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The perceptions of social workers on the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) within the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Region

By

Sipho Sol Mathebula

RESEARCH REPORT

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

At the

University of the Witwatersrand

SUPERVISOR: Dr Poppy Masinga

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Declaration

I, Sipho Sol Mathebula, declare that this Research Report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts (in the field of Social Development by Coursework and Research) in the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been presented before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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22nd day of October 2020,

Johannesburg

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved parents Sannie and Benjamin Mathebula, for showing me love, providing a good upbringing and reminding me of the important value of education and hard work. May your lovely souls continue to rest in eternal peace.

To the late Professor Edwell Kaseke who started this journey of research with me and taught me that with consistency, anything is possible.

To Mutende Msiska, your love, support and determination to achieve great things has been a pillar at which I find rest and renewal of strength. Your friendship and kindness will echo in my life until eternity. May your soul continue to rest in peace.

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First and foremost, Glory be to God Almighty for His Grace, without which nothing is possible, and this work would have not been possible.

To my supervisor, Dr Poppy Masinga, thank you for affording me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge and skills under your guidance. Without your wisdom, guidance and patience, this would have not been possible.

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Finally, a special thank you to all the participants who volunteered their time, wisdom and who played an active role in helping us to understand the challenges faced in the social work field. Without you this work would not have been possible.

Acronyms

DPSA:	Department of Public Service and Administration
DSD:	Department of Social Development
OSD:	Occupational Specific Dispensation
RSA:	Republic of South Africa

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Biographical profile of the participants 50
Table 2: Themes and sub-themes from the data analysis 52

Figure 1: Map of Johannesburg, Google (n.d.) 34

Appendices

Appendix 1: Approval to conduct research within the Gauteng Department of Social Development

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix 3: Consent Form to Collect Data

Appendix 4: Consent form for the Audio Taping of the Interview

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for Social Workers

Appendix 6: Interview Schedule for Key Informants

Appendix 7: Ethics Clearance Certificate

Table of Contents

Declaration i

Dedication ii

Acknowledgements iii

Acronyms iv

Tables and Figures v

Appendices vi

CHAPTER ONE 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY 1

1.1. Introduction 1

1.2. Problem Statement and the Rationale for the Study 3

1.3. Research Question 5

1.4. Primary Aim and Objectives 5

1.4.1. Primary Aim 5

1.4.2. Objectives 5

1.5. Research Methodology 6

1.6. Limitations and Delimitations of the study 8

1.7. Definition of key concepts 8

1.7.1. Retention 8

1.7.2. Morale 9

1.7.3. Perception 9

1.7.4. Motivation 9

1.7.5. Performance Management and Development System 9

1.8. Outline of the study 10

CHAPTER TWO 12

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW 12

2.1. Introduction 12

2.2. Theoretical framework 12

2.3. Literature Review 18

2.3. 1 Employee recruitment and retention 18

2.3.2. Factors influencing employee retention 20

2.3.2.1. Training and Development 20

2.3.2.2. Compensation 21

2.3.2.3. Career Advancement Opportunities 22
2.3.2.4. Work/life balance 23
2.3.2.5. Work environment and supervisory support 24
2.4. Legislative Framework pertaining to Human Resource Management in the Public Service 24
2.4.1.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 25
2.4.1.2. Public Service Act 103 of 1994 25
2.4.1.3. Public Service Regulations, 2001, as amended 26
2.4.1.4. Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 27
2.4.1.5. Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 27
2.4.1.6. Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 28
2.5. Summary 29
CHAPTER THREE 30
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 30
3.1. Introduction 30
3.2. Research Question 30
3.3. Primary Aim and Secondary Objectives 30
3.3.1. Primary Aim 30
3.3.2. Objectives 31
3.4. Research Approach 31
3.5. Research Design 32
3.6. Research Methodology: Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure 33
3.8. Research Instruments 37
3.9. Pre-testing 37
3.10. Method of Data Collection 38
3.11. Method of Data Analysis 40
3.11.1. Becoming familiar with the data 40
3.11.2. Managing the data 40
3.11.3. Reading and writing memos 41
3.11.4. Generating categories and coding the data 41
3.11.5. Search for themes 42
3.11.6. Review themes 42
3.11.7. Define themes 42
3.11.8. Write-up 42
3.12. Trustworthiness 43

3.12.1. Credibility 43
3.12.2. Transferability 43
3.12.3. Dependability 44
3.12.4. Confirmability 44
3.13. Ethical Considerations 45
3.13.1. Informed Consent 45
3.13.2. Voluntary Participation 45
3.13.3. Avoidance of harm 46
3.13.4. Privacy/ Confidentiality/Anonymity 47
3.14. Summary 48
CHAPTER FOUR 49
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 49
4.1. Introduction 49
4.2. Biographical profile of the participants 50
4.3. Empirical Findings 51
4.3.1 Introduction 51
4.3.2 Themes and sub-themes 51
Theme 1: Grade progression requirement 52
Sub-Theme 1.1: Administrative challenges 53
Sub-Theme 1.2: Excessive grade progression period 55
Theme 2: Absence of improved working conditions and tools of the trade 57
2.1: Poor working conditions 57
Theme 3: Ineffective Performance Review System 59
Sub-Theme 3.1: Biased management 60
Sub-Theme 3.2: Performance Management and Development System process delays career growth 62
Theme 4: Effectiveness of OSD Policy 63
Sub-Theme 4.1: Rigid and inflexible policy 63
Sub-Theme 2: Disparities in salaries 66
Sub-Theme 3: Low salaries 68
4.4. Summary 71
CHAPTER FIVE 72
KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 72
5.1. Introduction 72
5.2. Achievement of objectives 72

Objective 1: To establish the views of social workers on the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy as a recruitment and retention strategy. 72
Objective 2: To establish the perceived effects of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy on the morale of social workers. 74
Objective 3: To explore the perceptions of social workers on the challenges experienced in implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy 76
Objective 4: To determine the views of social workers on how the challenges associated with the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy could be addressed 77
5.3.1. Recommendations for Department of Social Development 78
5.3.2. Recommendations for Department of Public Service and Administration 79
5.3.3. Recommendations for Social Work Practice 79
5.3.4. Recommendations for Future Research 79
6. Reference List 81
Appendices 90
Appendix 1: Approval to conduct research within the Gauteng Department of Social Development 91
Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet 94
Appendix 3: Consent Form to collect data 95
Appendix 4: Consent form for the Audio Taping of the Interview 96
Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for Social Workers 97
Appendix 6: Interview Schedule for Key Informants 99
Appendix 7: Ethics Clearance Certificate 101

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the background to the research study will be provided along with a description of the research problem and rationale for the research study. The chapter will also set out the research question, the aims and objectives along with a discussion of the theoretical framework and a brief literature review. Finally, an overview of the research methodology is provided. Included in this discussion is pre-testing of the research instrument, trustworthiness strategies, and ethical aspects. The chapter concludes with limitations and delimitations and an outline of the structure of this mini thesis.

