their intervention methods to change exploitative and unjust structures perpetuating injustice, as well as the violation and suppression of human rights. The key instrument, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states' rights such as equality before the law, non-discrimination and equal protection by the law, and strengthening the human rights for the citizens of South Africa. Victims and perpetrators of crime suffer discrimination by the mere fact that they are in contact with the criminal justice system. Therefore, it is the role and responsibility of social workers in forensic practice to advocate for human rights and to denounce their violation by continuous engagement in legislation and policy education (Maschi et al., 2009). Maschi et al. (2009) further allude that ensuring non-discrimination of clients in and out of the courtroom is the FSW's responsibility. The researcher is of the opinion that ensuring that victims' and perpetrators' rights are upheld in and out of court can be challenging currently due to alarming rates of sexualised children against the number of social workers in forensic practice.

2.5.3. Legal regulations

The legal regulation refers to the professional regulation and relevant accountability procedures that FSWs need to be cognisant of when considering forensic practice in South Africa. Licencing is a pre-requisite for social workers to practice FSW in South Africa. It is evident that the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) must register FSWs and provide a Code of Ethics that is relevant to FSW practice as a specialised field. The SACSSP ensures that all social service professionals are registered by providing relevant documentations of their qualifications, training and experience. The registration of specialised fields enables each professional to be bound by the Code of Ethics that specifically applies to their field of practice than the general Code of Ethics. It is imperative to note that the FSW's

regulation by the SACSSP was signed by the DSD Minister on 03 July 2017 (Government Gazette, 2017:47-52; Social Service Protection Act, 1978; Act No. 110 of 1978). The regulations were effected by the Government Gazette on 01 September 2017. Thus, social workers in FSW practice and those wishing to practice within the mentioned settings are officially required to submit relevant documents to register and to use the FSW title against their names.

2.5.4. Victimology and therapeutic jurisprudence

A victim is an individual who suffered physical, emotional or mental harm resulting from another person or offender's action (Schoeman, 2012). Victimology is a study of all victims of crime and the psychological effects of their experiences (Pemberton, Mulder and Aarten, 2019:393-395). Children suffer victimisation caused by crime that negatively affects their psychological functioning to the extent of not recalling events before the occurrence of the crime, thus victimology is linked to therapeutic jurisprudence. Victims suffer from the aftermath of crime as they feel threatened, fearful and violated, leading to various side effects psychologically and physically, for example, feelings of guilt, shame, self-blame, confusion, powerlessness and grief (Teoh and Lamb, 2013:145).

Schoeman (2012) relays that FSW is linked to victimization since social workers provide evidence as expert witnesses in court, stand up for the victims' rights and access information from and provide information to victims. However, victims may suffer uncertainty and undue stress during court proceedings owing to the aftermaths of the crime committed against them. Due to the increasing rates of crime in South Africa, the study of victimology is of paramount importance to reduce and prevent crime. Victimology is essential in forensic practice because it focuses on the impact of crime, as well as the nature, extent, distribution and causes of victimisation. The high crime rates led to the development of FSW as a specialised field raising a demand of FSWs to curb crime across South Africa.

Therapeutic jurisprudence is a legal philosophy that explores how the law and legal systems affect the emotions, behaviours and mental health of people (Maschi et al., 2009:242; Spencer, 2014:222). Furthermore, therapeutic jurisprudence ensures positive outcomes of legal procedures, rules of law and actions. It is essential for FSWs to have sufficient knowledge about therapeutic jurisprudence as an ultimate aspect in breaking cycles of violence or violent criminal behaviours, for example sexual abuse and domestic violence. Butters and Vaughan-

Eden (2011) sustain that forensic social workers must value the psychological well-being, legal rights and interests of their clients in order to prevent legal problems arising through problem solving approaches. Therapeutic jurisprudence further attests that FSWs practise with ethics such as care and strong interpersonal skills. Mazibuko (2013) alludes that therapeutic jurisprudence accommodates both victims and perpetrators of crime and ensures a reduction of the offenders' chances of committing the same crime again and also ensuring that victims do not fall prey to the same crime again. It seems that victimology and therapeutic jurisprudence serve the same goal in problem-solving as the victim-empowerment in a bid to break vicious cycles of violence against vulnerable groups in South Africa.

2.6. Skills of a FSW operating in the field of CSA

FSW requires a specific set of skills and competencies to identify aspects contributing to sexual abuse, identifying strengths that preserve the family and protecting the best interests of the child. The FSW field consists of complex cases necessitating the authenticity and legitimacy of every intervention applied. A FSW needs skills and knowledge to use and interpret both psychosocial and non-psychosocial evidence for presentation in the court of law. Non-psychosocial evidence refers to medical findings, photographs, videos, other physical evidence, and the suspect's confessions while psychosocial evidence refers to clinical evaluations to determine whether sexual abuse actually occurred to ensure the identity of the perpetrator (Herman, 2010:189). Both forms of evidence guide and assist forensic social workers' investigations and assessments to make appropriate recommendations for court.

Social workers are trained to deal with statutory work in general but it is paramount to realise that sexual abuse is within the forensic science field and social work per se (Iffley, 2012:35). The forensic field demands competencies broader than those associated with generalist social work practitioners, thus making FSW a complex field requiring tertiary specialised training for social workers interested in this field. It is evident that the involvement of social workers in the legal field demands them to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively with children, and to write objective, accurate and authentic reports for court, and to act as expert witnesses in court.

2.6.1. Communication and engagement skills

It is paramount to be cognisant of the difference between therapeutic intervention and forensic intervention when dealing with CSA. The social worker's ability to communicate at a child's

level is paramount in forensic practice to ensure that the child understands that forensic interviews are strictly professional and are conducted to elicit truthful information as evidence to serve the best interest of the child victim. Therefore, communication with children requires a forensic social worker to possess special attributes that are different from a generalist social worker. The forensic communication process refers to the forensic interviewing process that has become a cornerstone of CSA, and often produces evidence presented in court where investigations lead to criminal prosecution. A forensic interview is a process of eliciting accurate information from a child, available witnesses and potential suspects (Saywitz et.al, 2011; Duron, 2018). However, interviews are not designed to accuse persons, instead interviews are conducted in criminal cases to gather relevant information from victims and witnesses who have the knowledge that is necessary to spearhead criminal investigations.

Communication is an essential element in CSA investigations to elicit credible and sufficient information from victims and collateral sources to back-up evidence when prosecuting cases. A forensic interview or investigation demands a balance of sensitivity and specificity to minimize both false negative errors and false positive errors (Everson and Sandoval, 2011). A criminal investigation is a thinking and a reasoning process which has the primary objective of gathering facts related to a specific act or crime (Palmiotto, 2013) thus, fact finding is a meticulous process involving critical thinking to produce comprehensive, authentic and objective facts that are admissible in the court of law. Maschi and Killian (2011) maintain that good communication and engagement skills assist social workers to access information from clients and other professionals such as the police. FSW requires social workers to develop communication and engagement skills that assist them in building healthy and collaborative professional relationships with other service providers and the clients such as the law enforcement, attorneys and other stakeholders, while the consumers involve the children, family members and the community since achieving success is critical (Mele, 2009). An interdisciplinary collaboration is an “effective interpersonal process that facilitates the achievement of goals that cannot be reached when individual professionals act on their own” (Bronstein in Mangezi, 2014:18). Therefore, FSWs engage other multidisciplinary role-players in assessing and evaluating the truthfulness of CSA allegations and making decisions regarding the outcome of cases.

2.6.2. Report writing in FSW

Report writing is one of the fundamentals in FSW, thus social workers need to possess good writing skills. According to Mele (2009), writing skills are essential as they help social workers to compile outstanding and reputable assessment reports. The courts frequently request for forensic reports as an instrument to bring justice to the concerned parties in the judicial process. Mnisi (2010:15) declares report writing as a paramount role that a social worker plays in the courts of law where children are concerned in South Africa. Assessment reports are submitted in court with recommendations endorsed to the magistrates as part of evidence for victims of crime.

The criminal courts request competency reports in cases involving CSA (Campher, 2014). Competency reports are used to determine the trustworthiness and authenticity of the child's testimony. It is the role of a social worker to establish the child's competency to ascertain the knowledge of actuality and contrived testimonies, intellectual ability and to understand the essence of trustworthiness in the court of law when giving a testimony. Mnisi (2010:5) asserts that the requests of competency reports place a huge responsibility on social workers' competencies thus emphasising on knowing beyond what the court expects, but an understanding of what is to be included in the competency report concerning CSA cases. The competency reports submitted to the criminal courts are requested in terms of the provisions stipulated in section 170A (2) (b) of the South African Criminal Procedure Act, Act 51 of 1977. The reports must be compiled in an objective and trustworthy manner containing factual evidence for magistrates to draw judgements of cases submitted to the courts. Therefore, report-writing skills are paramount in the FSW field.

2.6.3. Language used in court and professionalism

It is important to be cognisant of the language used in court for social workers in forensic practice to be effective and competent expert witnesses in the courts of law. Competency as an expert witness refers to social workers' ability and expertise in presenting their cases to the courts, thus they need to be skilled in the language used in court to maintain professionalism, as well as gain respect and trust in the courts of law (Rosenberg, 2009; Gxubane and Holtzhausen, 2012). Social workers need to understand the terms used in court to avoid misinterpretations that may provoke magistrates or judges while risking spoiling the cases they are presenting, thus Mele (2009) emphasises on professionalism as a skill that requires credibility and follow through in investigations in order to access correct information which

will not mislead the court in passing a sentence. Professionalism is a valuable skill for every profession including FSW practice. Professionalism also refers to the ability to collaborate with other service providers from different backgrounds, the appropriate behaviour and dress code when presenting cases in the courts of law, and addressing court professionals such as magistrates or judges. The manner in which social workers dress and carry themselves in the courtroom will speak volumes about their profession, standard of work and self-confidence and the researcher observed these aspects in practice. Professionalism in FSW practice generates respect of social workers from other role-players and respect of the profession as a whole.

2.7. Forensic interviewing techniques

The practice and education of FSW in South Africa is gradually growing owing to the alarming rates of CSA. It is imperative to acknowledge that South Africa has no guidelines informing FSW assessments with victims of CSA. Thus, FSW practice adopted international guidelines and protocols to facilitate disclosure in CSA allegations during forensic assessments with children. Forensic assessments require appropriate guidelines and protocols or techniques to elicit authentic evidence from the child victims, enabling the social worker to compile a quality and comprehensive report for the court as written evidence. In South Africa, social workers handling CSA cases employ various interviewing techniques to acquire candid evidence from victims of CSA. Rapholo and Makhubele (2019:92) argue that professionals need to be watchful on the dynamics which can impact the disclosure rate when conducting forensic interviews. In South Africa, culture and language of both the child and the interviewer, the age of the child and the type of questions asked to the child have an influence on the effectiveness of interviewing techniques (Cronch, Viljoen, and Hansen, 2006; Rapholo, 2018:92).

2.7.1. Rapport building

Rapport denotes an affirmative and essential relationship fostered between a forensic social worker and a child-victim during forensic assessments and it increases the likelihood that the witness will cooperate (Haney and Roller, 2012). Rapport building is imperative in social work to build trust with children before conducting forensic assessments. The social worker-child relationship determines the credibility of information the social worker obtains from the assessments. Rapport with children during assessments of sexual abuse allegations can be established in a numerous ways such as a relaxed milieu, a sincere investigator demeanour, attentive listening, good facilitation aptitudes and developmentally sensitive interviewing, and these contribute to building a relationship with a child (Rapholo, 2018:101). The researcher

has observed from practical experience that rapport building is done in the initial session with the child to build trust before actual assessment interviews commence. During this session, a social worker will be able to tell if the child will be comfortable relating with during sessions. It is also a stage where session rules are made and both the social worker and the child will adhere to the set rules throughout the assessment process.

Rapport building is a communication relationship between a social worker and a child victim that enables the social worker to elicit appropriate and meaningful information during an interview (Collins, 2012:276). This communication relationship permits the child to share a truthful interpretation of relevant events in their own words and pace. A FSW allows a child to share a free narrative interpretation in the directive he or she desires. In a free narrative, a child could be asked questions that require more information and child-victims are probable to divulge the sexual abuse that happened. Rapholo and Makhubele in their study mention that a child could be asked a question such as, “Did anyone tell you why you are coming to see me today?” or “Why do you think you are here today?” A child could say, “He did naughty things with me” and the FSW would use follow-up question such as “Please tell me everything that happened” (Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019).

Rapport building is a core element when working with children and the use of open-ended questions is highly commendable with school-going children and adolescents as alluded to by studies conducted in South Africa (Cronch et al., 2006; Rapholo, 2018; Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). The developmental stage and age of the child is imperative at all times when FSWs choose to implement this technique, thus guiding the structure and the type of questions asked during forensic assessments. Open-ended questions are referred to as interrogations that request comprehensive responses and which cannot be responded merely by means of a “Yes” or “No”, or other transitory one-phrase responses (Fouche, 2007; Aldridge and Cameron, 1999 in Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). For example, a FSW should ask questions starting with, What, When, Who, Where, and How. Open-ended questions are more effective to elicit detailed facts on the possibility of CSA (Spies, 2012).

Forensic interviewing aids such as drawings can be employed with child victims during the rapport building phase since it is believed that interview aids do not increase the amount of information when compared to best practice verbal techniques (Salmon, Pipe, Malloy and Mackay, 2011:370). The correct use of free drawings by the child victim can assist the

investigators to pay attention to subtle features such as the size of the body parts or colours used by the child in a drawing and hence, such drawings can be used when establishing rapport (Toth, 2011:1). The researcher concludes that with open-ended questions, a FSW has the ability to build rapport with the child victim and elicit more reliable information from the child's story which helps build-up on a case for criminal convictions.

2.7.2. Truth-Lie or competency assessment

The technique aims at determining the child's ability to differentiate between the truth and a lie or right and wrong, which also inform the forensic social worker about the competency of the child. The child's understanding of the difference between "Truth" and a "Lie" should be assessed during the pre-forensic interviews, first establish contact with the child just before beginning the abuse focused questioning (Faller, 2015:43). The establishment of the child's competency during the initial contact increases the credibility of statements obtained from the child, their admissibility and authenticity in the criminal court (APSAC, 2012:9). Currently, South Africa has no guidelines and or standard procedures on the true-lie discussions, and even the protocols used during forensic assessments do not include this technique (Rapholo, 2018; Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). Spies (2006) argues that children should be asked if they have ever told a lie and if so, what the consequences were. The researcher is on the opinion that a truth-lie technique informs the child about their accountability if they tell a lie about the sexual abuse allegations. Apart from the FSW establishing the competency of the child, this technique allows the child to know the repercussions of telling a lie in court. Smith (2014) affirms that the truth-lie technique plays an important role during the rapport building phase. However, every witness in the South African jurisdiction must go on a competency exam before delivering their testimony (Fouche, 2007).

According to the Criminal Procedure Act No. 51 of 1977 (SA, 1977), a child under the age of 14 will not give an affirmation or be sworn in, instead, a competency exam is conducted by the presiding officer. In CSA allegations within the South African context, FSWs are requested by the court to conduct competency assessments of child victims before they deliver their testimonies in court. Rapholo (2018:97) asserts that the truth-lie technique should be used continuously in each session with the child to remind them about the importance of telling the truth as children are likely to forget the discussions from previous sessions. A basic understanding of child development and developmental issues is an absolute necessity for anyone who works with child witnesses (Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). It is imperative to be

cognisant of the child's developmental stage and the cognitive level at which the child functions to be able to draw truthful interpretations about the allegations.

2.7.3. Allegation blind interviews

The technique involves the interviewer's assessment of the child without prior knowledge of sexual abuse allegations thus, increase the likelihood of more disclosure rates than informed allegation interviews (Rapholo & Makhabele, 2019; Cronch et al., 2006). In a study conducted by Rapholo, FSWs in South Africa have stated that the informed allegation interviews are effective with very young children than the older children and that their disadvantages are that they are leading, suggesting and subjective (Rapholo, 2018). In blind assessment interviews, the FSW has no information about the allegations of CSA, thus the FSW gathers information from the child and correlates it with the collaterals. For that reason, the social worker should not have knowledge of the perpetrator and that from the collaterals at his or her disposal before assessing the child victim.