The focus of the study was on the perceptions of social workers who are employed in the Gauteng Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Region regarding the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) policy. Recruitment and retention practices have become crucial elements of any organisation's strategy to motivate its employees to be highly productive. The implementation of effective recruitment and retention practices ensures that an organisation can recruit the best calibre of employees and/or ensure that developmental strategies are implemented. This is to ensure that employees stay within the organisation for a prolonged period (James & Mathew, 2012).

There are various strategies that promote effective recruitment and retention practices within an organisation. These include compensation, training and development, flexible working hours, career advancement opportunities and work/life balance policies (Calitz, Roux & Strydom, 2014). These interventions can contribute significantly to an organisation's ability to be competitive in a global market and to retain its employees amongst fierce competition (Towers Watson, 2014).

The OSD policy was introduced to promote effective recruitment and retention practices within the public service (Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council, 2009). The OSD policy regulates practice and ensures transparent grade progression, recognises experience, offers fair and consistent salary grading and defines career paths and opportunities (PHSDSBC, 2009). The policy was introduced to regulate various professional bodies within the public service sectors such as health, education, built environment, and social services. Every professional body within the public service has a specific OSD policy to regulate practice, recruitment and retention modalities. Within the social services professional sector, the OSD policy was introduced in line with resolution 1 of 2009 of the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC) as a policy that was designed to recruit and retain social service professionals within the public sector.

The policy was introduced in 2009 with the sole purpose of recruiting and retaining social workers in the public service. The secondary objective was to offer competitive salaries and avert the brain drain that was experienced by the South African government during the 1999-2006 period (Earle, 2008). The implementation of the OSD policy was influenced by the outcome of a job evaluation study that was conducted by the Department of Public Service and Administration in 2007 through the application of the Paterson Decision Band method (Hoffman & Groeneveldt, 2009). The Paterson Decision Band method is a grading system that classes and ranks jobs based on an individual's level of decision making in their job and the freedom they have to make binding decisions within a specific role (Paterson, 2019). Paterson's view was that employees should be remunerated based on the decision-making requirements and level of responsibility of a job instead of skills or effort (Bussin, 2010). Paterson also ranked officials according to their roles and placed them in a salary band based on the job functions they are expected to perform (Theunissen, 2015).

Upon completion of the job evaluation study, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) referred the negotiation of new salary packages of social service practitioners to the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council (PHSDSBC) (Gray & Van der Merwe, 2009). The agreement was made between the DPSA, as a representative of the State as the employer, and the majority unions including the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA), National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), Health and other Services Personnel Trade Union of South Africa (HOSPERSA) and National Union of Public Service & Allied Workers (NUPSAW)

(PHSDSBC, 2009). The negotiations would later be adopted as the Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) policy for Social Service Practitioners (PHSDSBC, 2009). As a result, the implementation of the OSD policy for social service practitioners has introduced new categories of employees, salary scales, career pathing, pay and grade progression and recognition of appropriate experience (PHSDSBC, 2009).

The policy was formulated as a result of challenges relating to globalisation that affected both the health and social services professions, for example with the emigration of public servants to countries such as New Zealand and England (Earle, 2008). Government even went as far as to declare social work a scarce skill since the shortage of social workers had dire implications for its attempts to meet both its economic and social development goals (Earle, 2008). Thus, the OSD policy was developed as part of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers (Department of Social Development, 2006) designed as a measure to curb the emigration of social workers to European countries that were offering incentives to attract skilled social workers (Zulu, 2013). The continuing extreme poverty faced by the majority of South Africans necessitated the recruitment and retention of social workers so that government could provide integrated welfare services to meet the needs of the population (RSA, 2012).

Other studies have researched the implementation challenges of the OSD policy within the health professions with a focus on the perceptions of nurses and doctors employed by the Department of Health in various Provinces. There has been no research study conducted that focused on the impact of the implementation of the OSD policy in the Department of Social Development in South Africa. Based on this research gap, this study aimed to explore the perceptions of social workers regarding the implementation of the policy and to highlight any challenges encountered by social workers during and post the implementation of the policy. In the next section, the problem statement and rationale for the study are outlined in detail.

1.2. Problem Statement and the Rationale for the Study

The recruitment and retention of employees has become a concern for organisations globally, as there is increasing competition amongst employers to attract highly skilled personnel (Mehta, Kurbetti & Dhankhar, 2014). Organisations in South Africa are not exempt from such challenges. For example, over 1036 social workers emigrated to the United Kingdom (UK) and other European Union (EU) countries during the period 2001-2006 (Earle, 2008). As such,

organisations needed to develop their own strategies to recruit and retain the most talented, skilled, and experienced employees. With employees considered as the most valuable asset of any organisation, Manhertz (2008) asserts that it is essential to enhance their well-being in order to retain them. Mehta, Kurbetti and Dhankhar (2014) argue that retaining employees in the workplace requires strategies that address compensation, benefits and career development opportunities. Without such strategies, many organisations face the risk of losing talented, skilled and experienced employees.

However, many social workers have been emigrating due to low salaries and lack of career development, an observation that is consistent with the findings of the South African National Development Plan (NDP 2030) on the challenges faced by the social services profession (RSA, 2012). The South Africa government and private sector employers suffered tremendously due to the emigration of social workers. This then led to a shortage of social workers in the country. In response, the South African Government declared the field of social work a scarce skill (Department of Social Development, 2006). This crisis led to the development of the OSD policy, which aimed to recruit and retain social workers in the public service.

Since implementation of the policy, there has been limited research studies conducted on the outcomes of the OSD policy, particularly with a focus on the challenges encountered by social workers in the implementation of the policy. The only study that was conducted was by Motsosi and Rispel (2012). The researchers explored the views of nurses within the Department of Health. The study findings revealed that nurses' perceptions of the OSD policy were positive in that they believed that the new policy contributed to improved salaries and facilitated hospitals' ability to attract nurses with specialised skills. However, it was also noted that although there had been an improvement in salaries, 72% of nurses indicated that the OSD policy was implemented unfairly, in part due to misinterpretation of the policy leading to erroneous or outstanding payments. While 54.1% of nurses felt demoralised, only 22.7% of nurses agreed that the OSD had improved the level of service delivery (Motsosi & Rispel, 2012).

This study therefore aimed to understand the broader implications of the OSD policy on the social work profession and to gauge whether it had improved the morale of social workers within the Department of Social Development. The current study sought to obtain the opinions and perspectives of social workers on whether the OSD policy has been an effective strategy

for recruiting and retaining social workers in the public service. The outcomes of the study contributed to the understanding of the intended and unintended outcomes of the OSD policy, especially with regard to the recruitment and retention of social workers. Moreover, the study provided understanding on the outcomes of OSD on service delivery within the Social Development and Social Welfare sector. In the next section, the research question, the aim and objectives and methodology are discussed in detail. This section will briefly discuss the research approach, data collection procedure and unpack the research process that was followed to respond to the research question. This section will be brief, as chapter 3 will provide in-depth discussions of the research methodology and how it was applied.

1.3. Research Question

What are the perceptions of social workers with regards to the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) *policy in the Gauteng Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Region*?

1.4. Primary Aim and Objectives

1.4.1. Primary Aim

The primary aim of the study was to explore and describe the perceptions of social workers with regard to the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) policy in the Gauteng Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Region.

1.4.2. Objectives

- To establish the views of social workers on the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) as a recruitment and retention strategy within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.
- To establish the perceived outcomes of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) on the morale and productivity of social workers within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

- To explore and describe any challenges experienced by officials in implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

- To obtain the views of social workers on how to address the challenges associated with implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

1.5. Research Methodology

The study utilised the qualitative research approach which was best suited to achieving the objectives of this study, which pertained to exploring the perceptions of social workers on the implementation of the OSD policy. The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature, because the aim was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of social workers about the implementation of the OSD policy.

The case study design was adopted as the central research design to respond to the research question. The researcher utilised the collective case study design, since this is often used in qualitative studies that aim to provide an in-depth description of a small number of cases (Greeff, 2011). In this instance, social workers in public service were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the OSD policy outcomes and the challenges that have arisen with its implementation (Mouton, 2011).

The research site was the Johannesburg Region in Gauteng. The researcher approached the Head of the Department of Social Development in Gauteng and obtained approval to conduct research within the Department (see Appendix 1). The study population consisted of all social workers employed within the Gauteng Department of Social Development. This included social workers employed within the various business units in the Department of Social Development ranging from the Probation Services, Community Development and Partnerships, Child and Family Care Unit and Sustainable Livelihoods Sections. The participants were issued with the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) which detailed the purpose and research objectives to be achieved and explained that participation in the study was voluntary (see Appendix 2). Non-probability purposive sampling was used (Creswell, 2013). Non-probability sampling refers to a sampling method that functions on the basis “that

each unit in a population does not have a specifiable probability of being selected" (Creswell, 2013, p.87). Selection of participants in the non-probability sampling is not random but could be deliberate through methods such as purposive sampling (Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling was appropriate because it ensured that the sample used included all required elements to investigate the perceptions of social workers about the implementation of the OSD policy (Marlow, 2010).

A sample of 10 social workers who met a specified selection criterion was chosen. The participants completed an informed consent form to participate in the study (See Appendix 3). With the consent of the participants, interviews were audio taped (except for one participant who did not give consent), in order to capture accurately the responses of the participants (See Appendix 4). The researcher took detailed notes to capture the responses of the one participant who declined to give consent to the recording of the interview. Also interviewed was a member of the task team that was investigating the feasibility of implementing the OSD policy in the Gauteng province because they are considered to be an expert in policy development in the West Rand Region.

Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data following a semi-structured interview schedule (See Appendix 5 for social worker's and Appendix 6 for key-informant's interview schedule). This enabled the engagement of participants through the use of pre-determined questions (Greeff, 2011). The open-ended questions allowed the researcher to engage with participants more deeply

The pre-testing of the research tool was a crucial step within the research process. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2013) describe a pilot study as a pre-examination of the suitability and appropriateness of the methodology, sampling, data collection instruments and analysis of data, before the actual study is conducted. The researcher conducted a pre-test with two participants who met the selection criteria. The pre-test was conducted in order to assess the appropriateness of the proposed methodology and research instrument and to make changes to the instrument if required, prior to the actual data collection process.

The data was then analysed thematically in line with Creswell's method of data analysis. This research method is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The different strategies that promote objectivity and trustworthiness of the qualitative data such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability are discussed in detail in chapter 3. The researcher also

considered the following ethical issues: informed consent, avoidance of harm, voluntary participation and ensuring privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants (Strydom, 2011). These ethical aspects will also be addressed in detail in chapter 3. During the collection and analysis of data, the researcher noted several limitations that are described below.

1.6. Limitations and Delimitations of the study

There was a possibility that participants could provide socially desirable responses due to fear of putting the Department into disrepute. Therefore, to limit any socially desirable responses, the researcher continuously reminded participants of the principles of confidentiality and anonymity that are adhered to in the study.

The sample covered a small number of participants which limits the study's ability to generalise the findings. Nonetheless, the intention of the study was not to generalise but to gain a deeper understanding of how the implementation of OSD was experienced by social workers. The size of the sample was sufficient to gain understanding of the participants' perceptions on the policy. In areas where there were gaps, literature that informs the study filled these gaps.

Lastly, the researcher was not able to conduct member checking to validate data received due to non-availability of participants. This affected the conformability of the collection tool and the accuracy of responses provided by the participants.

1.7. Definition of key concepts

This section aims to provide a brief description of the key concepts that recur in the study. These constructs are detailed in length in the literature review chapter but are presented in this section for the reader to accustom themselves with the underlying concepts of this study.

1.7.1. Retention

Employee retention is a concept that encapsulates the various conditions and practices within an organisation that are aimed at 'keeping' highly valued employees employed for longer periods within the same organisation (Towers Watson, 2014). Retention is a combination of

practices that are aimed at the reduction of employee turnover and employee-based benefits to retain the skills, talents, and performance level of employees within an organisation.

1.7.2. Morale

Morale is defined as the "state of mind or attitude of an individual or group towards the work and environment, meaning towards superiors, colleagues and goals of the organisation as well as the task assigned" (Matsaung, 2014, p.19). It is concerned with the state of mind of individuals and their relation to how the work they perform relates to a higher purpose.

1.7.3. Perception

Perception is the process whereby "people select, organise, and interpret sensory stimulations into meaningful information about their work environment" (Ndeipanda, 2018, p.38). It involves the process of perceiving, processing and analysing data into meaningful information.

1.7.4. Motivation

Motivation is considered as a process that energises human behaviour based on influences within an environment and the maintenance or sustaining thereof of motivation (Ndeipanda, 2018). Motivation can be defined as an "individual's direction, intensity and persistence of effort that is put towards accomplishing a goal" (Robbins, 2009, p.168). It can be seen as an internal interpretation of external influences that seek to energise or demoralise one's attitudes and actions towards achieving a goal.

1.7.5. Performance Management and Development System

The Performance Management and Development System refers to the appraisal system used within the Public Service to review the performance of employees based on agreed standards of measurement and outputs (Gauteng Provincial Treasury (GPT), 2014). It aims to be developmental by incorporating performance development plans within the performance review agreement to improve the skills and capacity of employees (GPT, 2014). It is an "authoritative framework for managing employee performance, which includes the policy

framework as well as the framework relating to all aspects and elements in the performance cycle, including performance planning and agreement; performance monitoring, review and control; performance appraisal and moderating; and managing the outcomes of appraisal" (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2011, p.25). The Performance Management and Development System is a systematic approach used to plan, track, develop and appraise an employee's performance on a consistent basis.

1.8. Outline of the study

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study: This chapter presents the contextual background of the research study and a historical overview of the OSD policy. The problem statement and rationale for the study as well as the research aim and objectives and questions are discussed. Thereafter, the methodology and limitations of the study are outlined briefly. Lastly, the key concepts underlying the study are defined.