However, APSAC (2012), states that preceding evidence around the allegations may be expedient in orienting the FSW and illuminating the child's testimonial. Rapholo and Makhubele (2019), argue that informed allegation interviews ought to be used after pre-forensic interviews when the FSW has established the developmental level of the child. The researcher is of the opinion that each technique preferred by a FSW during forensic assessments should be age-appropriate and according to the child's developmental stage due to differences in the levels of understanding and language skills. The technique should consider the child victim's concentration span, recognising that each child is unique and different, thus the individuality principle should be exercised by social workers involved with CSA allegations. APSAC (2012), Cronch et al. (2006), and Saywitz et al. (2011), assert that the FSW should always take a non-judgemental, objective and neutral stance towards the interviews gathering accurate information that serves as the hallmark for making decisions throughout the investigation.

2.7.4. Touch Survey

The Touch Survey was founded by Sandra Hewitt in the early 1980s and it has gained popularity in recent years (Carnes, 2000; Hewitt, 1999; Hewitt and Arrowood, 1994 in Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). The Touch Survey particularly screens for possible abuse in several areas such as physical abuse that is screened by looking at spanking, hitting or pinching, sexual

abuse by asking about genital touches and lastly, emotional abuse or neglect by asking about hugging and kissing (Rapholo, 2018; Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). This technique is based on the idea that touches fall along a continuum, ranging from good to neutral to bad touches (Hewitt, 1999 in Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). It is evident in literature that the Touch Survey has been developed to screen for multiple forms of abuse, thus CSA occurrences could involve different other forms of abuse. The Touch Survey exposes children to different touches such as hugging, kissing, hitting, sexual touches, and feelings associated with touches, location on their body where they receive a touch and by whom (Cronch et al., 2006). It is imperative to note that FSWs using this assessment technique in CSA allegations emphasise on unravelling the child's feelings of different touches with people involved in a child's life. For example, family and non-family members focusing on who touches the child and where and also how those touches make the child feel?

The Touch Survey is recommended for assessing children aged 4 and above due to children's lack of self-representation skills (Hewitt, 1999 in Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). The survey assists in rapport building between a child and the FSW, and also allows the assessment of the child's attention span. Rapholo and Makhubele (2019) argue that in the South African context, the age and culture of the child have been viewed as having implications especially when FSWs assess children from the cities versus children from the rural areas. For example, FSWs indicated that for some cultures mostly in rural areas, it is a taboo for a boy to kiss his father whereas in a western culture this is viewed as an expression of love (Rapholo and Makhubele (2019). Therefore, the Touch Survey is bound to yielding more disclosure rates when implemented with children from urban areas than those from the rural areas of South Africa. To counteract challenges regarding age and culture, Cronch et al. (2006) recommend combining the Touch Survey with other empirically supported interviewing techniques. Rapholo and Makhubele (2019) conclude that the Touch Survey technique appears to be more accurate in bringing about more disclosure of CSA, but should be used as a last resort when other techniques did not work and only in instances where the child did not at all disclose the possibility of sexual abuse.

2.7.5. Anatomically-detailed dolls

The anatomically detailed dolls are discussed in literature as the most controversial technique in forensic assessments (Wakefield & Underwager, 2014). Anatomically detailed dolls can be used to clarify the child's previous statements about sexual abuse rather than relying on the

child's statements (Faller, 2015; Rapholo and Makhabele, 2019). Therefore, specialised and intensive training is a necessity for professionals who intend using anatomically detailed dolls with child victims of sexual abuse. A social worker should be cognisant of the child's cognitive functioning when using anatomically detailed dolls to clarify the child's previous statements by mostly older children than the younger ones. The cognitive functioning can be assessed during the initial stage using a cognitive interviewing technique developed by Gieselman et al. in the 1980s (Rapholo and Makhubele, 2019). Employing this technique at the initial stage with the child assists the FSW to establish the child's cognitive development and his or her ability to recollect events, also allowing the FSW to choose a relevant and most appropriate interviewing technique. However, Faller (2015) encourages the use of dolls and other interview aids such as drawings to be useful with children under the age of five, with reluctant children and with uncommunicative children (Faller, 2015:41). Forensic interviewers should be skilled and trained to use anatomically detailed dolls and other forensic interviewing aids. The utilization of interview aids such as anatomically detailed dolls and drawings of unclothed people may distract the child's attention from the main theme of the interview focusing only on the genital parts. It is said that many of such aids lack a standard procedure and instructions to introduce them and have little empirical evidence supporting the interpretations (Giannetakis, 2013).

2.8. Challenges faced by social workers in FSW settings

Social workers working in forensic settings with child victims of sexual abuse face various challenges due to the traumatic nature of working with traumatised children. The nature of working within a sexual abuse and trauma field can be traumatic for professionals and this may lead to burnout. Supervision and other professional support services are of paramount importance in this field to guarantee effective and efficient service delivery to the clients served.

2.8.1. Supervision versus professional support

A study by Iffley found that social workers are responsible for making significant decisions on what they do; as well as the purpose, functions and role for making commitments and decisions that require the expenditure of significant supervision (Iffley, 2012). Debriefing and supervision are essential elements in social work that aims for effectiveness of service delivery and the maintenance of social workers' emotional well-being. Supervision is used interchangeably with mentoring and coaching of social workers, and consultation as an activity for supervision (Engelbrecht, 2012:357). Supervision is an essential element that plays a

pivotal role in client service delivery given the complexity of CSA cases. Furthermore, supervision enables supervisee guidance with complex cases where decision-making may be challenging and as a way to boost employee morale within the working environment. Support can be described as “the degree to which the environment makes available resources relevant to the demands made upon the system” and “a resource that helps us cope with job stress through supportive relationships with others” (Iffley, 2012). In addition, professional support systems in social work involve formal and informal systems where formal support refers to the line management and appraisal systems, while informal refers to support in and outside social work settings such as family, friends and colleagues. It is evident that supervision is imperative in the working environment where the supervisor provides direction and evaluation of services rendered by social work supervisees to promote competent and ethical services to clients.

2.8.2. Multidisciplinary teamwork

Social workers are frequently involved in multidisciplinary teams thus ensuring timely services offered to victims of CSA. Multidisciplinary teams involve various role players working within the forensic settings where the discussion and handling of cases is done timeously. It is apparent that wherever integrated social and legal services exist, legal issues take precedence, thus this has implications for social work care and the holistic identification of child victims, family and community needs, and this has to be addressed. Communication and cooperation among role players in the criminal justice system foster positive case outcomes and the protection of child victims from further abuse and promotes justice for both perpetrators and victims. Artz (2017) argues that should one stakeholder not cooperate in the helping process, it can cause secondary victimisation. Therefore, networking among role players of the criminal justice system is important and this reduces further re-victimisation of children and improves the whole service delivery in FSW practice.

2.8.3. Resources

Human and material resources are evident challenges within FSW settings. Forensic work became increasingly intensive and resources are shrinking while caseloads became harder to manage (Iffley, 2012; Powell, et al., 2010). SAPS has twenty-seven social workers that were appointed in 2007 to conduct forensic assessments of sexual offence cases (Jonkers; 2012). The study also added that the amount of administration required of them and the intervals expected to spend in the office and meeting performance targets is progressively increasing. In

addition, the study emphasised on investigating social workers in other working environments to understand their experiences and how they handle challenges as mentioned.

2.8.4. Burnout, fatigue and debriefing

Social workers in forensic practice are susceptible to burnout and vicarious trauma (Perron and Hiltz, 2006:216-220; Cox and Steiner, 2013) due to heavy workloads and overwhelming CSA cases. It is important for organisations to develop prevention and intervention strategies for vicarious trauma and burnout focusing on aspects such as organisational culture, workload, group support, supervision, self-care, education and work environment (Cox and Steiner, 2013: 52-59). The effectiveness of services to child victims is centred on taking care of social workers and their environment to allow them to handle traumatised victims of sexual violence. However, professional support is essential in the FSW field due to its nature of working with traumatised children, thus perhaps this might be traumatic to the forensic social worker. Professional support is therefore paramount to help social workers deal with the trauma and pressure of the cases they deal with in order to enhance service delivery. The National Instruction Number 18/1998 (in Iffley, 2012) states that members of the SAPS who have been exposed to a stressful experience should receiving debriefing sessions in order to counteract lethargy and exhaustion. Therefore, regular debriefing sessions should be rendered to professionals dealing with CSA cases for them to circumvent burnout.

The social worker's primary focus within the FSW practice is to conduct forensic assessments with sexually abused children. FSW support facilitates guidance in the investigations of challenging forensic cases and obtaining objective expert testimonies. Burnout is described as a state where individuals can no longer connect authentically to their work, to themselves or to service users (Koprowska, 2008). Failure to manage burnout leads to impaired self-esteem, reduced and ineffective service delivery and gradually drives valuable personnel out of the profession that is presently suffering from human resources. In this study, exploring social workers' experiences deliberates self-care advice to ensure efficiency in the demanding and traumatic field. Therefore, it is evident that social workers in forensic practice need skills to prevent themselves from burning out from the complex cases and to network with relevant role-players.

2.9. Chapter summary

The chapter discussed policy, legislative and theoretical frameworks linked to FSW practice in South Africa. Literature pertaining to FSW practice, CSA or sexual violence, FSW functions, knowledge and skills, protocols, techniques and challenges faced in handling sexual abuse cases was consulted and discussed in detail. The literature consulted covered few South African studies and international studies. However, the experiences, knowledge and challenges are similar. The following chapter discusses the research methodology adopted by the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting this research. Research methodology refers to the process that involves an application of a variety of standardized methods and techniques in the pursuit of knowledge (Fouché and Schurink, 2011:323). The research phases identify the research design as the most appropriate in determining answers to the research questions, choice of the sample design, data collection method, data collection tool, and the data analysis method (De Vos et al., 2011). This chapter discusses the research approach, design, population, sampling method and technique, sample and sample size, process of gaining entry, data collection method and research guide, data analysis, limitations, data verification and reflexivity as elements forming part of the methodology for this study.

3.1. Research Approach

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport. (2011) describe quantitative and qualitative research as two types of research designs, also known as paradigms, which could be used in conducting research. This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach (Botma et al, 2010:42) to explore participants' behaviours, experiences and challenges encountered in forensic social work practice and the meaning they give to each aspect. The research discovered and assessed social workers experiences of forensic practice with victims of CSA. The study attempted to answer questions about "what" challenges and concerns are experienced by social workers in forensic practice, their knowledge and skills, and determining social workers' decision making in their interventions. According to De Vos et al. (2011), qualitative research involves only a specific group of participants suitable for specific research. Therefore, this study included social workers in FSW practice and social workers in child protection departments and organisations who have direct contact with child victims of sexual abuse to share their experiences in handling these complex cases.

3.2. Research design

The study further employed a phenomenological paradigm as an important aspect of this research design. This paradigm involves an attempt to view the world through the participants' eyes (Creswell, 2009; Babbie, 2013). The paradigm fits into this study as it focuses on investigating individual experiences and challenges which formed the purpose of the study.

The study was explorative in nature, with the aim to investigate and discover people's behaviours and feelings, and to understand the underlying meaning of such experiences (Babbie, 2013). An explorative research design focuses on gaining insight about a particular situation thus, qualitative data collection methods are employed. For example, semi-structured interviews.

3.3. Population

A population is described as a term that sets boundaries to the units under study (Strydom, 2011b:223) thus, a chosen population should possess specific characteristics. The population involved in this study were social workers in FSW practice handling CSA caseloads in Cape Town, South Africa. The population's sample comprised of social workers from the SAPS, DSD and ACVV- NGO. A sample is described as the elements of a research population who are included in the actual study and can talk directly about the group (Babbie and Mouton, 2010). The sample for this research was based on the judgement of the researcher, thus the researcher selected a sample containing the specific characteristics of the population serving the purpose of this study (De Vos et al., 2011:232). The sample of this study is referred to as participants hereafter. Participants are referred to as people who provide information that allows the researcher to construct a synthesised picture of the group that participants represent (Babbie and Mouton, 2010). The participants for this study were drawn from social workers handling CSA caseloads, a population of participants who possess characteristics favourable for the study. The participants were purposely meant for this study, thus drawing boundaries from which the sample was drawn, which were social workers in forensic practice within the government and non-governmental organisations. The study focused on social workers in forensic practice and this allowed social workers to give inputs of their experiences within their settings and in working with the child victims.

3.4. Sampling method and technique

The study employed a non-probability purposive sampling approach. Non-probability sampling is defined as a technique in which samples are selected in a way that is not suggested by a probability theory (Babbie, 2013; de Vos et al., 2011). Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to determine the study sample based on perceptions of which social workers in FSW practice are relevant to the study. Therefore, the study focused on universal social experiences and processes of social workers in forensic practice for a purpose. A purposive (judgemental) sampling is a non-probability sampling method that is found in the qualitative research

approach and this was applicable to this study. Purposive sampling is a process of selecting samples based on the researcher's knowledge (subjective judgement) of the nature of the research, rather than random selection (Clark, 2010:123, Babbie and Mouton, 2010). The researcher's selection of the sample was based on the literature's description of the roles of social workers employed within the forensic settings.

3.5. Sample and sample size

A sample is described as the elements of a research population who are included in the actual study and can talk directly about the group (Babbie and Mouton, 2010). The sample for this research was based on the judgement of the researcher, thus the researcher selected a sample containing the specific characteristics of the population serving the purpose of this study (De Vos et al., 2011:232). The researcher interviewed twenty social workers working in forensic practice handling CSA cases in Cape Town, South Africa. The study represented social workers from government departments and a non-governmental organisation as the target population. Therefore, the departments represented were the SAPS, DSD and ACVV (NGO). The social workers in the population sample are involved in the courts of law where criminal cases have been established and also where cases are referred for conversion to the children's courts.

3.6. Process of gaining entry to participants

The researcher submitted a proposal at the University of Cape Town (UCT) for ethical clearance and it was finalised and granted on the 16th of July 2018. The researcher's desire to collect the appropriate data and the nature of the research design required permission to be obtained from relevant organisations and professionals separately. Fouché and Schurink (2011:325) define gatekeepers as individuals with formal or informal authority to provide approval for access to participants. Therefore, the data collection process was prolonged due to the procedures that were followed for the participating organisations to grant permission to the researcher. FSW is a relatively developing field of specialisation in South Africa and the researcher made contacts with relevant departments and organisations for data collection arrangements. FSW is an overwhelming field with few social workers employed specifically to handle CSA cases in Cape Town. As a result, the researcher made phone calls to the SAPS Rondebosch which proposed Claremont Police Station as the initial point of departure, the Wynberg and Cape Town Magistrate Court, the DSD and welfare organisations namely, Child Welfare, LifelineChildline BADISA and ACVV. The researcher was referred to various

individuals at supervisory or managerial levels and emails were forwarded to the DSD, Child Welfare, LifelineChildline and ACVV.

In addition, the researcher approached the Claremont Police Station as per appointment with the HR - Mr Williams, to meet the social worker deployed at the named police station. However, due to the busy work schedules, the researcher failed to meet the social worker and left her contact details and a message at the Human Resources Department. Following a telephone conversation with the social worker at Claremont SAPS, the researcher was referred to the Provincial Coordinator-FSW, Colonel Luleka Mbuku for clarifications of the permission process. Upon contacting Col. Mbuku, she further referred the researcher to the Provincial Commander FSW - Lieutenant Colonel Geraldine Jonkers, she also issued the contact number for further discussions. Since, Lieutenant Col. Jonkers conducted her study for a Master of Social Work in Forensic Practice with the SAPS members in 2012, she was familiar with the research ethical clearance and permission processes, and thus, she guided the researcher accordingly. The researcher emailed application letters with relevant documentations attached for permission to the SAPS Western Cape Provincial Office. The application was then forwarded by AC Lindile Gomo to the SAPS National Head Office in Pretoria. The DSD and welfare organisations received the same application via email excluding BADISA and the Wynberg and Cape Town Magistrate Court. Due to several emails and telephone calls back and forth, the researcher decided to maintain contact with the SAPS, DSD and ACVV as central to the study. Prior to receiving approval from the DSD, the researcher engaged in a meeting with Ms Petro Brink and Mr Clinton Daniels from the DSD Research Committee, Cape Town Head Office. Despite the challenges, the researcher's applications were approved by the DSD, ACVV Head Offices, and the SAPS National Head office, Pretoria and the SAPS Provincial Office, Cape Town. The ethical clearance process stretched from mid-July to end-November 2018 for them to be finalised. The researcher identified gatekeepers from relevant departments and organisations to gain entry to the participants. Lieutenant Col. Jonkers- SAPS, Ms Elma Filmalter- ACVV and Ms. Pumeza Magadla- DSD helped the researcher in identifying social workers willing to participant in the study, the venues and copies of the consent forms and interview schedules where necessary.

3.7. Data collection method and research guide

Data collection is a process of gathering information that is relevant to the study (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher conducted interviews as a data collection method to allow direct interaction with participants expected to possess knowledge that is appropriate for the study

and to obtain rich data. According to Babbie (2013), an interview is a data collection encounter where one person asks questions to another. The researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule as a data collection instrument. Semi-structured interviews assist the researcher in obtaining a detailed picture of the participants' experiences on a particular topic, allows flexibility and does not dictate the interview process (Greef, 2011:351-352). Thus, semi-structured interviews allow participants to add information not probed by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to obtain a detailed picture of the participants' experiences pertaining to the topic under investigation. The interview schedule engages the respondents to relate their experiences of forensic practice with victims of CSA. The interview schedule involved open-ended questions. The researcher used open-ended questions to create meaningful dialogues with the research participants. The open-ended questions allowed participants' freedom to respond to questions whichever manner they considered appropriate to provide the necessary information. The interviews allowed flexibility and receptivity to new information. The researcher used a Digital Audio Recorder and an iPhone as a backup device to record the interviews. Field notes were also taken during interviews.

3.8. Data analysis

Marshall and Rossman (2011) refer to data analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data. Data analysis is 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 from the audios recorded into Microsoft Word for analysis. The audio recordings were made with the consent of the research participants, verbally and in writing before commencing each interview. The researcher dissected the information following Tesch's eight steps of data analysis (Tesch, 1990 cited in Creswell, 2009:186). The eight (8) steps include;

- Firstly, the researcher transcribed all the interviews. After transcribing the data, the researcher read all transcripts to gain the whole picture by making notes on the margin. The notes were ideas coming to mind and relevant to the topic.
- Secondly, the researcher selected one of twenty transcripts with the richest narrative data and read through it. The researcher asked questions of what it is that she was

reading. It allowed the researcher to understand the underlying meaning and not the substance of the transcribed data.

- Thirdly, the researcher repeated the process for all the interview transcripts, making a list of topics until themes emerged. The identified topics were clustered into columns and they were labelled as main topics, sub-topics and remnants of the data.
- Fourth, the researcher kept this list handy and revisited the data again and gave each topic an abbreviation to code it. The codes were written next to the appropriate text and used to check if no new codes emerged.
- Fifth, the researcher considered the most descriptive wording for all the topics and turned them into categories. Topics related to each other were grouped together.
- Sixth, the researcher finally abbreviated themes and provided alphabets for each code.
- Seventh, the researcher assembled all data belonging to each category using a copy-and-paste method and began a preliminary analysis.
- Eighth, after analysing the data, the findings were mirrored against literature for literature control.
- Lastly, where necessary, the existing data was re-coded for verification. The researcher then presented a report of the results in a narrative form.

3.9. Limitations of the study

The research design of an explorative approach has the shortcoming that it seldom provides satisfactory answers and may only hint at the answers (Babbie, 2013). The sampling approach deliberates the sample size where the proposed number was limited to twenty participants which is a small purposive sample representation. Challenges in accessing the sample size of social workers in forensic practice were encountered due to lengthy ethics clearance procedures and participants' reluctance to participate in the study. However, the researcher was able to obtain her data through in-depth engagements with the participants despite these challenges. Data analysis is a subjective process relating to the way the researcher interpreted data, thus this has an influence on the research findings. However, the researcher ensured remaining objective by coding the data until a framework of analysis was developed to enable a coherent discussion of findings.

3.10. Data verification

Babbie and Mouton (2010), explain data verification as a process of verifying the validity of the data you have collected. Data verification required checking the accuracy of the data collected and analysed. The study applied four components of verification namely; credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability. The four components are detailed below;

Credibility: Credibility refers to a manner in which data were gathered and reported (Babbie and Mouton, 2010; De Vos et.al, 2011:420; Botma et.al, 2010:232). Credibility aimed at demonstrating that the research was conducted in such a manner that ensured the accurate identification and description of the subject (De Vos et al., 2011:420). To ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher ensured that the data is an accurate representation of what respondents intended saying. The researcher recorded the findings without changing the meaning of the respondents' responses to questions posed to them during the interviews. The researcher ascertained the actual meaning of responses given based on individual experiences before analysing the data. That made the information reliable and trustworthy. The researcher's data collection method and instruments were reliable where audio recorders were used to record the answers given by the respondents unlike using only field notes.

Confirmability: Confirmability seeks for a researcher to keep the data collected and analysed thus includes transcripts and recordings. Confirmability is a question of other researcher's ability to confirm the study findings (De Vos et.al, 2011:419; Botma et.al, 2010:232) thus, research findings should be objective and not biased. As forensic social work is an emerging field in South Africa, these study findings will be made available to the public by the University of Cape Town and other researchers may use the same findings to confirm their validity. The researcher also engaged with credible stakeholders for data collection, hence the findings can be confirmed by other researchers.

Dependability: Babbie and Mouton (2010) explain dependability as a component that looks at whether the research process is well documented and logical. The researcher maintained authenticity of the data through the audio recordings of the interview, made field notes during interviews and kept ongoing records of the process. Finally, the researcher transcribed and analysed the data according to Tesch's eight steps as stated on 3.8 above.

Transferability: The transfer of findings from one situation to another is referred to as transferability (De Vos et al., 2011). The research findings may be used in geographical areas bearing similar characteristics as Cape Town where this study was conducted. Therefore, this study's findings may not be generalised to a broader population but these have relevance to the service delivery context in South Africa.

3.11. Reflexivity

The researcher has practical experience in social work and has undertaken previous research projects in both quantitative and qualitative designs, which made the researcher confident and competent to conduct this study. In addition, the researcher worked as a generic social worker handling cases involving criminal justice systems, civil matters and training of other professionals such as the court officials, police officers, school teachers, traditional leaders and communities on the mentioned matters before. When embarking on a journey to advancing her studies in this field that incorporates FSW practice, she was keen to learn more about these experiences as her previous experience working with cases of CSA, rape, gender-based violence and other forms of violence perpetrated cases offered some valuable personal experiences, but highlighted many concerns in practice that need to be examined in greater depth. These include variations in ethical issues around social workers' handling of sexualised children with or without tertiary specialist training, re-victimisation of children, social workers' secondary or vicarious trauma due to these complex cases and the whole justice system regarding delays of cases and convictions of perpetrators. The researcher developed an integrated understanding of the participants' experiences and challenges in handling similar cases and clients in a different geographical location. The researcher maintained empathy and self-awareness as principal characteristics of the study.

3.12. Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed how the research process unfolded. The section considered aspects such as the research design, sample group, process of gaining entry to the participants, data collection, data analysis, study limitations, data verification, and reflexivity as they demonstrated the awareness of the researcher in the research process. Gaining entry to the participants involved applications for ethical clearances from the UCT and the government departments and the NGO that participated in the research. The following chapter includes a presentation and discussion of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of social workers in forensic practice with victims of CSA. The present chapter presents the research findings. First a profile of participants is presented. This is followed by the framework of analysis for discussions indicating four themes. The data analysis employed Tesch's steps of qualitative data analysis. The analysed themes are presented in a table reflecting the categories and sub-categories derived from the study's objectives. The results are presented and discussed using in-text verbatim references from participants and important links are made to the literature.

4.1. Background of participants

4.1.1. Participants' profiles

The table below illustrates the profile of participants involved in this study. The study consisted of twenty social workers handling CSA cases. The participants were purposely selected by virtue of them providing services to victims of CSA under DSD, ACVV child protection services and the SAPS Forensic Units. The social workers' overall experiences ranged between eighteen months and thirty-two years. It is important to note that ten SAPS social workers' forensic experience commenced in 2007 which indicates that they had twelve years maximum practicing as FSWs. The ten generic social workers possess generalist experience with CSA caseloads within their organisations. However, the whole sample involved social workers handling CSA cases.

4.1.2. Age and gender of participants'

The table below is an illustration of participants' gender and age distribution for this study. The majority of the participants were female and coloured, this speaks to the language barrier and the use of interpreters and long-waiting lists experienced by social workers in forensic practice. The profile indicates ages ranging from 26-56 years. The study involved a gender distribution of seventeen female social workers and three male social workers. The distribution reflects that one male person per organisation participated, adding up to three male social workers for the whole study. The presentation reflects that females dominate the social work profession.

Table 1: Participants profiles

Participant	Gender	Age	Qualification	Organisation/ Department	Current position	Years of Experience
1	Female	26	Bachelor of Social Work	ACVV	Social Worker	4
2	Male	31	BA Social Work	ACVV	Social Worker	3
3	Female	26	Bachelor of Social Work	ACVV	Social Worker	18 months
4	Female	36	Bachelor of Social Work	ACVV	Social Worker	10
5	Female	42	BA Social Work	DSD	Social Worker	5
6	Female	56	BA Social Work	DSD	Social Worker	32
7	Female	32	BA Social Work	DSD	Social Worker	9
8	Female	32	BA Social Work	DSD	Social Worker	6
9	Male	47	Bachelor of Social Work	DSD	Social Worker	7
10	Female	39	BA Social Work	DSD	Social Worker	7
11	Female	40	BA Social Work	SAPS-FCS	FSW	19
12	Male	44	Master of Child & Family Studies	SAPS-FCS	FSW	21
13	Female	44	Master of Forensic Practice	SAPS-FCS	FSW	22
14	Female	47	BA Social Work & BA Diac	SAPS-FCS	FSW	22
15	Female	41	Master of Forensic Practice	SAPS-FCS	FSW	9
16	Female	46	MA Social Work	SAPS-FCS	FSW	17
17	Female	52	MA Child & Family Development	SAPS-FCS	FSW	27
18	Female	39	MA Social Work	SAPS-FCS	FSW	17
19	Female	48	MA Child & Family Studies	SAPS-FCS	FSW	24
20	Female	53	Diploma Social Work	SAPS-FCS	FSW	30

4.1.3. Participants educational qualifications and work experience

The participants' educational background ranged from a Diploma in Social Work to various Master degrees. To summarise, participants comprised of one with a Diploma of Social Work, twelve with Bachelor degrees, and seven with Master degrees. However, three of the participants are advancing their tertiary education, two pursuing PhDs and one a Master of FSW. This study revealed that the majority of the participants obtained the basic undergraduate tertiary training in Social Work which is a basic qualification for people who wish to practice social work in South Africa as per the South African Council for Social Service Professions

(SACSSP) regulations. Only some social workers acquired post graduate Masters Tertiary training in the social work field of which seven of them are under the SAPS-FCS Units around Cape Town. The profile of participants further indicates practical experience ranging from 18 months to 32 years. The study shows that ten had experience ranging from 1 and half years (18 months) to 10 years. Between 11 and 20 years, there were three participants while six were in a category ranging from 21 to 30 years. Lastly, one participant indicated under 31 to 40 years of experience. The experiences are the total number of practical experience including generalist social work practice. However, the SAPS FSWs' forensic experience commenced in 2007, therefore, the majority have 12 years practicing FSW in South Africa.

4.2. Framework of analysis

The framework of analysis reflects four major themes, categories and their sub-categories. The researcher adopted Tesch's (1990) data analysis approach (refer to Chapter Three for the approach). The results of the interviews and themes for the analysis were channelled by the study objectives and the implemented interview schedule.

4.3 Research objectives

The objectives of the study were;

- i) To explore the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of CSA.
- ii) To discover concerns involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of CSA.
- iii) To describe the social workers' decision making in their intervention in providing FSW services.
- iv) To explore the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice with sexual abuse cases.

Table 2: Framework of analysis

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories
Challenging work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk area • Perpetrator intimidation • Stressful work 	<p>Situated in high crime areas</p> <p>Stalking by perpetrators</p> <p>Burnout, lack of debriefing and supervision</p> <p>Lack of professional peer support</p> <p>FSWs attrition-resignation of Social Workers</p>
Caseload management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High caseload • Complexity of cases • Poor coordination among role-players • Lack of resources • Withdrawal of cases 	<p>Child protection caseload unmanageable and lack of training</p> <p>Depth of detail required for forensic social workers</p> <p>Limited collaboration</p> <p>Transport and human resources</p> <p>Lack of uniformity in reports and protocols</p> <p>Open application of intervention protocols</p> <p>Influence of time and delays affecting case outcomes</p> <p>Parental involvement</p>
Social worker client engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Engaging with young children • Therapeutic services • Secondary trauma 	<p>Language barrier and use of interpreters</p> <p>Information distortion due to multiple interviews</p> <p>Verifying collateral information</p> <p>Limited services and long waiting lists</p> <p>Effects of victim experience on worker</p>
Ethical considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case confidentiality • Professionalism by police services • Criminal Justice System 	<p>Child victims' resistance to disclose information</p> <p>Fear of exposure</p> <p>Quality of work and communication</p> <p>Court prosecution</p> <p>Re-victimisation of child victims</p> <p>Delay of cases and low conviction rates</p>

4.4. Discussion of themes derived from the research interviews

The key findings relate to the aim of the study intertwined in the research objectives. The study presents four major themes derived from the interviews namely, challenging work environment, caseload management, social worker client engagement, and ethical considerations. Categories and sub-categories emerged from the key themes of the study as indicated in the framework of analysis above. Below is a discussion of the key findings:

4.4.1 Challenging work environment

The first theme relates to participants' experiences with the environment in which they operate. This theme has three categories that emerged, including high risk area, perpetrator intimidation and stressful work. Within each category sub-categories emerged. The mentioned aspects are further discussed in detail.

4.4.1.1. High risk area

This category relates to social workers situated in high crime areas of Cape Town. Participants expressed the discomforts they experienced working in high risk areas and the risks involved when rendering services to child victims. The participants felt unsafe and insecure working in these areas, which negatively impacts their investigations and the whole service delivery to the victims. The following sentiments confirm this finding:

“Working in high crime areas and it’s very unsafe for us as social workers to go out there and work on these cases.... Situated at SAPS is a challenge because some children are still scared of the police and they have to come to the police station for interviews with the forensic social worker but the mere fact that it’s a police station induces fear in the already traumatized children.” Participant 11

Safety and security is a major issue for social workers handling these complex cases in terms of geographical locations where they work. Social workers are mostly situated in heinous crime-ridden areas and safety when executing official duties is compromised, which influences service delivery to child victims and the service delivery of the whole justice system. FSW practice is an investigative aid within the SAPS and it exposes them to risks similar to which police detectives face. Social workers situated in high crime areas are at high risk of being subjected to threats and violence resonating the issue of their safety. Regehr and Glancy (2011:233) in their study confirm that stalking of social workers by clients is a serious issue

that has far reaching personal and professional implications. Social workers being the frontline professionals expressed concerns regarding their safety when conducting official duties in high crime areas. The safety aspect adversely influences service delivery in forensic practice, thus networking and cooperation with the SAPS promotes safety, security and timely service delivery.