Chapter 2: The Literature Review: This chapter examines motivation theory as the theoretical framework that underpins the study. This is followed by a literature overview that discusses the legislative framework that underpins the establishment and implementation of the OSD policy The employee retention framework is also discussed as part of the literature review. Next, the factors that influence retention within an organisation such as compensation, training and development, work environment and supervisory support, work/life balance and career opportunities are explored in more depth. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter 3: The Research Methodology: This chapter will focus on the research approach and research design adopted for this research study. Next, population, sample and sampling procedure will be delineated. This section will be followed by a focus on the research instrument and pre-testing process. This is followed by discussion of the methods of data collection and data analysis. This chapter will also detail the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness and ethical aspects that were taken into consideration. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter 4: Empirical Findings: The empirical data will then be presented, discussed and interpreted. Firstly, the biographical profile of the participants will be presented in a table format. Next the empirical findings will be presented according to the themes and sub-themes

that emerged during the analysis process. The themes and sub-themes are initially presented in a table format, whereby the empirical findings are discussed. These discussions will be supported with verbatim quotes from the participants and with supporting literature. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter 5: Key findings, Conclusions and Recommendations: This chapter will provide a detailed presentation of the main findings. These will be aligned with conclusions. Finally, the recommendations will be made based on the main findings and conclusions. The chapter concludes with a summary.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Recruitment and retention of employees has become a concern for organisations globally as there is increasing competition amongst employers to attract highly skilled personnel (Mehta et al., 2014). Organisations in South Africa are not exempt from such challenges and need to develop their own strategies to retain their employees. This view is supported by the Global Workforce study which indicates that from a study involving 1637 organisations across 31 markets, the majority of employers indicated that they find it difficult to get and keep key talent which includes top performers and high-potential employees (Towers Watson, 2014). Literature in the field of retention holds that various factors such as compensation, training and development, career advancement opportunities, reward and recognition, work/life balance, job security and supervisory support are amongst the issues that can influence positively or negatively an employee's decision to stay or leave an organisation (Mehta et al., 2014).

The literature review chapter introduces the theory and concepts that underpin the research study. Two theories of motivation are outlined that give a theoretical perspective to understanding factors that contribute to motivation. The employee retention framework is discussed with emphasis on how organisations in South Africa and countries within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) respond to the crisis of globalisation and migration. Thereafter, various factors that influence employee retention are explained to gain better understanding about the employee retention framework. This is followed by a literature overview that reviews the legislative framework that underpins the establishment and implementation of the OSD policy.

2.2. Theoretical framework

Motivation plays an important role in influencing employees to perform at an optimal level and it contributes to increased productivity within any organisation. Nujjoo and Meyer (2012) confirm that a motivated and determined workforce contributes positively to the retention practices of any organisation. Motivation is considered a process that energises, maintains, or

sustains human behaviour based on influences within an environment (Ndeipanda, 2018). Motivation helps to understand the topic under discussion by defining and describing the factors that motivate employees within the workplace. The understanding of motivation helps to outline factors that determine and enhance the retention of employees within an organisation. The true essence of this study was to understand how motivational factors within the Department of Social Development have resulted in increased or decreased levels of retention of social workers. The OSD policy's aim is to recruit and retain employees and as such it was important to study it together with motivational theory for the purposes of analysing the policy and the working conditions within the organisation.

In order to gain better understanding of the concept of motivation, two theoretical perspectives will be discussed, namely: Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Frederick Herzberg's theory of hygiene and motivation. These two theories are important to understand human behaviour as they offer a comprehensive approach to studying the contributing factors that enhance and negatively affect motivation within individuals and in the workplace. The theories complement each other as needs theories and highlight that employees have needs that need to be met by an employer in order for the employee to feel a greater sense of motivation and ultimately to be retained within an organisation.

For the purposes of this study, motivation is regarded as either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Intrinsic motivation relates to inspiration to perform productively in line with the inherent nature of the job such as exciting work, success, acknowledgement, challenges and self-actualisation (Jali, 2015). Intrinsic motivation is derived from within an individual and intrinsically-motivated individuals are more inclined to demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction and job performance as they find their job to be interesting, challenging and bringing more meaning to life (Putra, Cho & Liu, 2015).

Research shows that jobs that offer a fun, interesting, meaningful and challenging work environment increase employees' motivation to perform better and be more engaged at work (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). As a result, social workers could be influenced to be high performers and experience high job satisfaction if their work environment is viewed as interesting, challenging and providing meaning to their lives. Furthermore, in contrast to extrinsic motivation where competitive salary packages do have a significant impact on job

satisfaction, literature on intrinsic motivation holds that the relationship between job satisfaction and compensation is not significant (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009).

Extrinsic motivation relates to motivation derived from external factors that act as incentives for a worker to do a job and refer to benefits such as competitive pay and remuneration packages, job promotion, bonuses and job security (Ngwenya, Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2018). The behaviour of employees is seen to be driven by their desire to receive organisational benefits through the accomplishment of an organisational goal or task and thus the extrinsic outcomes are received from an external source (Bergström & Martínez, 2016). Therefore, the behaviour of employees to perform is based on external factors instead of intrinsic factors. This would suggest that the motivation of employees would be negatively impacted if the extrinsic reward is either withdrawn or not adequately given as initially promised. George and Jones (2012) note that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors are not mutually exclusive as employees can be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated by both motivation factors at the same time.

The other theory to be discussed is Maslow's hierarchy of needs which derives from research undertaken by Abraham Maslow. He studied human behaviour in relation to the need to satisfy different needs in a progressive manner to reach the level of human fulfilment (Kanfer & Chen, 2016). He used a hierarchical paradigm to demonstrate individuals' unfulfilled human needs. In this paradigm individuals strive to satisfy lower order needs first before focusing on higher level needs (Nguyen, 2017). The lower order, commonly referred to as 'deficiency needs', encompass esteem, friendship and love, security and physical needs while 'growth needs' represented the desire to reach a level of individual self-actualisation (Strong, 2015). This theory is relevant to the study as it demonstrates that the needs of employees extend beyond fulfilling their basic needs of a decent income and also include employers ensuring employees perform meaningful work in order to retain their skills and improve the organisation's productivity.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs included five need categories and were originally identified as physiological needs, safety and security, belonging and love, esteem and self-actualisation (Kanfer & Chen, 2016). Behaviour is viewed to be motivated by the desire to fulfil unmet needs with the lowest unsatisfied needs being the most significant need to be addressed. For example,

if an individual has not met their basic physiological need such as food, they would be motivated to fulfil this unmet need before moving to the next unmet need of safety and security. Once a need has been satisfied, it is deemed to be an ineffective motivational factor and the individual is propelled to pursue higher needs (Strong, 2015). Jerome (2013) emphasises that unmet needs may lead an individual to feel anxious and tense and thus, in the workplace, render the individual non-productive or ultimately disengaged from workplace-related duties and activities. Therefore, the goal of the model is for humans to attain the highest level of human need of self-actualisation (McEwan & Wills, 2014). This aspect is important in understanding how unmet individual needs of employees can have a direct negative impact on the achievement of the retention goals of the OSD policy and create a disengaged workforce.

This theory is relevant to this study because it requires the structural intervention of an organisation to actively address the unmet needs of employees especially physiological and safety needs. An organisation that is not responsive to the basic needs of its employees would contribute negatively to employees' motivational levels resulting in a large number of employees being anxious, frustrated, overwhelmed, non-productive and eventually leaving the organisation or making it difficult for the employer to retain its high performing employees.