4.4.1.2. Perpetrator intimidation

Participants indicated that intimidation by perpetrators is a concern especially if a perpetrator recognizes the social worker handling the cases that involve them. Participants related that most CSA perpetrators are members of the local gangs, thereby making it easier to stalk social workers, and threatening to cause harm or even harm them. The participants stated that,

“.....it is very stressful and traumatic that sometimes I do not want to work with sexual abuse cases. I am now scared for my life because I have been threatened thus affecting my work with child victims of sexual abuse. Most perpetrators of child sexual abuse are part of gangs in the area and it is very scary now that after working on a case, they can follow you and it is risky since I stay close to the office, I feel unsafe, nervous and resistant that I do not want sexual abuse cases anymore.” Participant 6

Social workers handling CSA cases are at high risk of becoming victims of stalking by virtue of their work and in situations where they help a client who is being stalked by a former intimate partner. (Regehr and Glancy, 2011:232-233). CSA is a complex field that involves the ecological systems theory to understand the child and other systems linked to the child. Therefore, social workers are at high risk of being trailed and intimidated or threatened by perpetrators and significant others interested in the case during the investigative process to unravel facts to establish the occurrence of sexual abuse allegations. The disclosure and investigation of CSA attracts the majority's attention, hence perpetrators and other interested parties can stalk, and threaten to physically harm or harm the social worker handling the case if the investigations continue. The researcher is of the opinion that this can apply to other criminal justice system role-players due to the sensitivity and complex nature of CSA. Stalking develops uneasiness in social workers, affecting their functionality at personal and professional level and thereby rendering services ineffective and thus possible social workers' attrition.

4.4.1.3. Stressful work

CSA is a heavy field within FSW practice, calling for appropriate debriefing and self-care to counteract burnout and maintaining effective service delivery to child victims. The CSA field is mentioned as stressful due to the rigorous assessments and investigation processes employed to gather enough evidence to prosecute these cases and to prove that the environment is risky for the child victims and thereby calling for removals either of child victims or perpetrators. Participants related to stressful work as follows:

4.4.1.3.1. Burnout

Burnout in forensic practice according to the study findings reflects the social workers' lack of prioritisation on self-care, thereby permitting work to engulf their personal lives. Moreover, the complexity of CSA has been viewed as a major issue driving social workers in forensic practice to burnout resulting from the negative and traumatic stories of the sexualised children they listen to during assessments. Participants referred to CSA cases as complex and draining which negatively influences their service delivery to child victims. Below are participants' verbatim quotes in relation to burnout;

"...it's not a nice field to work in like the child sexual abuse field is in general not a nice field to work in because you are listening to stories where children have been sexualized, raped so you listen from the parents and from the child giving you details. So it's a negative environment and I am saying that I feel that, that information I get sits somewhere that I feel so down but I don't know the reason is I just feel so low, so lethargic that I don't feel like seeing the next child and it has an impact on the next child I am going to assess because I haven't worked through that and I have to take in more. ." Participant 18

Social workers experience burnout and vicarious trauma (Agllias, 2012; Lloyd, King and Chenoweth, 2002:260) due to heavy workloads and the complexity of CSA cases. Literature suggests prevention and intervention strategies for vicarious trauma and burnout including changes in organisational culture, workload, group support, supervision, self-care, education and work environment (Bell, Kulkarni and Dalton, 2003:465; Cox and Steiner, 2013:52-53). Taking care of the environment for social workers is mentioned as a step forward to enhancing service delivery to this delicate population. It is paramount for FSW departments and organisations to take care of the carer thus counteracting the vicarious trauma and burnout of social workers. Additionally, social workers' stressful work can take emotional and

psychosomatic toll on them, which negatively affects service delivery to child victims. Literature reveals that stress emanates not only from responding to traumatised child victims suffering from hurt and catastrophic events, but also from the organisational characteristics, thus further causing the burnout of social workers.

In the same vein, social workers' stressful work experiences result in emotional exhaustion, detachment from work, cynicism and ineffective service delivery (Maslach in Bell et al., 2003:463) and this indicates that forensic practice undoubtedly involves hazards and risks to FSWs due to their exposure to the realities of human hardships, cruelty and all forms of injustices (Cox and Steiner, 2013:59). Trauma theory plays an essential role in understanding vicarious trauma and burnout experiences of social workers handling sexual abuse cases. Various theorists have concluded that the emotional impact of traumatic material is contagious and can be transmitted through the empathy process (Ben-Porat and Itzhaky, 2011) which is an essential value of social work and a standard in providing ethical care. FSW supervision implementation as a framework counteracts burnout by allowing the identification of situations in which social workers can express signs of secondary trauma and burnout and devising ways of dealing with them.

4.4.1.3.2. Lack of professional peer support

Participants tussle with support from a social worker colleague within their units. Participants felt that it would help if they had a social worker colleague for support than being at the unit surrounded by investigating officers who may at times influence their opinion and lens of looking at cases. In relation to the above sub-category, participants stated the following;

“Working in the police environment makes you feel very isolated and making it difficult to be neutral at times because you are surrounded by investigating officers leading to kind of distortion of the way you look at the cases especially when you listen to the investigating officers opinion about the case and you are not surrounded by other FSWs who understand your role in the case.” Participant 11

“It was difficult when I moved to forensic social work so I used to cry with the client and leave the office. What made it better was that we were two social workers and she acted as my mirror sort of, I could speak to her. So, we were each other's crutches to lean on.”
Participant 19

Social workers expressed the need for moral support within their departments thus avoiding isolation and influence of their decisions by the investigating officers which may in turn impact the outcome of the cases. Moral support plays a crucial role in effecting efficient services to child victims, hence evading burnout in this emotionally demanding and complex field. The lack of moral support for participants may result in resilience such as adaptability and hardiness as personality factors that place a social worker in a situation, creating the ability to examine options for building resilience into the organisation's environment (Bonanno, 2007; Hart et al., 2007; McFadden et al., 2015:1548). The strengths perspective can inform broader personal and organisational strategies and resources that support resilience (McFadden et.al, 2015:1548). The authors emphasise on the organisation's ability to support social workers with resources targeted at dealing with stressful work to maintain their emotional, psychological and physical well-being, thus enhancing service delivery.

4.4.1.3.3. FSWs' attrition-resignation of social workers in forensic practice

The study indicates that the inability to cope with the stressful work of handling complex cases related to CSA is another cause of social workers' attrition. Furthermore, lack of cooperation and undermining of social workers by multidisciplinary role players were indicated as other causes of demotivation and possibly attrition. Social workers felt that the way cases are handled within the criminal justice system negatively affects their service delivery and further demotivates them to think that nothing works and social work is not for them. These findings are reflected in the following quotations;

"I feel people are degrading social work profession because we are given the crumbs, we are the ones expected to deal with the worst of the worst. Everyone is nice and getting recognition for their professions they work so much but we social workers work so hard but we do not get that recognition...All this can demotivate you as a social worker, I am leaving social work though (laughs)." Participant 1

"No structured debriefing especially looking at colleagues failing to cope and resigning due to burnout from these complex cases. Generally, we share cases but not really debriefing itself. I feel debriefing is paramount to us because we die inside, our work gets to us." Participant 11

Burnout and undermining of social workers handling CSA cases have been indicated as possible aspects for social workers' attrition. McFadden, Campbell and Taylor (2015:1552)

from their study assert that social workers should use active coping strategies such as emotion-focused coping methods and support from colleagues to prevent and to treat their experiences of emotional exhaustion. Participants' need for peer support within their units aligns with McFadden et al.'s (2015) study, which allows social workers to reach out to a colleague, as well as share and treat their experiences. Reamer (2008) claims that it is not unusual to hear social workers in court and correctional settings, and they complain that their training, education and goals are neither appreciated nor supported by colleagues who are closely oriented and aligned with law enforcement and public safety. For that reason, social workers involved in these settings are reported as experiencing the justice system as hostile towards the mission and values of social work added Reamer. The undermining of social workers can cause attrition in this demanding field where practitioner-client ratios are high, and where service delivery is challenging and ineffective, where caseloads remain high, with a prolonged finalisation of cases coupled with low conviction rates.

4.4.1.3.4. Lack of debriefing and supervision

A lack of debriefing and supervision is another finding that was echoed by participants. Participants viewed peer-mentoring and consultations as aspects that are different from supervision, hence referring to their interventions as professional guidance. Half of the participants indicated that they receive supervision and they have access to consultations but have no access to debriefing sessions. This was emphasised by the participants as indicated by their responses below:

“No structured debriefing especially looking at colleagues failing to cope and resigning due to burnout from these complex cases. Generally, we share cases but not really debriefing itself. I feel debriefing is paramount to us because we die inside, our work gets to us..... It is professional guidance only when it is necessary especially when you feel it's a difficult case that you need to discuss with your supervisor. Supervisors only see our reports after the case is finalized. I feel it is important to give the report to someone because you will not see your mistakes before submitting that report to court.” Participant 11

“I think ummmm there is not enough focus on debriefing for social workers, all we do is work, work and work. I do think once in a while social workers should go out of the office and also I do think that counsellors should be made available to social workers because you know sometimes social workers are people who went through a lot of things and have not dealt with

those things, when they in practice those things comes forth....remember with the supervisor, we deal with the cases, what happened, admin, paperwork, court or so we stick to work we don't do emotional things” Participant 1

Debriefing and supervision are essential elements in social work that aim for effectiveness of services and maintenance of the social workers' emotional well-being. Supervision is used interchangeably with support, guidance and training of social workers, and discussion sessions as activities for management (Engelbrecht, 2012:357). However, participants felt that they need structured debriefing and regular supervisory sessions to vent their emotions and feelings from overwhelming cases for them to render quality and effective services to child victims. The issue raised focused on dealing with complex and intense cases of CSA which impacts social workers' functionality in this field, thus they felt that debriefing is a need for them to be effective when performing their official duties.

4.4.2. Caseload management

4.4.2.1. High caseload

The participants from child protection indicated that they have high caseloads and these are increasing on a daily basis, and also that they lack expertise in this complex field of practice. Participants related that CSA is the highest on their caseloads than cases of neglect and other forms of child abuse they dealt with previously. Therefore, social workers handle cases in haste, thereby rendering their services ineffective due to the overwhelming caseloads at their disposal. Participants stated the following;

‘I think they should umm employ more SWs to make our caseloads manageable (laughs).... I see there is a rise in sexual abuse cases, there should be more education yah education for social workers like training- in-depth training for social workers on how to deal with child sexual abuse....We social workers in child protection we do not have the necessary training, skills or expertise to work intense or in-depth with sexual abuse cases. I do think it is a concern for me because I am half of the opinion that we are failing these children that was exposed to sexual abuse and so forth.’ Participant 1

“.....there is a high influx of sexual abuse cases and it is overwhelming....it is difficult to handle cases properly because as a professional I try my best to help the child but in a hurry to finalize

the case if there is any referral I do so as soon as possible. The services end up ineffective and it feels as if I maybe causing more harm than good to the child victim.” Participant 7

The workload pressures faced by child abuse investigations seem to be a global problem and numerous studies have reported that restrictions on time is one of the major factors reported by FSWs to mitigate against thorough investigations and quality interviewing of child victims and collateral sources. Workload concerns result from the high incidence and reporting CSA cases (albeit in part), and high staff turnover Aarons et al., (2004 in Powell et al., 2010). High caseloads evidently impact on FSWs’ ability to practice their skills and to seek feedback from colleagues. Furthermore, pressures arising from heavy caseloads directly impact the quality of the forensic interview by reducing the social worker’s concentration within the interview, and reduction of the time allocated to the preparation and administration of interviews to child victims. The process of eliciting quality evidence requires considerable patience and time, particularly for child victims (Powell et al., 2010).

High caseloads and lack of expertise among social workers handling CSA cases in child protection are major impediments in rendering effective services to children who have been sexualized. As a result, social workers handle CSA cases in haste which can lead to re-victimization of victims. Participants mentioned that due to lack of expertise, they feel that they are causing more harm than good to child victims thus failing the children. Sexual abuse caseloads within child protection are escalating drastically such that social workers feel overwhelmed and they have limited interventions to implement with child victims rendering services ineffective. Schiller (2017) agrees with the study findings that social workers in child protection are required to do generic social work services and they are often expected to do forensic assessments (Schiller, 2017: 348) when confronted with CSA cases and yet they are not trained to do so. FSW is specialised and postgraduate forensic training is a necessity when dealing with CSA investigations. Hendricks and Schiller’s research studies concur with the current study that sexual crimes perpetrated against children are alarmingly increasing and in some instances the child protection social worker is the only specific resource in a community to respond and deal with these CSA allegations (Hendricks, 2014; Schiller, 2017).

The emphasis is for social workers to facilitate investigations in a way that protects the child from re-victimisation and to be empowered through age appropriate participation in the service delivery process (Schiller, 2017:349). However, this is contrary to the veracity of the criminal

justice system and the legislative mandate, hence cooperation among role players involved in ensuring the best interest of the child is of paramount importance in terms of Article 28(2) of the Constitution (South African Constitution, 1996). The Constitution's best interest of the child principle aligns with the provisions of The Criminal Law (Sexual offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No 32 of 2007, the Child Care Act No 38 of 2005 and the Child Justice Act No 75 of 2008.

4.4.2.2. Complexity of cases

CSA is a complex field that requires tertiary training and practical experience to be effective in service delivery. The category includes a sub-category namely, the depth of information required for forensic social workers.

4.4.2.2.1. Depth of detail required for FSWs

CSA cases require detailed information as facts or evidence to assist the criminal justice system Walby, Olive, Towers, Francis, Strid, Krizsán, Lombardo, May-Chahal, Franzway, Sugarman, Agarwal and Armstrong (2015) with the prosecution process. Participants reflected that they are fact finders; hence more information is required from child victims and collaterals to validate the investigations. However, participants indicated that to be able to gather relevant details for the cases, specialised skills and training is a necessity in FSW practice. Social workers expressed concerns about their safety and security in the service delivery process. Social workers indicated that they need training to use mirrors and recorders that are mounted at their units to be able to record children's activities in the playrooms, and if the same recordings can be filed as court evidence to boost convictions. The recordings will enable the social worker to have in-depth analysis of the recorded material to support forensic assessments. Participants mentioned that;

“Too much information and too many people interested in the case, so it is clouded thus draining your energy as a social worker trying to link the child victim with all necessary services needed.... Fear of losing your life as a social worker because you want to do more for the child but you are at risk since other interested parties are tracking you.” Participant 6

“The field of child sexual abuse is overwhelming and I believe there is a great need for more specialized and tertiary trained practitioners to handle these complex cases.... The organizations should ensure to employ forensic social work specialists and assign child sexual

abuse caseloads to them and not to every social worker who received in-service training to help handle these complex cases. I believe in-service training alone is not enough for social workers to handle the overwhelming caseloads.” Participant 7

“.....I consult very widely with depth and the Investigating Officer does not have the time to do all that maybe he speaks to the mum and one or two more people. But, in my role I have to sit and do my assessments and interrogate all other people relevant so my role is diversified because I involve a lot of people.” Participant 19

The criminal justice system relies on social workers' investigations, assessments and reports submitted to the court regarding sexual offences. CSA is multifaceted and overwhelming hence it requires specialised knowledge and skills to conduct in-depth assessments to gather relevant facts and produce consolidated and objective court reports. Due to the depth required in FSW practice, the study findings concur with UN (1985), that adequate training and education of professionals working with victims promotes protection and sensitivity when handling victims of CSA. The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP, 2017) promotes continuous professional development (CPD) for social service providers to keep the knowledge of best practices and evidence based practices abreast. Social workers have an obligation to advance their knowledge and skills through formal, private trainings, and to consult widely with collaterals to gather relevant facts with cognisance that sexual offences are not straightforward. Jonkers (2012:3) confirms that the investigation of CSA cases is challenging and thus calls for specialised training, commitment and expertise for social workers in forensic practice to be effective in this field.

FSW practice integrates a holistic approach, the rights-based theory and the ecological systems theory to understand the child and relevant systems for allowing age-appropriate involvement of the child in the decision-making process. Social workers need to know when sexual offences require conversions to the Children's Court for statutory enquiries, allowing children to access the necessary services irrespective of the establishment of a criminal case. Social workers' effective implementation of the legislative provisions enhance the quality of details, the evidence gathered during investigations, protection of child victims and their rights in and out of court and boosting of conviction rates.