The other theory that underpins this study is the Two-factor theory by Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (Strong, 2015). This highlights the factors of motivation and hygiene in determining the attitude of employees to their work performance. This theory views motivation of employees to be shaped by six factors: the level of individual achievement within an organisation, recognition given for work done, the possibilities of growth within the organisation, the value of work done, responsibility assigned over one's work and advancement and career pathing for growth and promotion (Nguyen, 2017).

The premise of this theory differs from the Maslow needs theory as motivation is not driven by the lack of satisfied needs, but is considered to be impacted by six identified factors. These factors play a crucial role in the retention of employees. Therefore, the application of Herzberg's theory within the practice of retention is essential and sums up the factors that need to be considered in developing a successful retention strategy within an organisation. Therefore, this confirms that the motivation and satisfaction of employees within an organisation plays an essential role in the retention of employees and contributes towards high productivity of employees.

It is important to provide a detailed definition of the various hygiene and motivational factors as set out by Herzberg et al. (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959) as cited in Suciu, Martin and Lazar (2013). The latter define hygiene factors as company policy and administration and concern issues such as adequacy or inadequacy of the company and management to provide an enabling working environment (Rahim & David, 2013). This includes but is not limited to blurred lines of communication and authority that impede employees' abilities to perform their functions/duties in a satisfactory manner and or inadequate implementation of company policies (Ngwenya, Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2018).

Supervision is the second hygiene factor in line with Herzberg's model. The professional conduct and attitude of supervisors such as whether they are encouraging or critical of all efforts, has an impact on the employee's feelings of satisfaction towards their work (Banks, Patel & Moola, 2012). Supervision relates to the competency or incompetency, fairness or unfairness of the supervisor that the employee reports to in relation to the allocation of tasks and the supervisor's willingness or unwillingness to teach or delegate responsibilities to the employee (Jali, 2015). The relationship between a supervisor and employee is crucial within the social services profession as it is viewed as one of the areas that impact on motivation and morale of social workers to perform their duties (DSD, 2006).

The third hygiene factor relates to interpersonal relations which can be purely social or relate to working relationships. These can occur at different levels such as relations between peers, subordinates and superiors within the organisation (Jerome, 2013). The working relationships within an organisation whether horizontally (amongst peers) or vertically (between employee and management) can contribute to improved effectiveness in work performance (McEwan & Wills, 2014). It is important that there are always acceptable levels of interrelations within the organisation to contribute towards job satisfaction.

The fourth hygiene factor relates to physical working conditions within the organisation that include the amount of work done, and facilities such as tools of the trade to perform the functions attached to one's duties (Silberstein, 2017). Herzberg et al. (1959) cited in Suciu et al. (2013) include the aspects of health and safety. This aspect concerns issues of adequacy or inadequacy of ventilation, lighting, space and any other environmental factors that contribute to a good working environment. This is also true within the social services professions whereby the working conditions and tools of the trade such as laptops and counselling rooms can enable

social workers to effectively perform their duties and contribute to service delivery (DSD, 2006) while the lack of such resources and poor working conditions can demotivate them.

Lastly, salary and job security are grouped as a hygiene factor that is concerned with adequate or inadequate compensation of work done and includes the fulfilment of, or lack of, wage or salary increases (Strong, 2015). Herzberg et al. (1959) as cited in Suciu et al. (2013) specify that job security is reflected in the tenure and stability or instability of the company which provides feelings of job security to the individuals working for the said company.

Nguyen (2017) concurs that compensation is a hygiene factor as it aims to provide employees with the ability to reach their financial and economic goals but states that an increase alone in salaries is not sufficient to motivate employees to reach their personal goals of self-actualization. Rather there needs to be adequate consideration and implementation of all the hygiene factors by an employer to enhance the working conditions of employees. Nguyen (2017) emphasises that all hygiene factors are equally important and urges organisations not just to focus on salaries while neglecting the other factors that promote job satisfaction.

Frederick Herzberg's theory of hygiene and motivation highlights that there are satisfier and dissatisfier factors that impact on the level of motivation of an employee (Nguyen, 2017). The hygiene factors relate to issues such as salary, benefits, job security and company policies while motivational factors relate to those factors that are concerned with recognition, achievement and job challenge (Kanfer & Chen, 2016). Osabiya (2015) indicates that hygiene factors are responsible for demotivating employees when they are inadequately promoted while motivational factors sustain the efforts initiated by hygiene factors. In essence the satisfier factors are concerned with a person's relationship with the job that he performs while dissatisfier factors are concerned with the person's relationship to the environment where they perform their job

The theoretical framework discussed the theory of motivation in detail by exploring intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation. This section highlighted that these factors are not mutually exclusive and that instead both factors need to be considered in understanding the factors that motivate behaviour. Two models of motivation were discussed: Maslow and Herzberg's model, which indicated that unmet needs play a crucial role in determining the motivational behaviour of employees. These models emphasise that employers need to be aware of the different satisfier, dissatisfier and hygiene factors that influence motivational behaviour and

their role in ensuring that prevailing conditions are present in the workplace to increase levels of motivation. These factors are crucial in not only ensuring that employees are motivated and engaged, but also to help organisations make significant attempts to retain their employees. The following section will explore the different factors that contribute to the retention of employees in the workplace and emphasise the role of employers in this practice.

2.3. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted in order to provide analytical and summative information on the application and challenges of recruitment and retention strategies within the public service. The purpose of a literature review is to contextualise the research topic by reviewing previous research and background theory that is relevant to understanding the research topic (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). Paltridge and Starfield (2007) further allude that a literature review aims to describe and synthesize major studies related to the topic of research and should demonstrate a relationship between the student's research and data available within that particular research area. Kamler and Thomson (2006) add that the literature review should identify the research gaps in existence and provide the justification for a researcher's study in addressing the identified gaps. For the purpose of this study, the literature review aims to describe employee recruitment and retention and the factors that contribute to employee retention. Lastly, the review identifies legislative and policy frameworks pertaining to Human Resources in the public service and its link to the OSD.

2.3. 1 Employee recruitment and retention

The South African and Southern African Development Community (SADC) markets are challenged by the effects of globalisation on developing regional and local economies. Globalisation has allowed for easy travelling and the migration of skills between countries resulting in companies paying more salaries to import skills, which affects locally skilled employees because migrants (Govender & Parumasur, 2010) then take jobs. The need for retention strategies to retain skills within organisations requires interventions that aim to commit employees to the achievement of developmental goals that that will advance the lives of all citizens. Therefore, it is the view of the researcher that South Africa and SADC countries have a unique opportunity to develop recruitment and retention strategies that encompass

factors such as compensation and work conditions and the need to advance the development of their countries.

Employee retention is a concept that encapsulates the various conditions and practices within an organisation that are aimed at 'keeping' highly valued employees employed for longer periods within the same organisation (Mehta et al., 2014). In the highly competitive market employers continuously aim to appeal to potential employees as the employer of choice in order to attract highly skilled personnel. In order to successfully attract personnel of a highly skilled nature, employers need to review their recruitment and retention strategies and practices to remain relevant and meet the changing needs within the market.

The Towers Watson (2014) global study interviewed 32000 employees and 1637 organisations across 31 markets to understand their views on attraction and retention drivers. The study presents a global view that the retention of highly skilled and high-potential employees is an important practice that all employers should engage in if they aim to be highly productive in the current competitive market (Towers Watson, 2014). Further, The Towers Watson study (2014) reveals that the views of employers and employees on the factors that promote retention are different and that such a difference can impact negatively on the practices of employers to retain employees. In addition, the study reveals that employees view competitive basic pay/salary, career advancement opportunities and trust/confidence in senior leadership as the top three factors that influence retention while employers surveyed believe that competitive basic pay/salary, career advancement opportunities and relationships with supervisor/manager to be important factors. This reveals that organisations need to consider different strategies of retaining junior staff, middle and senior management since they have different needs. Therefore, a recruitment and retention policy must reflect the needs of the different occupational levels in an organisation.

Employee retention is important for organisations as it helps reduce turnover and maintain a healthy (low) vacancy rate (Machethe, 2011). With this context, the loss of skills and knowledge is minimised and the cost of recruiting, selecting new employees and transferring of skills is lowered (Mavimbela, 2015). Mehta et al. (2014) adds that it further reduces unexpected workload put on the remaining employees upon the departure of an employee.

Hence (Hausknecht, Rodda & Howard, 2008) argue that Effective retention practices should not be isolated from the practice of recruiting the correct and qualified people for the job. This could be seen when recruiting an unskilled employee in a position that requires high technical

skill competency. This employee may have difficulty in reaching their work targets and negatively affect the overall achievements of the organisation's objectives. Therefore, to recruit and select suitable employees is the first step in building good employee retention practices. The view is that a high turnover rate leads to more costs being incurred by the company through the loss of valuable employees who possess organisational knowledge, experience and skills that are valuable to the company. Finding a suitable replacement for a lost high performer can be difficult and costly (Irshad, 2012) due to the need to implement recruitment and training so that the new employee can understand and embody the values of the organisation. Mehta et al. (2014) argued that there is no one factor that impacts or influences the retention of highly skilled employees within an organisation, rather a multitude of factors. Olckers and du Plessis (2012) hold the view that these retention factors can influence the turn-over rate positively within an organisation thus maintaining a healthy vacancy rate. These factors are discussed in detail below.

2.3.2. Factors influencing employee retention

As already alluded to in the previous section (See Section 2.3), Das and Baruah (2013) confirm that employee retention is not influenced by a single factor, but rather a multitude of interrelated factors. Literature suggests that it is important to make clear distinctions between factors that increase retention and factors that influence retention as retention factors are crucial in ensuring that employees remain within the organisation for longer periods (Modipane, Botha & Blom, 2019). There are various factors that influence retention such training and development; compensation and appreciation of performed work; career advancement opportunities; work/life balance; work environment and supervisory support. These factors are discussed in detail below.

2.3.2.1. Training and Development

Training is used as a tool to enhance skills, experience, knowledge and overcome inefficiencies (Shakeel & But, 2015). Nujjoo and Meyer (2012) suggests that training has the potential to increase employees' loyalty towards the organisation and ownership of it, both of which can increase retention rates. Moreover, Sinha and Sinha (2012) concur that job training is critical for personal and professional development which should be made available to all employees

within an organisation. Additionally, Coetzee and Gunz (2012) suggest that training and development should be implemented systematically to provide long-term development of employees and encourage commitment from employees. In support, Govender and Parumasur (2010) state that employees commit to companies that have a policy of investing in career opportunities through learning and ensuring that the work environment allows for the application of the newly acquired skills. It is important to create a work environment that provides opportunities for employees to implement new learning. Hence, Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011) argue that effective implementation and management of a training and development strategy are important as they help companies to facilitate their career development plans.

Similarly, child welfare workers in the United States of America (USA) revealed that on-the-job training is an effective tool for employee retention (SACHS, 2015). Nujjoo and Meyer (2012) also found that training opportunities contribute to a decreased desire to change jobs. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) suggest that training with clearly established links between training and promotion within the organisation can be considered as a non-salary benefit. In essence, training and development of employees is an effective tool to improve employee retention and a means of investing in the development of employees. This view is supported by Mohlala, Goldman and Goosen (2012) who observed that for information technology employees to remain relevant and productive within their fields of practice, they need to be continuously trained on the latest technologies. With specific reference to the social sciences field, it is important for social workers to be continuously updated on new theoretical developments that aim to explain social and human behaviour and how to address problems affecting their client groups. The next sub-section will address the importance of competitive compensation as a retention factor.

2.3.2.2. Compensation

In the Global Workforce Study (Towers Watson, 2014) both employees and employers surveyed indicated competitive base pay as the number one determining factor of employee retention. Rahim and David (2013) confirm that compensation continues to offer security, autonomy, recognition in society and contribute to an improved self-worth which can have a positive effect on employee retention. Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011) support the view that compensation and benefits should be competitive and market-based in order to give any organisation the ability to compete within the labour market. The authors argue that

compensation that is not competitive has the potential to increase turnover as employees tend to leave employers who do not provide competitive salaries, nor disperse bonuses and have high pay inequality. Similarly, Sun and Jin (2009) assert that companies who do not dispense bonuses and incentives in line with one's performance, face the risk of losing employees to their competitors.

Sinha and Sinha (2012) warn that companies should ensure that pay increases are equitable amongst all staff members and not be seen to favour senior management at the expense of junior employees who do not receive significant pay increases. This has been evident in the South African labour market where workers will protest wage increases offered and withhold their labour due to the perception that senior management is not rewarding them for their production. In such instances, Olckers and du Plessis (2012) state that employers should compensate and reward performance and meet the needs of various categories of employees to avoid employee turnover. Although compensation is regarded as essential and an important factor in the attraction and retention of skilled employees, Modipane, Botha and Blom (2019) argue that it alone is not sufficient to retain an employee within an organisation. SACHS (2015) suggest that employers should implement strategies that encompass all the factors that contribute to employee retention and not only focus on compensation. The next sub-section will address the importance of career advancement opportunities as a retention factor

2.3.2.3. Career Advancement Opportunities

In the Global Workforce Study (Towers Watson, 2014) both employees and employers surveyed indicated career advancement opportunities as the second most important determiner of employee retention. Arendse (2013) defines career advancement opportunities as the capability to advance to higher echelons within an organisational structure. Govender and Parumasur (2010) confirm that career development opportunities within the organisation promote an atmosphere and perception of viewing the employer as recognising the value that employees bring to the organisation.

Career development opportunities relate to a system of internal promotion that advocates for career pathing within salary grade or categories of employees based on performance (PHSDSBC, 2009). A fair career development and planning system should ensure that all employees understand what skills are required to grow professionally and to be rewarded based

on performance and monitor that all efforts are linked to the organisation's business objectives (Theunissen, 2015). Shakeel and But (2015) add that promotions within the organisations are viewed by employees as extrinsic rewards and can lead to continued commitment of an employee to an organisation and maintain highly skilled employees within the organisation . The lack of an advancement plan as advocated for by Muteswa and Ortlepp, (2011) can lead to dissatisfaction of employees and result in them seeking alternative employment which could increase the turnover rate. The next sub-section will address the importance of policies that enhance work/life balance in the workplace as a retention factor.