4.4.2.3. Poor coordination among role-players

This category has a sub-category that emerged focusing on limited collaboration among role players handling CSA cases. The study findings indicate that participants experience little to no collaboration from the police officers when carrying out official duties. Participants raised concerns that role players such as the SAPS are not supportive when removals of high risk children from violent families are concerned thus the social workers are forced to risk their lives to protect the child victims from further sexual abuse. Furthermore, participants stated that they feel undermined by the SAPS when they request for police escorts and feedback regarding reported cases. They also feel that CSA cases are not taken seriously by the detectives. Participants stated that;

“We are also not valued much especially by SAPS when we need escort to remove child victims from violent families and you end up risking your life executing that task without them because it is an emergence.” Participant 5

“.....weak collaborations with other role players and there is no feedback on cases and each time you are the only person to follow-up on cases all the time. Families sometimes blame social workers for any outcome of the case and personalize the whole matter.” Participant 6

“The detectives also do not take child sexual abuse cases seriously because when children disclose sexual abuse information they try to convince the victims not to open a case on the bases that there will be friction in the family. Instead, the victim is referred to the social worker and the case will never be investigated.” Participant 10

The study findings indicate a need for cooperation and strengthening of relationships among the criminal justice system's role players for effective service delivery. Reinforcement and teamwork improve the effectiveness of services and aid in boosting conviction rates which seem challenging presently due to collaboration and networking difficulties among multi-disciplinary role-players. The researcher's concerns focused on social workers' ability to network and negotiate with other professionals to enhance service delivery to their clients and the maintenance of professional relationships with the multi-disciplinary role-players. Maschi et al. (2009), assert that social workers obligation involves the ability to negotiate and connect with other individuals. These individuals involve the criminal justice system and the civil justice who may have essential information about child victims at their disposal. The

implementation of an ecological theory involves a holistic framework stressing that individuals and environments cannot be understood autonomously. Therefore, the implementation of this theory enhances networking and collaborations among the criminal justice role players for effectiveness of the whole service delivery process.

It is important to note that decisions made at one level are most likely to have an impact on other systems, hence the need for collaborations when handling CSA. The rights based approach in forensic practice encourages collaborative partnerships among role players as it constitutes rights backed by international laws. Social workers are responsible for service provision to child victims, for example, facilitation of the investigation process to protect the child against re-victimisation and ensuring age-appropriate participation. This may conflict with police investigations, court proceedings and the legislative mandate (Schiller, 2017:349) thus, collaborations among role players cannot be over-emphasised in this overwhelming field of practice. Collaboration with other professionals is fundamental to forensic investigations of CSA as evidence is typically collated from numerous sources. In order to determine the best interest of the child, forensic and other corroborating evidence must be obtained and coordinated in a manner that minimizes the risk of trauma and re-victimization arising from children's involvement in legal processes and multiple interviews. One way of minimising stress on child witnesses is to reduce, where possible, the number of interviews; thus, joint interviews involving multidisciplinary role-players should be reinforced (Powell et.al, 2010).

4.4.2.4. Lack of resources

The lack of transport and human resources for social workers to effectively execute their official duties was discovered. Transport was the main concern for social workers to reach child victims for assessments, collateral investigations and court proceedings so as to speed up the process to avoid compromising the credibility of information obtained during forensic assessments and investigations. Regarding transport, participants related that;

“More vehicles because the IOs are always on the road and if I, want to go and do my collaterals, it becomes difficult. For example, going to schools to speak to the teacher, hospitals to the doctor who examined the child and other professionals to get more information because I cannot do my stuff over the phone.” Participant 15

“Transport challenges to reach clients..... The forensic social workers should have a vehicle to allow access to the children for assessments and other service providers for collaterals. Most of my children are from the rural areas and it is difficult to access services especially if they do not have taxi fare.” Participant 16

Regarding human resources participants stated;

“More staff needed on board to reduce caseloads and also have a team that only specialize in child sexual abuse cases like two or four people sitting in the department even though it sounds unrealistic due to human resource shortages.” Participant 7

“We have few Investigating Officers and a lack of Xhosa speaking forensic social workers to move cases a bit faster.... We need Xhosa speaking forensic social workers for children who can speak well in the local language and more IOs needed since sexual abuse is very high in the country and this varies with areas where we work also.” Participant 15

The lack of resources, both transport and human, remain a concern in FSW practice. Social workers in forensic practice conduct assessments with children and investigative work with collaterals to ascertain the occurrence of sexual abuse to drive cases for prosecutions. The lack of resources according to the research data has a negative impact on FSW practice in South Africa and this finding concurs with Iffley’s (2012) and Mnguni (2018) study findings. The researcher views scarcity of both transport and human resources as a colossal concern experienced by participants assuming the escalating rates of CSA in South Africa. As a result, the social worker-victim ratio remains high, leading to burn-out from overwhelming caseloads, complex cases and possibly forensic social worker attrition. The researcher is of the opinion that the lack of both transport and human resources adversely influence the evidence gathered from child victims and its admissibility in court, leading to low conviction rates and an increase in vicious and continuous cycles of CSA. Resource availability positively influences the effectiveness of services to child victims and the whole justice system to finalise cases within reasonable time periods.

4.4.2.5. Withdrawal of cases

This study category has four sub-categories that emerged, including lack of uniformity in reports and protocols, open application of intervention protocols, influence of time and delays

affecting case outcomes, and parental involvement. Below is a detailed discussion with quotations.

4.4.2.5.1. Lack of uniformity in reports and protocols

The research findings indicate a lack of standardised formats for court reports and differences in the court's expectations of the details to be incorporated in the reports requested from FSWs. Participants were concerned that the report formats currently implemented do not address the courts of law's needs and expectations, hence there is a need for uniformity of reporting formats for social workers in forensic practice to produce quality reports and also to uplift the image of the profession. Participants stated that;

“No standardized report format so we each have different structures for our reports. I feel the stakeholders involved in forensic social work, the courts, prosecutors and the police need to have a standard format of each important aspect that must be incorporated in the court report and a format that applies to the whole of South Africa. I feel the format we have does not address what the courts of law need so we need uniformity and at the same time protect our profession.” Participant 11

FSW reports are requested from social workers by the courts of law as an instrument to bring justice to concerned parties forming part of the judicial process. Report writing is a paramount role that a FSW plays in the courts of law where children are concerned. The requests of competency reports place a huge responsibility on social workers' competencies, thus emphasising on knowing beyond what the court expects, but an understanding of what to be included in the competency report concerning CSA cases alluded (Mnisi, 2010). Therefore, the uniformity of forensic reports and knowledge about the contents and focal aspects to be incorporated in court reports improves the authenticity and quality of reports submitted to court, boost conviction rates and elevate the social work profession. However, forensic report writing is a complex process that requires FSWs to be cautious and meticulous to produce sound and quality forensic reports for court. Good report writing skills are fundamental in FSW practice to help social workers compile outstanding and reputable assessment reports. There is no specific format of compiling a forensic report in the field of FSW thus, social workers write these reports as they deem fit (Joubert and van Wyk, 2014). The study findings concur with Joubert and van Wyk's study hence, developing specific formats or guidelines creates uniformity of all FSW reports submitted to court. The researcher has an opinion that the

uniformity of forensic assessment reports and good report writing skills reinforce the FSW specialisation's reputation among other benefits.

4.4.2.5.2. Open application of intervention protocols and techniques

The research data showed that social workers implement a variety of protocols and techniques during forensic assessments. Participants mentioned that it is advisable to use more than one protocol and technique to obtain comprehensive assessment reports from child victims. Participants established that they choose protocols, techniques and literature they are familiar with, and they can defend when questioned about their applicability to the cases presented in court. Participants mentioned that:

“Our investigations are done using a comprehensive model, APSAC, MICHIGAN, Phase Interview Protocol, Collateral information, Hypothesis testing. I use Phase Interview protocol because I am comfortable with it and I will be able to answer any question pertaining to that protocol in court. I choose protocols that I feel apply in South African cases over international protocols.... Child interviewing techniques such as open-ended questions as a baseline, Body part inventory to know how the child identifies or calls different body parts, Competence to know if the child can determine between right and wrong and basic knowledge of the child, Feeling faces, Touch survey, Body part inventory.... Where there is no verbal disclosure I do not use anatomical dolls because they are for verification and clarification of the abuse after verbal disclosure. Therefore, anatomical dolls are not for getting information from a child. Another situation I will use anatomical dolls is where there is medical confirmation of the abuse to confirm and clarify as the child demonstrates.” Participant 13

“I use the APSAC guideline and a comprehensive model where I involve the whole family in the investigation because I see the child as a whole so I involve the family and other people that have an impact on the child's life like I speak to the teacher, to the aunty next door you know everybody you need to speak to... I use play techniques and these are various techniques that are all age appropriate because I work according to the developmental stages of the child. I normally use the ginger bread man with the children to name different body parts, the developmental touch survey to explore the relationship they have with significant others in terms of hugs and kisses so I get to understand who touches and who kisses the child, where and how the different touches and kisses make the child feel. I use the ginger bread man technique to get a disclosure and Touch Survey technique to build on the disclosure and verify

the information. I also use clay to know what happens in the child's world. My favourite technique is the Body Part Inventory like the ginger bread man because you get to know the knowledge of the body part." Participant 19

It is important to note that literature regarding forensic models is limited. Therefore, social workers in forensic practice need to be conversant around the philosophy underlying the approach they are implementing and they must select models with great caution, which will then form the basis of the investigative process they will follow. Forensic assessment protocols and techniques are defined as graphical, theoretical, or other types of representations of a concept or basic behavioural or bodily process which can be used for various investigative and demonstrative purposes (Smith et al., 2018:75). Social workers must have the ability to defend the assessment techniques they choose and procedures followed during the assessment process underlined by a certain model reiterated (Smith et al., 2018:75) and the present researcher found links to the research data where participants indicated that their choice of protocols and techniques is based on familiarity and the ability to defend them in court.

Various protocols and techniques are used in CSA forensic assessments and they require in-depth knowledge due to the complexity of the CSA field. A social worker conducts a forensic interview that forms part of the broad investigative procedure which intends to elicit credible information from the child's perspective, uniquely to each case. Participants use a variety of protocols and techniques considering the uniqueness of each case and the child victim to avoid generalisation of cases. The information gathered can be used to further law enforcement and child protection investigations (Cordisco-Steele, 2012:100; Smith et al. 2018:75). Various scholars state that social workers are tasked with identifying facts in each case and they must constantly maintain a supportive but objective and hypothesis-testing stance throughout the interview (Cordisco-Steele, 2012:100; Fouché, 2006:206; Herman, 2009:262; Saywitz and Comparo, 2009:114; Smith et al., 2018:75).

4.4.2.5.3. Influence of time and delays affecting case outcomes

Participants raised concerns about the influence of time and delays in finalising CSA cases as recognisable factors affecting the outcome of cases. Participants indicated that delays within the criminal justice system affect conviction rates since child victims are bound to forget relevant information, and transitions in developmental stages of children influence the

terminology used before, and a few years after sexualisation when they have to go to court. Participants stated that;

“The criminal justice system lengthy processes from the time of reporting to the finalization stage because you may be called to court after a few years and some children may forget important information details or do not recall properly the relevant information for the case when court proceedings have to continue a few years later like 2 or more years.” Participant 13

“I feel we must be on top of the game when it comes to cases of child sexual abuse bearing in mind that time is of essence. Also, reduce the trial of child sexual abuse cases to at least reasonable time periods instead of years expecting the child victims to remember the incident even after 5 years.” Participant 5

“There is a delay when the cases are referred to me that in itself hampers the quality of statement I will be getting from the child because the child might forget or the child might move on or minimize it or does not see it as a problem or think of consequences and let it go. So the end result is you don't have good success of all cases or most cases and want to move forward.” Participant 12

The influence of time and the delay of cases are major concerns in FSW practice. Participants raised concerns that the delay of cases from the referral to finalisation stage and the influence of time have a negative impact on the information gathered from children. Children tend to provide inconsistent information due to trauma or the forgetfulness of the relevant details concerning the occurrence of sexual abuse. Studies conducted by Ntlatleng (2011) and Jiya (2015) established that the role players in CSA cases are understaffed with high caseloads, which prolongs the conviction process. The study by Ntlatleng further alluded that it is quite clear that the whole criminal justice system plays a role in the finalisation of sexual abuse cases (Ntlatleng, 2011:27). Due to lack of human resources, the sexual offences courts were viewed as the causes for delays in finalising CSA cases thus contributing to the influence of time on children's memories. Social workers have a role to play in educating the justice system and relevant role-players about the negative effects of time on child development which in turn affects the outcome of cases. Given that CSA cases suffer the lowest prosecution and conviction rates of all indictable offences (Daly and Bouhours, 2010), the focus should be on

identifying methods to maximize the amount of forensically-relevant detail needed to assist the criminal justice system, while minimizing child re-victimization and FSWs' vicarious trauma mounting from the investigations and trial processes.

4.4.2.5.4. Parental involvement

The study findings showed that parental involvement and cooperation have a negative impact on the effectivity of services to child victims. Parents were noted as being in denial, as coaching child victims and there were challenges where the perpetrator is a bread winner leading to the other parent keeping him or her close for support, hence leaving the child victim at a higher risk of further abuse. Participants related the following sentiments;

“.....parental involvement is a challenge because they come with pre-conceived ideas of the outcome of the case which affects the social worker's pace of investigation. In some cases parents are too involved and are in denial thus failing to acknowledge the occurrence of the abuse....parents tamper with the information that you need to use as facts to prove the occurrence of the sexual abuse.” Participant 2

“When child victims disclose sexual abuse, parents and care givers do not want to believe the child and when a case is opened, there is no cooperation from the parents or caregivers leading to cases thrown out... Where perpetrators are bread winners, it is a challenge to keep him away because the other parent will draw the perpetrator close putting the child at risk of further abuse.” Participant 10

“.....cases where parents lay false charges against each other or forcing the children – especially teenage children, to lay false charges against the other parent to break down the family. Such cases delay my process and also increase my caseload.....” Participant 20

Parental reactions or anticipations are likely to affect the willingness of children to disclose the occurrence of sexual abuse. Parents, especially mothers, are frequently confronted with negative family relationships should they tell and make the abuse known (Strydom and Stander, 2011:371; Motshegoa, 2011:1). Parental involvement negatively influences the disclosure process, contaminates the information and delays case progression and thereby impacting the conviction rates. Motshegoa (2011:iv) concurs with the study findings that when CSA happens within the household, parents at times expect the child to tell no one or to deny CSA allegations.

However, a child's lack of disclosure during the forensic assessment must not be considered as a definitive proof that CSA has not occurred but, apply more than one forensic interview session with the child victims to ascertain the abuse allegations (APSAC, 2012; Katz and Hershkowitz, 2012; Smith, Wessels and Strydom, 2014: 77). The study findings show that parents do not admit the existence of sexual abuse even with the presence of evidence and they do not want to be educated about it. This impedes the effectiveness of FSW assessments and other services that are necessary for the child and the whole family system. In cases that involve a perpetrator as the sole provider for the family, children are forced to keep the abuse secret. In cases where children disclose sexual abuse warranting the removal of the perpetrator from the child's environment, another parent can draw the perpetrator back, thus exposing the child to further abuse. Social workers' knowledge and understanding of family structures, functions and family relationships, culture through a holistic approach enables the achievement of the child's best interest principle a legal mandate.