2.3.2.4. Work/life balance

The concept of work/life balance is becoming an important factor within companies aiming to promote retention amongst staff members (Shakeel & But, 2015). Organisations with flexible work/life balance policies are the most sought after by job seekers as they offer flexible working time and hours such as allowing employees to arrive at work at 9am and leave at 5pm (DPSA, 2008). Mashiane (2017) indicates that flexible work/life balance offers employees the flexibility to work hours that are accommodative for example employees who are faced with traffic problems or who have to drop off children at school. This is further enhanced by work/life friendly activities such as the provision of childcare and gym facilities within the business premises. Both communicate a positive message that the well-being of employees is valued by the employer.

Work/life balance policies could also include the provision of Employee Health and Wellness Programmes that encompass education, care and support to employees encountering challenges with psychosocial, health, occupational health and general well-being problems (DPSA, 2008). These programmes would ensure that the health and well-being of employees are cared for in order to enhance their productivity (Mashiane, 2017). Modipane et al. (2019) indicate that companies who help employees maintain a balance between personal and work life are favoured by employees and seen as encouraging staff retention. Notably, companies cannot provide work/life through Employee Health and Wellness Programmes in a vacuum. The working environment has to be conducive for employees to thrive and be productive as will be discussed next.

2.3.2.5. Work environment and supervisory support

The social services field addresses social problems relating to children and adults in conflict with the law, missing persons, rape, substance abuse, and crime (Calitz, Roux & Strydom, 2014). Modipane et al. (2019) indicate that these different fields of social work are closely linked with trauma, compassion fatigue, stress and burnout. Supervisory support is necessary to help navigate the different difficult cases and trauma experienced by social workers and the offering of support to cope with occupational stress and burnout (Calitz et al., 2014). Shakeel and But (2015) indicate that these prevailing conditions extend to unfavourable working conditions such as lack of counselling rooms, limited resources, lack of supervisory support and work overload. As such, employers within the social services field need to create a good working environment with consistent supervision offered to the employees which can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and perceived support from the organisation (Arendse, 2013). In order to enhance working conditions of social workers, organisations should invest in providing resources such as cars, laptops and any other tools of the trade to allow social workers to do their work in a conducive working environment so they are able to provide essential services to their clients (Nujjoo & Meyer, 2012).

Effective employee retention strategies have been discussed and they highlight that there is no one measure that can be applied unilaterally to achieve employee retention. Rather a combination of measures are needed to achieve higher levels of retention within an organisation. These measures will need to be informed and guided by legislation and/or policies. The section below highlights the different legislative and policy frameworks that are designed to enhance human resource management strategies, ensure an integrated approach towards recruitment, selection, retention, and exit practices within the public service. The section will further provide links to the regulatory frameworks of the OSD policy and how these regulations enable the effective implementation of the policy.

2.4. Legislative Framework pertaining to Human Resource Management in the Public Service

Thulo (2014) argues that the importance of policy guidelines within the human resource management (HRM) practice is to ensure that HRM is implemented within a regulatory framework. Theunissen (2015) asserts that HRM practices and employment conditions of

public servants are regulated by national legislation supported by the different policy frameworks as published by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). This section provides an overview of the legislative and policy frameworks for recruitment and retention practices in the public service in order to understand how the recruitment, training and retention practices are implemented. The OSD policy derives its principles and values from several legislative protocols within the ambit of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). These pieces of legislation are discussed below to demonstrate their link to the prescripts of the OSD policy.

2.4.1.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was enacted in 1996 as the supreme law of South Africa (RSA, 1996). It is the guiding document upon which all policies and legislation are based. No policy or law is allowed to deviate from the guiding principles and rights enshrined in the Constitution (RSA, 1996). Chapter 10 of the Constitution, section 195 (H) & (I), emphasises the practice of good HRM and career development practices that enhance the human potential and that are based on ability, objectivity and fairness. Section 195 (I) stipulates further the need to develop practices that redress the injustices of the past in order to achieve broad representation.

The Constitution therefore prescribes the principles and values that should guide the development of legislation and policies that regulate effective HRM practices and by extension the prescripts of the OSD policy. The Constitution offers a suitable guide in ensuring that the OSD policy is based on the principle of fairness and is implemented in an objective manner in the efforts by the Department of Social Development to recruit and retain social service practitioners.

2.4.1.2. Public Service Act 103 of 1994

After the advent of democracy, the SA government promulgated new legislation to transform the public service such as the Public Service Act 103 of 1994. The aim was to provide for the organisation and administration of the public service through the regulation of the conditions of employment of public servants, terms of office, discipline, retirement and discharge of members from the public service (RSA, 1994). This ensured a move towards an integrated Human Resource Management approach within the public service.

This Act introduced new guiding principles that should be considered in the appointment and filling of vacant posts in the public service. Chapter 4 section 11 of the Act states that the principle of equality shall be applicable when filling appointments and that due consideration will be given to all applicants who applied and qualified for a vacant position. Subsection 2 (B) orders applicants to be evaluated based on their level of training, skills, competence and their knowledge in relation to the job specifications. The selection panel is reminded of the need to redress injustices of the past and promote affirmative action targets set by the government in line with the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998.

The Public Service Act focuses mainly on the recruitment, selection and exit of employees within the public service and serves as a guideline document that all Departments must follow. It is essential to realise the OSD policy goal of the recruitment and retention of social service practitioners. This Act has the ability to enhance and improve the recruitment and selection processes of the Department by ensuring the verification of qualifications, training, skills and knowledge base of those applying for vacant positions (Thulo, 2014). Therefore the objectives of the OSD can be enhanced if due consideration is given to the provisions of this Act when recruiting social service practitioners in the public service.

2.4.1.3. Public Service Regulations, 2001, as amended

The Public Service Regulations (PSR) were legislated in 2001 with the aim of outlining the rationale for introducing employment practices that would warrant the improvement of employment equity, fairness and efficiency in recruitment processes and the achievement of a public service that is representative of the demographics in SA (RSA, 1999). The PSR are applicable to all persons employed under the Public Service Act and organisations or State Owned Entities that operate within the ambit of the Public Service Act (RSA, 1999). The PSR in terms of section 26 mandates the Head of Department (HOD) to develop and implement an HR plan that aims to assess the human resources required to perform the functions of the department, to access existing human resources by race, gender, disability, age and any other criteria. Lastly, it gives authority to the HOD to review and allocate funds for crucial HR functions such as the recruitment, retention, development and utilisation of personnel.

The PSR requires the HOD to abide by the statutory requirements in the appointment of suitable employees and ensure that there is no bias towards any individuals during the recruitment

process. The PSR further makes provision for the HOD to develop an HR plan that considers the retention needs of that particular department. This aspect is crucial in the realisation of the OSD policy goal of the retention of social service practitioners and as such empowers HODs to ensure that suitable plans are developed and sufficient funds are allocated to support employee retention measures within their respective departments.