4.4.3. Social worker client engagement

4.4.3.1. Communication

This apparent study's findings concerning language barriers and the use of interpreters' delays case progress, thereby impacting the credibility of information gathered from children and its admissibility in court, thus negatively affecting the conviction rates. The majority of the participants were coloured social workers, thus language is a challenge when rendering services to Xhosa-speaking children. However, social workers engage services of the interpreters to maintain case flows as a proactive measure. Participants showed hesitancy regarding the regular use of interpreters due to limited supporting literature on the use of interpreters in CSA cases. Participants mentioned that;

"...a lack of Xhosa speaking forensic social workers to move cases a bit faster... We need Xhosa speaking forensic social workers for children who can speak well in the local language. I try and use interpreters but there are some clues that lose meaning when translated to English.... The use of interpreters is time consuming and it does not leave the true meaning to the child's story. Also, it may be difficult to maintain confidentiality." Participant 15

"Language barrier and the use of interpreters especially where gender issues are involved. For example, I had a case before where the guy I used as an interpreter talked for long with

the child and when he translated back to me, it was a short response and I was wondering what he was saying to the child. Also when a translator is male translating for a girl child such things where the child cannot say certain words also because of culture. We also do not have literature that support the use of interpreters, I have been searching.” Participant 17

Communication is salient in social work and language barrier often leads to social workers’ use of interpreters as indicated in the study findings. The use of interpreters assists social workers to handle cases as they are referred to avoid long-waiting lists. Maschi and Killian (2011) support that good communication and engagement skills assist social workers to access information from clients and other professionals such as interpreters. It is important to note that some cultural clues can be lost in interpretation and the translated meaning does not contain the intended meaning, thus impacting success rates of cases. Tribe and Tunariu’s study indicates the importance of using qualified interpreters as opposed to *ad hoc* or untrained interpreters (Tribe and Tunariu, 2010:76). The use of qualified professionals can be advantageous to social workers for confidentiality purposes and to interpret the intended meaning since the cases involve vulnerable children as opposed to untrained interpreters.

Participants indicated gender and culture as aspects that can influence the information communicated during forensic assessments. The use of qualified interpreters as they interpret not only the actual talk but consider culture-specific norms and understandings to negotiate useful and ethical interpretations (Tribe and Tunariu, 2010:77). However, the gender of the interpreter and the child should be considered before requesting services and this should align with the presenting problem. This helps to ensure that the child and the interpreter are comfortable in using certain words as communicated considering the cultural aspects. Social workers seek to overcome language barriers by using interpreters and referrals can also be made to social workers who speak the children’s first languages. In the same vein, from the researcher’s experience, communication through third-parties (interpreters) alters the quality of evidence and it is time-consuming (Skivenes and Kriz, 2010:1358; Rapholo, 2018:208; Spies, 2012:214). Skievens and Kriz (2010:1359) assert that translation is lost because the interpreters do not translate verbatim, thus interpreters can summarise a five-minute response with a short answer when a social worker is interested in all details as narrated by the child. This finding concurs with the current study findings and this has an adverse impact on forensic assessments, investigations and the justice system convictions.

4.4.3.2. Engaging with young children

Communication with young children to disclose sexual abuse occurrences has been indicated as a challenge in FSW practice. Challenges emanating from the traumatic experience and victims living with psychological challenges have an influence on the social worker-child victim communication and disclosure process. Below are quotations from the participants;

“Age of the child victims when it comes to communicating age appropriately with them to get information especially the younger child...” Participant 13

“I have a child now with an intellectual borderline disability and with that he has ADHD as well and so he was sexually abused. So it’s hard for me as a social worker to help that child...because I do not have that kind of expertise to assist that child at that kind of a level.”

Participant 1

Many children find it difficult to talk about their experiences of being sexually abused (Rapholo, 2014). Significant other studies support that children may face difficulties disclosing sexual abuse due to the perpetrator revolving around adverse effects, anxiety, feelings that no one will believe them, and fear of perpetrator retaliation (Motshegoa, 2011:3) and concerns about the stigma around CSA. Disclosure of CSA is viewed as a procedure with a clear-cut period and features, thus children wait longer to disclose the abuse where grooming was involved and a perpetrator has established a close relationship with a child victim (Van Dam, 2006:43).

The participants experience significant challenges with the younger children between the ranges of 1 and 6 years. Bruck and Ceci proffer that children, like adults, may experience difficulties remembering or giving accurate accounts of what happened (Motshegoa, 2011). Social workers should collaborate with other authorities who have the expertise in eliciting information from children with special needs. Mangezi (2014:18) argues that collaboration is an “effective interpersonal process that facilitates the achievement of goals that cannot be reached when individual professionals act on their own”. The statement emphasises the effectiveness of services through collaborative efforts than focusing on individual service rendering with limited expertise to serve children with special needs.

4.4.3.2.1. Information distortion due to multiple interviews

Participants expressed that the information gathered from child victims gets distorted due to multiple interviews with various role players involved in the service delivery process. Parental influence in custody battles that include CSA allegations has been indicated as another cause for information distortion. CSA allegations involving other statutory and non-statutory services with different role players lead to the contamination of information before reaching the social worker's office for forensic assessments. Participants were quoted as follows;

"FSWs receive contaminated information due to victim's several contacts with various service providers thus too much influence to the case....I don't get a child victim that is uncontaminated, you already get a child that is influenced and has been exposed to some of the techniques now it takes time to sit and sieve facts and what is not." Participant 12

"Cutting out multiple interviews by use of one-stop interview services where a social worker sits with the child during an assessment session while the prosecutor and the IO are watching and if they have questions they will ask me to find out from the child..." Participant 17

"...Custody battles where there are allegations of child sexual abuse within that and when I have to do my process but find parents fighting in between contaminating the child, it makes things difficult to know what really happened....it's really difficult to get that truthful account due to the contamination of the information that you will get." Participant 18

Social workers assumed that a one-stop interview service as means of reducing multiple interviews and contamination of information from child victims can help boost the conviction rates by getting authentic information that is uncontaminated. Schiller's study findings indicate that during sexual abuse allegations, children are exposed to many different role players who contribute to their vulnerability (Schiller, 2017). Multiple interviews further expose children to re-victimisation and social workers feel that they cannot fully protect the child. Multiple interviews negatively affects the conviction rates due to the development of new information or omission of relevant information or even forgetfulness since cases take long to be finalised by the justice system. However, the justice system seeks to ensure that the perpetrator is prosecuted and not to focus on the child who deserves equality and has the right to social services and protection (Schiller, 2017). Social workers need to be cognisant of victimology so as to protect child victims from further victimisation in the service delivery process. Schoeman

(2010) states that it is important to study all victims of crime and the psychological effects of their experiences. Children can be exposed to further re-victimisation when questioned by various service providers about the same traumatic event. Multiple interviews trigger new information and that can reduce the reliability of information due to therapeutic, forensic and investigative techniques employed in the process.

The South African Constitution (1996) Section 28 (2) stresses that the best interest of the child is of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. Children are vulnerable by virtue that they are children hence they require protection from harm, desertion, exploitation or deprivation. It seems that multiple interviews expose children more to vulnerability which affects the outcome of cases when they enter the criminal justice system. However, Simon (2006:56) avers that the best interest of the child sentiment is often neglected in cases where a child comes in contact with the criminal justice system where his/her rights conflict with the rights of the accused. This reduces the conviction rates and the truth the criminal justice system pursues. Social workers have mirrors and other recording equipment at their disposal, and the researcher is of the opinion that the same recording equipment can be used to record assessment sessions and then played in court as reliable evidence to convict perpetrators. In the same vein, the use of the recording equipment can be used as a one stop service where children are recorded from the playroom where role-players observe from the video output room. In cases where questions arise, role-players can discuss and allow the social worker to elicit more necessary information.

4.4.3.2.2. Verifying collateral information

Participants mentioned that verification of collateral information proves the authenticity of information given by the child during forensic assessments. Collateral verification is paramount in FSW because it deals with facts and candid evidence to support prosecution in CSA cases. Collateral information guides social workers' when making decisions as to whether sexual abuse occurred or not, and the choice of further interventions within the criminal justice system or outside supporting services for the child and the family. Participants stated;

“Consistence of information given in multiple interviews that is internal and external consistence of information from collaterals, the content of the disclosure and its evaluation and the sensory details including time lines. I do all this to verify my collateral information to

ascertain if the sexual abuse happened and that informs my decision on the interventions.”

Participant 13

“I first do a blind assessment. I start with a child and what the child gives me I test it against all my collateral sources to test if it collaborates with other sources. Ask questions, test my hypothesis ruling out until I come to the conclusion because in FSW it’s not always one thing so I test the hypothesis ruling out everything and that brings me to the decisions regarding my interventions.” Participant 18

Collateral information verification is an important aspect in FSW as it ascertains the occurrence of sexual abuse and a choice of appropriate interventions for the child and the family. Collateral information collection and verification is a holistic process that focuses on the child and the support systems. The collateral information is gathered during the investigation of allegations to collect reliable information from the child victim and relevant systems or sources to determine whether the abuse happened (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, APSAC, 2012) and these sources include family members, friends, and school teachers among others. The relevance of conducting collaterals is to ensure the credibility of the information disclosed by the victim. The more collateral sources concur with the child’s information, the higher the credibility of the information gathered to prosecute the case.

4.4.3.3. Therapeutic services

Therapeutic services to child victims have emerged from the study findings with two sub-categories including protracted waiting list and inadequate services. Due to the increasing rates of CSA as a common problem in South Africa, a long-waiting list and limited services for children awaiting therapeutic and FSW services is a concern. Participants stated;

“Therapeutic services, we usually refer to ChildLine and Safeline, but the waiting lists are too long thus children have to wait for about a month before they receive the counselling they need, therefore, there is no crisis intervention anymore.” Participant 5

“Therapeutic services should be streamlined within the department itself to reduce long waiting periods for the child victims who require crisis intervention services....The long waiting list on the therapeutic part stagnates the cases and other new behaviours develop and you have to deal with the new developments of the same cases again.” Participant 9

With regards to limited services, participants mentioned that;

“A lack of therapeutic services for victims to deal with the traumatic experience on time dragging the whole service delivery process....The implementation of the Sexual Offences Courts- the specialized courts for our children. Also, the establishment of the Thuthuzela Care Centres, this will help us improve our services because in my area we do not have both the SOC and TCC.” Participant 14

“Some areas are under resourced especially my area, only one organization offers therapeutic services. More social workers and psychologists have to be employed to make sure the children don't have to be on long waiting list to receive therapeutic services.” Participant 19

Long waiting lists and limited services for children negatively influence the whole service delivery as echoed in the study findings. These study findings intertwine with the findings pertaining to the lack of human resources and transport. The long waiting lists are evident challenges in both therapeutic and forensic service provision thereby causing delays in service delivery to both ends. A study conducted by Iffley (2012) echoes that FSW became increasingly intensive and resources such as human and materials are shrinking while caseloads become harder to manage. The research findings correspond with Iffley's study as social workers face challenges in delivering effective services to children in areas that have little to no resources and other services essential. A study by Ntlantleng in Thembisa supports the current study findings where other areas of Cape Town are under-resourced thus presenting the lack of sexual offences courts which in turn affects the finalisation of CSA cases (Ntlantleng, 2011:27). Long waiting lists and limited services affect not only therapeutic service providers but the criminal justice system too as the courts also suffer because of backlog of cases awaiting finalisation.

4.4.3.4. Secondary trauma

This category has one sub-category that emerged from the study findings concerning the effects of victim experience on the social worker. Social workers with personal sexual abuse histories are at high risk of experiencing secondary trauma resulting from continuous exposure to traumatic stories or material. Participants indicated their experiences of secondary trauma and confirmed the use of natural blocking as a strategy to prevent burnout from overwhelming

sexual abuse cases so as to maintain objectivity in service delivery to victims. Participants stated;

“.....some cases are traumatizing for me as a social worker but I have to suppress my emotions to be able to help the child. When I write my report, I relive the pain the child shared and there is no debriefing for us, it can make you breakdown.” Participant 16

“I, myself was a victim of sexual abuse so whenever I have to deal with a child sexual abuse case, I always have to remind myself umm that it is not about me but about this child.....In the beginning I was very emotional and could relate with a client, but as the years went by with more cases of child sexual abuse I became more tougher or resilient so I have built up this emotional wall for myself.” Participant 1

“Do you know how it affects me to write a court report? I sit there in front of this thing and I am think oh ehh nah this case and it ignites something in you, oh my word and I have to go through that same info again and its now secondary trauma and I must type it. I heard the information and I have to re-look typing and I still have to testify....” Participant 18

Child victims' experiences bring back memories of social workers who share similar experiences. McFadden et al.'s study concur that personal history of abuse may be a motivator to enter caring professions and suggest that organisational strategies should be developed to foster resilience in the employees (McFadden et al., 2015:1551). The employer's ability to develop strategies that foster resilience in social workers is of utmost significance because the sexual abuse phenomenon is multifaceted and overwhelming, often assuming social workers' personal history. The study findings indicated that children's experiences ignite social workers' past experiences. Social workers' memories of the past can have a negative influence in service delivery thereby leading to secondary trauma. The “daily reality of a police member's work is to absorb the frustrations of the community concerning escalating crime and the emotional experiences of the victims of crime” (Van der Westhuizen and Melena, 2016). “The emotionally intense police environment requires social workers to understand their own emotions. They need to be able to control their own emotions and to deal with the emotions of the community affected by traumatic incidents” (Watson et al., 2012:184). Emotional intelligence is a necessity for social workers in forensic practice handling CSA cases for them to understand children's emotional states and their own emotional states also, ways of

managing relationships with others (Darabi, 2012:2991). Emotional intelligence and self-awareness allow social workers to deal with the demanding CSA cases.

4.4.4. Ethical considerations

4.4.4.1. Case confidentiality

Confidentiality is another sub-category that emerged from the study findings. This ethical principle is central to FSW practice because social workers deal with human beings, their feelings and emotions and the stories shared are mostly painful, thus making confidentiality a paramount aspect in service delivery. Participants stated that,

“....I have issues with clients that bad mouth your name very quickly especially if they do not get what they want, sometimes things get really messy. In this field, I am always concerned about my ethical issues, people can bring up anything against you in court....” Participant 18

“I have a concern where a child discloses the abuse but tells you that the parents or guardian should not know about. However, you break that confidentiality issue because you should inform the parents or guardian about the abuse and the case reported to the police too.” Participant 10.

“Our reports are docket evidence for the criminal court thus we cannot hand out our reports to anyone otherwise, it will jeopardise the evidence in court... we cannot share reports because once the defense gets the report then the information gets to the public easily.” Participant 15

Social workers' confidentiality and experiences with hostile clients who show dissatisfaction with the outcome of cases were established as major concerns. Confidentiality creates boundaries around the client-worker relationship and boundaries around information outside of that relationship, including information that can be communicated within, between, and among agencies. Social workers in forensic practice are sceptical about issues concerning confidentiality because information gathered during forensic assessments is revealed to third parties involved in the criminal justice system. Millstein emphasises that evidence shared beyond the confines of the client-social worker relationship is shared responsibly in the interest of providing client services, and with client understanding and consent consistent with legal mandates (Millstein, 2000:270). Social workers are responsible for rendering services to children and families who have experienced sexual abuse (Tanton, 2015). The ability to protect

confidentiality diminished due to increasing demands for accountability, mandated duty-to-protect or -warn provisions, expanding court involvement in professional decision making, and widening access to client record information through the requirements of third-parties and the expanded use of computer technology (Millstein (2000:270). Social workers should adhere to the Code of Ethics governing their work on issues relating to confidentiality for them to maintain ethical conduct for effective service delivery and social worker-child professional relationship.

4.4.4.1. Child victims' resistance to disclose information

This sub-category emerged from the study findings and indicated child victims' resistance to disclose information mainly in interfamilial cases where children are expected not to talk about the occurrence of sexual abuse. In some cases, children and families fear stigmatisation and the removal of the perpetrator from the family who may be a bread winner. Participants mentioned that;

“At the hospital the child mentioned she was sexually abused by an unknown man when it happened in the family and family members are covering up.” Participant 3

“Sexual abuse within the families, they are reluctant to press charges and they keep it among themselves. Even if we explain to them the benefits of pressing charges some families raise concerns about stigma out in communities.” Participant 5

“.....children finding difficulties to disclose the perpetrators because they still want to be with their parents at home. Sometimes, children feel the abuse is normal in the home especially if it has been happening for some time and reluctant to lay charges against perpetrators.”
Participant 7

The findings indicate that parents are more concerned with the stigma against the family if a child discloses the occurrence of sexual abuse within the family. In cases where there is resistance, social workers have challenges to gather truthful information and to safeguard the child from further abuse and thereby ensuring the child's best interest. Cases take long to be finalised in this case because the social worker needs to break through those barriers of resistance so as to obtain the relevant details that are necessary for the court. Children become resistant because they are concerned about their family members and their own safety and a

parent has to provide care and support for them. It is evident in reality and in Motshegoa's study that children experience resistance due to fear of the perpetrator's retaliation, shame, guilt and family pressure (Motshegoa, 2011:3) to never communicate to external individuals about sexual abuse.

4.4.4.2. Professionalism by police services

This category consists of one sub-category, the quality of work and communication that emerged from the study and this is discussed with verbatim quotes from participants. The participants mentioned a challenge with the SAPS detectives where there is no feedback of cases reported to the SAPS and the social workers may feel that verbal communication is unprofessional since there should be documents that can be filed as part of the service delivery process. In addition, the participants felt once the case is referred to the police, the social worker is not involved anymore which negatively influences service delivery. The participant stated that;

“If a case is reported at the office and you refer the child victim to the detectives, you always have to follow-up with the detectives for feedback on whether the abuse is confirmed or not. There is no clear communication among service providers thus leaving social worker's role as unimportant in the process. There is no written confirmation given to a social worker regarding the abuse, it is done verbally and I feel it is unprofessional.... It negatively influences the SWs work because you are always kept out of the picture, you are not informed thus keeping child victims more exposed to the abuse.” Participant 8

Communication and cooperation among role players in the criminal justice system foster positive case outcomes and the protection of child victims. Artz (2017) affirms that should one stakeholder not cooperate in the helping process, it can cause secondary victimisation. CSA is complex and exposes children to vulnerability in the helping process, thus causing secondary victimisation when role players experience communication challenges. The decisions made at one level are most likely to have an impact on other systems. Therefore, the interconnection of systems involving the child victims, their families, communities and the socio-economic political context cannot be ignored. The FSW practice forms part of the justice system and the decisions to or not communicate with other role players impacts the service delivery holistically. Maschi et al. (2009) emphasises that networking among role players of the criminal justice system is important and this improves service delivery in FSW practice.

4.4.4.3. Criminal justice system

4.4.4.3.1. Court prosecution

The prosecution of perpetrators of CSA is a sub-category that emerged from the study findings. Factors including the manner of questioning and the victim's age can cause case attrition or low convictions. Participants stated that;

“Victims’ age is a challenge especially children below 10 in most cases their testimonies are not accepted by the courts as authentic or seen as authentic witnesses in court proceedings. Therefore, the perpetrators are not really punished for what they did because of the proof and validity of the victims’ testimonies. That is a big concern because they can do it over and over again to other children.” Participant 5

“Cases withdrawn at court because children are so young mostly between 3 & 6 and even after assessments of children cases still are withdrawn.... If the cases involve children under 5 years gets raped and it's the child's word against the perpetrator, the case will be withdrawn and ask a social worker to reassess the child after a certain period to ascertain if the child remembers. At the reassessment time, the child does not remember anything and the parents do not want anything to do with the case and the court.” Participant 11

The study findings showed concerns regarding children's age and lack of sexual offences courts as major factors leading to low conviction rates. The establishment of the Sexual Offences Courts aimed at alleviating undue stress in child witnesses during court proceedings can also boost the conviction of perpetrators. The Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 (SA CPA, 1977) Section 170A relates to evidence given by child witnesses and the court may appoint an intermediary for child witnesses and the questions are channelled through the intermediary. This provision ensures that children's rights are exercised in court and this can possibly boost convictions. Testifying in court is an intimidating experience for most witnesses, especially for vulnerable groups such as children; the court experience is even more intimidating when the child has to testify in an open court about traumatic events that occurred during sexual abuse (Magagula, 2018; Reyneke and Kruger, 2006:74). Davis and Saffy (2004:17) concur with the study findings that it is a widely accepted fact that the criminal justice system views evidence given by children with scepticism. A need has arisen to address the gap that prevails concerning a child's capability to give evidence and the court of law's recognition of the testimony. Social workers are requested by the court to conduct competency assessments with child victims. It is

the researcher's elucidation that when social workers conduct competency assessments, the court should not doubt the testimony of a child witness because the assessment proves or disproves the child witness' ability to testify in court.

4.4.4.3.2. Re-victimization of child victims

Re-traumatisation of child victims emerged from the study findings where children are exposed to non-child-friendly criminal courts. Children may suffer undue stress whilst testifying about the traumatic events they have experienced. Re-victimisation occurs through multiple interviews, delays to attend court proceedings and lack of intermediaries at some courts in Cape Town as echoed by the participants as stated below;

“Involvement of intermediaries in child sexual abuse cases to assist children when testifying in court because many cases are closed on the basis that children are too young but they suffer secondary trauma later when they have to go back to court which is unfair to the child victims.”

Participant 6

“Re-traumatization of the victims due to multiple interviews and long waiting lists for children to attend counselling sessions dragging cases some falling through the criminal justice cracks may frustrate the child victims.” Participant 11

“...the lack of a sexual offences courts...the courts we have are not child friendly enough. If the prosecutor consults with the child and the child cannot speak the case is withdrawn.”

Participant 14

“When children's testimonies are not heard or doubted in court, it may break them down emotionally because some children feel empowered by being able to tell the story in court and feel heard.” Participant 15

Testifying in court is an intimidating experience for most witnesses especially for vulnerable groups such as children; the court experience is even more intimidating when the child has to testify in an open court about traumatic events that occurred during sexual abuse (Magagula, 2018; Reyneke and Kruger, 2006:74). The provision for intermediaries to children as vulnerable witnesses to be able to testify seems not to be fully implemented at some courts in Cape Town, thereby leading to low convictions of perpetrators. Several initiatives have been

developed to make courts more witness-friendly; however, the need to be more responsive to witnesses is not a policy priority in the criminal justice system (Reyneke and Kruger, 2006:75). Section 153(3) of the CPA (1977) makes provisions for in camera hearings for child witnesses, with section 153(4) specifying that hearings involving child witnesses are closed to the public and the press and section 158(2) and (3) stipulates that a court may order that a child witness gives evidence outside of the presence of the accused by means of closed circuit television (South African Law Commission, 2002). The emphasis should be on the need for special care considerations to ensure that children testify in a separate section in court, in cases where the use of closed-circuit television is not possible in order to limit the trauma of facing the perpetrator (Davis and Saffy, 2004:21). The legislative provisions mentioned above assist child witnesses to deliver credible testimonies in court, hence boosting perpetrator conviction rates.

4.4.4.3.3. Delay of cases and low conviction rates

This inherent sub-category was indicated by participants as a challenge affecting the quality of information gathered during forensic assessments with children. The delays hinder the consistence of information and low conviction rates in instances where child witnesses' testimonies are doubted by the justice system, cases that involved touching with no penetration and lack of *viva voce* social worker's expert testimonies. Participants echoed:

"The admissibility of child victims' testimonies in courts because there are still doubts especially if the information is given when the child is still young and a few years later the child uses different words, it does not mean the child is lying. So the magistrates and prosecutors must understand and take into consideration the developmental phase of the child." Participant 13

"Cases falling through the cracks where sexual abuse occurred through touching with no penetration so the court looks for evidence to prove and at the end the cases fall away because there is no physical evidence...it seems the law still looks at sexual abuse to primarily involve penetration to be proven." Participant 7

"The courts have more caution with child witnesses because the court feels children do not make good witnesses and they do not use us often to explain child development so they ask them age appropriate questions." Participant 15

“... the issue of expert witnessing, I feel more value is added when I go and give a verbal expert testimony in court than relying more on my report submitted as evidence in court.”

Participant 16

The CSA field is multifaceted; hence time is of paramount importance because children may forget relevant details that are necessary to prosecute cases and to link them with other necessary services. In a study conducted by Jiya, the time spent on forensic assessment is recognised as a critical component in the criminal justice process since timely assessment improves the quality and accuracy of the information obtained from the child, whilst this quality deteriorates over time (Jiya, 2015:2). It is vital for the criminal justice role-players to be knowledgeable about CSA and the influence of time on the child witness' memory and the conviction rates because children may forget or new information may develop or they may deal with the trauma and withdraw from participation in court. A delay generally is not considered honouring the best interests of the child, and therefore, it is crucial for the justice process to be concluded in the shortest possible time whilst protecting the rights of the child (Ewing, 2007:291; Jiya, 2015:3). The child's best interest is of paramount importance in every case that involves a child and as such, role-players must adhere to legislative and international standards provisions.

The child witness' age and developmental stage, other evident features of abuse overriding sexual abuse features, social workers not often called for *viva voce* expert testimonies and non-penetrative allegations all affect the conviction rates. Davis and Saffy (2004:18) claim that the child's testimony is in many cases the most important or only evidence, therefore it is in the best for the child and the justice system to handle CSA victims and witnesses in a sensitive way. The criminal justice system's cautionary rule in relation to child witnesses' testimonies and the challenges of proper implementation of the sexual offences courts also adversely influence the outcome of cases. Therefore, conviction rates remain low, leading to continuous cycles of CSA. A study conducted by Davis and Saffy (2004:22) emphasises the abolishment of the cautionary rule relating to child testimonies. It seems that the criminal justice system doubts the authenticity of child witnesses' testimonies when social workers are available to conduct competency assessments.

4.5. Critical analysis

The study explored and examined the experiences of social workers in forensic practice that are handling victims of CSA. It is apparent that social workers in forensic practice encounter many challenges in dealing with CSA caseloads, considering that the majority acquired an undergraduate degree coupled with on the job training. Social workers' attrition rates have been viewed as common in forensic practice where participants expressed struggles to cope with stressful work involving child victims, from the disclosure of sexual abuse allegations to prosecution or finalisation of cases. Due to limited knowledge and skills in FSW, the findings confirm the researcher's assumption that social workers in forensic practice inadvertently re-victimise victims of CSA. In the same vein, the re-victimisation of child victims stems from the operation of the whole criminal justice system and other relevant stakeholders involved, which in-turn affects the overall criminal convictions.

In addition, the study indicates that the participants face ethical challenges when dealing with child victims, which also hinders effective service delivery. The ethical issues such as confidentiality when it comes to children's understanding about their information shared with third parties are a challenge. However, in reality the information shared with third parties in the service delivery process serves the best interests of the child according to the South African legislative mandate and SACSSP regulations. Therefore, it is a social worker's responsibility to explain to the children, parents and relevant parties to help them understand the reasons and benefits for sharing information with third parties specifically in this complex and sensitive field where services are rendered using holistic frameworks to problem-solving because the goals cannot be reached by individuals but a group. In this holistic problem-solving approach, social workers' cognisance of the children's rights helps them understand how to handle the complexity and sensitivity of CSA cases.

Social workers practicing FSW in South Africa had no Code of Ethics. However, the FSW regulations were signed and endorsed since September 2017 and social workers in forensic practice are mandated to register to use the specialised title legally and to abide to the specific Code of Ethics guiding their daily work activities with this delicate population. Due to the demanding cases of CSA, social workers were not aware of the endorsements of the FSW regulations. The study findings regarding the FSW Code of Ethics confirm the researcher's assumption that its absence hinders service delivery to child victims because the specialised forensic practice requires a specialised ethical and guiding principles beyond a generalist Social

Work Code of Ethics. This confirms the findings where participants were sceptical about issues related to confidentiality in the service delivery process. However, social workers in forensic practice need to immerse themselves in the specialised Code of Ethics for them to render ethical services through abiding to the guidelines outlined in the FSW ethical code. It is imperative to understand that confidentiality can be breached in the CSA field but if it happens, it should aim at helping children and the family to access services that are necessary in the service delivery process. Therefore, social workers should be mindful not to over-step the boundaries of confidentiality for them to avoid ethical malpractices because they are under specific regulations, and actions can be taken against them if malpractices are established.

The researcher realised that a generic undergraduate degree in Social Work is not enough to practice in the specialised forensic field due to the socio-legal dynamics and child development issues involved. The study participants received in-service training and continue finding difficulties in handling CSA cases and that proves the need for tertiary training coupled with private and formal training on issues relating to forensic practice. The study findings prove that social workers have some knowledge from basic Social Work degrees but CSA is different from any other form of abuse and that makes it more complex because it involves various dynamics in the service delivery process. Therefore, the findings confirm the researcher's opinion that forensic practice requires tertiary specialised knowledge and skills superseding only having work experience coupled with in-service training in the forensic field. Due to the limited numbers of FSW specialists, the number of victims per each qualified practitioner remains huge considering the CSA overwhelming caseloads, hence creating inefficiencies in the whole service delivery process.

In conclusion of the above analysis, the complex nature of CSA requires social workers practicing FSW in South Africa to acquire specialised knowledge and skills in social work, child development and the legal domains for them to function as experts in this embryonic field. Baker and Branson (2000:2) concur with the conclusions of the study by confirming that it is more important than ever for social workers to know about the law, its applicability for oneself and the clients so as to minimise legal difficulties, and its implementation in quest for social and civic justice. A social worker needs specialist training as specific expertise and adherence to specific guidelines and ethical standards required (Jonkers, 2012:3; Iffley, 2012 and Mangezi, 2014) to practice FSW.

4.6. Chapter summary

The chapter discussed the findings of the study to understand social workers experiences of forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse. The background information of participants, verbatim quotes to support the findings and the relevant literature were incorporated to consolidate the study. The next phase is the final chapter, 5 entailing the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

The following conclusions and recommendations are interwoven in the research objectives and they are drawn from the study findings, and the directions for future research are highlighted.

5.1 Research objectives

The study objectives are;

- i. To explore the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
- ii. To discover concerns involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
- iii. To describe the social workers' decision making in their intervention in providing forensic social work services.
- iv. To explore the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice with sexual abuse cases.

5.2. Conclusions

The research revealed that social workers in forensic practice experience immense challenges whilst handling CSA cases. The participants in this study handle CSA and some of the participants have some tertiary undergraduate degrees as a basis for practicing social work in South Africa while some acquired post-graduate degrees to enhance their knowledge for effective service delivery. Social workers in the child protection department and organisation have not received post-graduate tertiary training for them to be equipped to handle sexual abuse cases. However, they received in-service trainings for them to be able to handle cases reported or referred to their offices. Due to the complex nature of CSA, social workers find themselves faced with challenges in service delivery given that in-service training is challenging because of resource constraints. It is imperative to note that in-service training alone cannot substitute specialised tertiary training for social workers to become experts in the growing FSW field.

The challenging work environment for social workers exposes them to life-threatening situations such as being stalked by perpetrators or perpetrators threatening to cause grievous-bodily harm or even murder due to the complexity of cases. Perpetrators can easily track social

workers or even other criminal justice system role-players handling their cases by virtue of them being positioned in crime-ridden areas. Safety and security is a challenge for children and service providers involved in this multifaceted sexual offence field. The sexual abuse environment is regarded as stressful such that social workers' burnout from these cases is inevitable. The challenging work environment presents lack of peer support, debriefing and supervision necessary for social workers' emotional and psychological health for them to maintain good social worker-client relationships. The study convincingly exhibited that social workers' failure to cope with stressful work demands and perpetrator intimidations among other factors as discussed in Chapter four, cause social worker attrition in forensic practice. Therefore, FSWs have to receive regular structured debriefing to counteract vicarious trauma, burnout and possible social workers' attrition rates.

Challenges concerning caseload management were viewed as limitations to effective service delivery. The complex nature of CSA cases require specialised tertiary training coupled with formal and private trainings to be an expert and to provide effective services for upholding the "Best interest of the child" principle according to the legislative mandates. The development of FSW and the involvement of social workers in handling complex cases relating to CSA demands criminal justice role-players' collaborative efforts to curb the escalating violent crime rates in South Africa. Social workers' networking skills are essential to ensure collaborations to achieve goals that cannot be achieved by individuals but require teamwork for effectiveness of services to child victims. Networking and collaboration of role-players in forensic practice helps to develop holistic and proactive responsiveness of services to child victims, families, and communities at large. Limited human and logistical resources prove to be setbacks in dealing with overwhelming caseloads thereby contributing to further delays in the progression of cases. FSW is complex and therefore requires committed social workers and criminal justice role-players to counteract the influence of time and delays on case progression which in-turn affect children's memory and testimonies in court.

Parental involvement contributes to the justice system's withdrawal of cases as revealed by the study findings. Although social workers from child protection in Cape Town received trainings on sexual abuse from various private mentors, it is apparent that they continue facing challenges to effectively render services to children affected by violent crimes. This reinforces the importance of tertiary training to acquire specialised knowledge and skills on child development, social work, and legal domains for them to be competent in forensic practice.

Social workers' inclusion of the holistic approach to handling these complex cases requires knowledge and skills to handle parental reactions such as anger towards self, the child, perpetrator, family members and social workers during the disclosure process. Therefore, parental involvement in these stigma-associated and delicate cases is critical, and the researcher concurs that parents are reluctant to support the child and to cooperate with service providers when they are overwhelmed with feelings of denial and failure to acknowledge children's rights and needs, thus leading to the distortion of sexual abuse existence.

It is imperative to note that the research revealed social worker-client engagement challenges as affecting service delivery. The study concludes that language barriers hinder effective communication; hence social workers involve the services of interpreters. However, language barriers and the use of interpreters can delay the finalisation of cases. Also, FSW is a detective aid, meaning that social workers only gather facts that are uncontaminated, but the use of interpreters can be argued that it alters information especially when unqualified interpreters are involved. Therefore, qualified interpreters are encouraged when social workers experience language barriers as a challenge for case progression. The study also concluded that the age of children remains a challenge when conducting assessments because disclosures can be prolonged and information might be distorted in the process where various role-players are involved, thereby affecting the effectiveness of services. The study further concludes that social workers are highly concerned about their professional ethics thus they try to handle cases carefully. The SACSSP as a regulatory body made progress to develop and regulate FSW in South Africa and social workers who wish to use the title are required to register as FSWs. Most participants were not aware that the registration was open since September 2017 following the Government Gazette endorsements. In light of the overall research, the following recommendations are indicated.

5.3 Recommendations

In light of the above conclusions, the following recommendations have been made;

5.3.1. Strengthening collaborations between social workers in forensic practice and the SAPS

It is evident that there is need for stronger collaborations between social workers in forensic practice and the SAPS so as to ensure security for both children and social workers during and after the service delivery process. The CSA field is complex and the criminal justice system role-players are subjected to high-risks of perpetrator retaliations. The SAPS is a law

enforcement agent, thus there is need to ensure that all South African citizens are protected from harm, including service providers, and to ensure maximum enforcement of the laws so as to curb crime.

5.3.2. Crisis intervention, education and awareness campaigns on CSA

Social workers need to ensure that parents and children involved in sexual abuse cases receive crisis interventions such as counselling for them to deal with trauma, ascertain CSA occurrence and to evaluate possibilities of parental support so as to uphold the child's rights, needs and "best interest". Moreover, parents should be empowered to overcome all anxieties, including the stigma that is associated with CSA by engaging them in school and community awareness campaigns, parental education on how to protect children from further abuse, and support children to cope with the traumatic life experiences. The awareness campaigns aim should focus on helping children, parents, school authorities and other role-players about possible causes, signs and symptoms, mandatory reporting procedures and other available services to help children and families affected by sexual offences. The researcher being cognisant of cultural aspects believes that there is a great need to re-evaluate the implications of culture and how it fits into the modern world. In the same vein, harmful cultural practices and taboos relating to CSA should be addressed for parents and children to be informed, hence allowing parents to foster open communication with their children for them to recognise and explore children's everyday activities. Therefore, social workers need to help parents from a strengths-based perspective for them to be able to identify the strengths that reinforce parent-child connections, support, and reduction of anxieties, anger, self-blame, guilt, isolation, and stigma. Also, social workers need to address parental economic circumstances in the process so as to avoid the pulling of perpetrators back into the family, especially in cases involving perpetrators who are breadwinners, hence exposing children to further sexual abuse.

5.3.3. Long-waiting lists and the use of interpreters in FSW practice

The long-waiting lists in FSW practice warrants social workers to request the services of qualified interpreters as compared to unqualified interpreters in order to maintain case flows and management. In addition, social workers need to ensure that the gender and culture of the child and the interpreter complement before requesting the services because culture and gender play a pivotal role when handling sexual abuse cases due to their complex nature. Also, children need to be free to express themselves in their first language especially in these sensitive cases

in order to get a truthful account of events that are uncontaminated. It is imperative to note that the use of *ad hoc* interpreters might result in omitting certain cultural contents that are pertinent to the sexual abuse allegations. Therefore, the involvement of qualified interpreters helps to avoid the risk of losing out more credible information given the scarcity of isiXhosa speaking social workers in FSW practice in Cape Town. This is according to the population sample for this study where the majority are coloured social workers, thus services of the interpreters applies across South Africa.

5.3.4. Specialist tertiary training as a pre-requisite for forensic practice in South Africa

The social workers handling CSA cases need tertiary specialised training in socio-legal and child development fields to provide effective services to child victims and families. Correspondingly, in-service training and field experience alone cannot equip social workers with comprehensive knowledge and skills required in this overwhelming FSW field. Therefore, there is a need for tertiary institutions to in-cooperate a sexual abuse course at undergraduate level. This will equip social workers with basic knowledge to handle sexual abuse allegations in practice because in reality they might be the only resource in the community that is required to conduct forensic assessments and investigations regarding sexual abuse allegations. Due to limited tertiary training, social workers in forensic practice are currently experiencing challenges in handling CSA cases, thus making curricular inclusion a necessity. However, social workers in possession of other postgraduate degrees such as (Honours & Master) Probation and Correctional Practice can be employed in FSW practice because the programme involves comprehensive criminal justice system courses thereby making it a diversified programme. The SAPS should consider hiring specialised Probation and Correctional Practice degree holders because they are equipped to function competently within the criminal justice system in handling CSA and other related cases. This will help improve service delivery and add human resources in the understaffed field of specialisation. In the same vein, the reality of FSW practice presents a gender imbalance in the profession. Therefore, proper marketing of the whole social work field including its specialisations is essential.

5.3.5. Standardized reporting format

The criminal justice system role-players need to develop standardised reporting formats that are suitable for all court mandated reports, which is essential to maintain uniformity, quality of reports, elevation of the FSW profession, and boosting conviction rates because social workers

will be well versed or immersed in the court's expectations of written and *viva voce* evidence presentation.

5.3.6. FSW as expert witnesses in the courts of law

Expert witnessing is one of the core functions of FSW in South Africa and social workers need to be subpoenaed by the courts of law as expert witnesses in all child sexual offences than relying on reading the reports submitted at court as evidence, dockets and witness statements to pass their judgements. The researcher from experience realised that *viva voce* expert testimonies usually yield positive outcomes of sexual offences and even in other cases. *Viva voce* expert testimonies augment the meaning and contents of the written report and give an opportunity for court officials to verbally confirm and clarify the contents of the case presented.

5.3.7. Establishment of more SOCs and their proper implementation

There is a great need for the establishment of more sexual offences courts and improvement in the implementation of the sexual offences courts for them to function as they are intended. These courts will reduce re-victimisation of child witnesses, uphold their rights and boost convictions of sexual perpetrators.

5.3.8. Strengthening the TCCM and establishing more TCC across Cape Town

In the same vein, there is a need to strengthen the Thuthuzela Care Centre Model (TCCM) where children receive services at a one-service point. Furthermore, there is a huge need to establish Thuthuzela Care Centres in other areas around Cape Town where there are limited resources for victims of CSA. This will help to reduce long-waiting lists for therapeutic services which in-turn improves elicitation of authentic information from child victims, thereby leading to positive outcomes of cases.

5.3.9. Allocation of transport or vehicles to FSWs

Access to cars is a great need for social workers in forensic practice to be able to conduct their collaterals timeously. Collateral investigations on complex matters such as CSA cannot be discussed over the telephone to verify the occurrence of the abuse or to support allegations. Therefore, transport is a great need in forensic practice for it to be effective in service delivery.

5.3.10. Child victim versus perpetrator removal from the environment

The removal of child victims has become a common norm where sexual abuse and other related allegations are presented. Given the scarcity of resources such as transport as highlighted on 5.3.8, the removal of child victims from their support systems before forensic assessments take place makes it difficult at times. The removals lead to the delay of forensic investigations and finalisation of court cases thus, hampering the conviction rates resulting from the fact that child victims may forget information pertinent to the investigation or they may minimize the severity of the problem and normalise the abuse. Instead of social workers mostly focusing on the removal of children, they should rather recommend the removal of the perpetrator from the child's environment as per the legislative provisions unless if removing the child is highly necessary after a thorough assessment of circumstances around the child and the perpetrator.

5.4. Future research

Future research should focus on the effectiveness of the Thuthuzela Care Centres, the Sexual Offences Courts and the possibility of using pre-recorded video material as court evidence in CSA cases to reduce re-victimisation of children from engaging in hostile and rigorous court proceedings, and possible re-victimisation from multiple interviews.

5.5. Conclusion

The research explored and examined the experiences of social workers in forensic practice handling CSA cases in Cape Town. This chapter discussed the conclusion and recommendations for the study. It further provided directions for future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION & CONSENT FORM

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Student number:

This research forms part of the qualification for a Master of Probation and Correctional Practice degree in the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town

Title of Study: Social workers experiences of forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse in the City of Cape Town.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
2. To discover the ethical issues involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
3. To describe the social workers' decision making in their intervention in providing forensic social work services.
4. To explore the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice with sexual abuse cases.

Please read the following and sign if you agree to participate in this study.

Research Procedures: I understand that I will be participating in an interview process to explore the experiences of social workers working in forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be recorded with your permission using a digital recorder or by taking notes. The recording will be transcribed and the notes, the recorded information and the transcripts will be kept in a secure place. Once the

research has been completed, this material will be only be used for academic purposes and the transcripts will be destroyed.

Risks and Harm: There are no foreseen risks or harm in participating in this research. However, in the event of any emotional distress by a participant, the researcher will make a referral for appropriate assistance.

Benefits/Incentives: I understand that this research will not benefit me directly and that I will not be paid for agreeing to do this interview. However, through my participation, the information gathered will provide important information on the experiences of social workers and how to enhance forensic social work services to victims of child sexual abuse.

Participant’s Rights: I understand that I am free to withdraw from participating in this study at any time, without giving any reason and that there are no consequences should I decide not to participate at any stage.

Confidentiality: I understand that the interview process will be kept strictly confidential and that information will be available to the researcher and the supervisor. Extracts from the interviews will be included in the final research report without anyone being able to link my quotes to my identity. The final report will be examined by an external examiner and the findings will be made available to participating agencies. Under no circumstances will my name be revealed in the report or any other publications related to this research.

I understand that if at any time I would like any additional information about this research, I can contact my research supervisor, Dr.Somaya Abdullah telephonically at 021 650-4219 or by email at somaya.abdullah@uct.ac.za

I confirm that I have read this consent form or researcher has read it to me and that the study has been explained to me. I voluntarily participate in this study

Signature of Participant

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Signature of Researcher

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Appendix B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A: BACKGROUND/ BASIC INFORMATION

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Current position: _____

Qualification: _____

Years of Experiences: _____

Organization/ Department: _____

SECTION B:

1. What are the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse?

1.1. What challenges do you face when working with victims of child sexual abuse?

1.2. Do these challenges influence service delivery? Please clarify.

1.3. In your opinion, how can these challenges be addressed?

2. What are the concerns involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse?

2.1. Do you face any personal or professional concerns handling cases of child sexual abuse? Explain

2.2. Does it influence your ability to work with child sexual abuse victims? Describe

2.3. How do you make decisions under the circumstance? Explain

2.4. How do they affect service delivery to victims of child sexual abuse?

2.5. In your opinion, how can practitioners and organizations address these concerns?

3. How do social workers make decisions in their intervention in providing forensic social work services?

3.1. Are there any guidelines or protocols that you follow regarding forensic social work interventions? Explain

3.2. What are the specific techniques that you apply to get children to share information? Explain

3.3. How do you make decisions regarding child sexual abuse interventions?

3.4. What supervision or professional guidance do you receive? Explain

3.5. What value if any, do you think you add to investigations of child sexual abuse cases?

3.6. How do you think other role players in a multidisciplinary team view your role?

3.7. Any other comments?

4. What are the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice with sexual abuse cases?

4.1. Based on your experience, what can be done to enhance service delivery in forensic practice?

4.2. Comment on the following areas relevant to forensic social work

4.3. Legislations and policies

4.4. Knowledge on legal aspects

4.5. Knowledge on courtroom procedures

4.6. Acting as an expert witness

4.7. What areas do you think need improvement?

Appendix C: ACVV PERMISSION LETTER

ACVV Hoofkantoor / Head Office
ACVV-Sentrum/Centre, Caledonstraat 61/ 61 Caledon Street
Postbus / P O Box 3834, Kaapstad /Cape Town, 8000
Tel : (021) 4617437, 461 1109
Faks/Fax : (021) 4610074
Epos/email: headoffice@acvv.org.za
www.acvv.org.za



002 834 NPO
930004921 PBO

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Permission has been granted to **MS SIBONISIWE PERTINA PAMBURAYI** (student number: PMBSIB001), a registered student for a Masters degree in Social Work at the University of Cape Town, to include social workers of the ACVV in her research studies. The topic of the proposed research is "*Social Workers experiences of forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse in the City of Cape Town*".

The research requires conducting semi-structured interviews with social workers to understand their experiences of forensic practice and how to improve forensic social work services in South Africa. The objectives for the research are as follow:

1. To explore the challenges faced by social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
2. To discover the ethical concerns involved in generalist social workers providing forensic services to victims of child sexual abuse.
3. To describe the social workers' decision making in their intervention in providing forensic social work services.
4. To explore the levels of knowledge and skills of social workers in forensic practice with sexual abuse cases.

It is recommended that the researcher contacts ACVV Cape Town, ACVV Koeberg, ACVV Peninsula and ACVV Mitchells Plain to include social workers from these ACVV branches in the proposed research study. The researcher will not coerce participants to be part of the study thus emphasizing voluntary participation. Should there be any queries participants can contact the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Somaya Abdullah of Dept of Social Development at UCT.

According to ACVV Policy it is required of the student to supply the ACVV Head Office with a copy of the research findings on completion of the study.


NICOLETTE VAN DER WALT
ACVV National Manager: Child Protection

CAPE TOWN
2018-09-12

*ACVV lewer maatskaplike dienste aan kwesbare kinders, gesinne, vroue en ouer persone/
ACVV renders social services to vulnerable children, families, women and older persons*

•SAAM IN DIENS VAN DIE GEMEENSKAP • TOGETHER IN SERVICE OF THE COMMUNITY •
•SIKUNYE KWIINKONZO ZOLUNTU • RE MMOGO MO DITIRELONG TSA LOAGO •

Appendix D: LANGUAGE EDITING LETTER

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11 December 2019

To whom it may concern

LANGUAGE EDITING – SIBONISIWE PERTINA PAMBURAYI

This letter serves to confirm that a *Master of Social Science in Probation and Correctional Practice* at the *Department of Social Development, Faculty of the Humanities, University of Cape Town* entitled *Social Workers' experiences of forensic practice with victims of child sexual abuse in the City of Cape Town* by Sibonisiwe Pertina Pamburayi was submitted to me for language editing.

The thesis was professionally edited and track changes and suggestions were made in the document. The research content or the author's intentions were not altered during the editing process and the author has the authority to accept or reject my suggestions.

Yours faithfully

N. Lambo

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B. A. Special Honours in English – First class
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