2.4.1.4. Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998

The Employment Equity (EE) Act was introduced as a measure to achieve equity in the workplace through the promotion of equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment (Public Service Commission, 2015). The Act envisions that in order to achieve these aforementioned goals, there needs to be an elimination of unfair discrimination and thus it puts measures in place to ensure that no employee or person is discriminated against based on their race, gender, sex, age, social origin, language and any other arbitrary ground (RSA, 1998). Chapter Three, section 20 of the Act stipulates the need for the development of employment equity plans and the submission of such plans by a designated employer. The employment equity plans are required to include the numerical targets to ensure that suitably qualified employees from designated groups are represented at all occupational levels within every organisation (PSC, 2015). The Act further makes provision for the reasonable accommodation, retention and development of people from designated groups in order for them to enjoy equal opportunities in the organisation (RSA, 1998).

The EE Act ensures equal access of opportunities to all groups of people in the recruitment, selection and retention of employees. It is an affirmative action measure to redress injustices from the past. The Act is thus an added measure that strengthens the OSD policy directive of recruitment and retention of all designated groups and sectors of society.

2.4.1.5. Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995

The Labour Relations Act (LRA) is designed as a tool that helps to rule out discrimination in the workplace and protects fair labour practices for both the employees and the employer (RSA, 1995). The LRA supports the provisions of the EE Act by putting in place measures for the promotion and protection of the rights of previously disadvantaged designated groups.

Amongst these rights is the right of association and representation by a recognised union in the workplace.

Labour unions are realising the importance of their role in the recruitment and selection process and are slowly demanding greater participation in this process (Van der Westhuizen, Wessels, Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk & Schenk, 2011). As such, the participation of unions in the HR cycle of recruitment and termination is promoted and protected by the Act as unions are seen to be the voice of employees and work tirelessly to ensure that employers implement practices that protect the rights of employees (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2011). This therefore emphasises the important role of the unions in the development, implementation and review of the OSD policy as any changes made to the policy can result in the amendment of current collective agreements. This assertion and importance of consultation between labour unions and the employer is outlined in Chapter Five of the Act. Chapter Five, section 86(1)(a)-(d) states that "unless the matters for joint decision-making are regulated by a collective agreement with the representative trade union, an employer must consult and reach consensus with a workplace forum before implementing any proposal concerning disciplinary codes and procedures, measures designed to protect and advance persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, amongst others" (RSA, 1995, p.58).

2.4.1.6. Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997

The Basic Conditions of Employment (BCOE) Act (RSA, 1997b) regulates the benefits that employees are entitled to such as working hours and requires employers to consider the health and well-being of their employees when determining working hours. It extends to recognising the family responsibilities of employees as a determining factor in the regulation of working hours. It further makes provision for compulsory fringe benefits such as annual leave, sick leave over a 36 months cycle, maternity leave and family responsibility.

The BCOE Act gives employers the authority to determine flexible working hours for their employees and thus this aspect is important for the OSD policy as it enhances retention practices. This allows the HOD of a department to allow flexible working hours that consider family responsibility of employees and as such promotes the health and well-being of employees, which in turn offers a healthy working environment for employees. As discussed in section 2.3, one of the effective retention factors that employers can implement includes

flexible working hours and providing a conducive working environment. The Act is instrumental as a tool to implement employee retention measures.

The legislative framework section has described the transformative nature of the Public Service in implementing an integrated approach to HRM practices. The different legislation is supportive of both recruitment and retention practices and makes provision for the allocation of adequate human and financial resources to achieve these ends. The section above highlighted the different legislative regulations that are designed to enhance Human Resource Management strategies, ensure an integrated approach towards recruitment, selection, retention, and exit practices within the Public Service. The section further provided links of the regulatory frameworks in the OSD policy and how these regulations enable the effective implementation of the policy.

2.5. Summary

The literature review chapter introduced the theory and concepts that underpin the research study. Two theories of motivation, namely Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg two-factor theory, were discussed in order to establish a theoretical perspective to understanding factors that contribute to employee motivation and retention. Next, the literature overview focused on employee recruitment and retention and that the factors that increase and those that influence employee retention was discussed. Thereafter, various factors that influence employee retention were discussed to gain a better understanding of the employee retention framework. This discussion was followed by an overview of the legislative frameworks that underpin the establishment and implementation of the OSD policy.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The research process was operationalised by selecting an appropriate research approach and design and then identifying the sample and sampling procedure to select relevant participants for the study. This chapter begins with a recap of the research question, aim and objectives of the study. This discussion is followed by an elaborative discussion of the research approach and the research design. The research methodology is discussed by outlining the population of the study, sample and sampling procedure. Thereafter, the research instrument and pre-testing are described. This description is followed by a discussion of the methods of data collection and analysis. Next, the strategies to ensure trustworthiness were outlined. This discussion was followed by an exploration of relevant ethical aspects taken into consideration. This chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter.

3.2. Research Question

What are the perceptions of social workers in the Gauteng Department of Social Development in Johannesburg with regard to the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) *policy*?

3.3. Primary Aim and Secondary Objectives

3.3.1. Primary Aim

The primary aim of the study was to explore and describe the perceptions of social workers in the Gauteng Department of Social Development in Johannesburg with regard to the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) policy.

3.3.2. Objectives

- To establish the views of social workers on the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) as a recruitment and retention strategy within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

- To establish the perceived outcomes of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) on the morale and productivity of social workers within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

- To explore and describe any challenges experienced by officials in implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

- To obtain the views of social workers on how to address the challenges associated with implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) within Gauteng Department of Social Development.

3.4. Research Approach

For the purposes of this study, the qualitative research approach was best suited to achieving the objectives of this study as it made it possible to understand different perspectives of social workers and enabled the researcher to arrive at conclusions about their experiences of the implementation of the OSD policy (Fouché & Schurink, 2011). The qualitative research approach is based on the notion that reality is subjective and aims to make meaning of the social reality of individuals. It is constructed around the view that an individual construct a view of the world based on their interactions (Cropley, 2019). Thus, the concept of relativity is central to qualitative approach as reality is believed to be relative and not absolute (Hawking & Mlondinow, 2010). The aim of qualitative inquiry focuses on how individuals construct reality through the process of personal observation and interpretation of events (Cropley, 2019). The qualitative approach was largely non-experimental and took place in participant's

natural setting/environment (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009) whereby the participating social workers were able to share their experiences freely.

The study was exploratory in nature as it aimed to study and understand the in-depth perceptions of social workers relating to the implementation of the OSD policy. Van Wyk (2013) indicates that exploratory studies are appropriate in studies that address a subject matter that has a lot of uncertainty and a problem that has not been adequately studied in the past. This assertion is true of this study because there are limited studies that explore the views and perceptions of social workers on the implementation of the OSD policy. Therefore, this approach was appropriate in studying the unknown factors about this subject matter in the hope that it will lead to more certainty about the process of implementation the OSD policy and the intended and unintended outcomes on DSD employees.

In addition, the study was descriptive as it aimed to "provide an accurate and valid representation of the factors that are relevant to the research question" (Van Wyk, 2013, p.12). The study aimed to be descriptive as social workers were able to accurately articulate factors that enhance their motivation and their willingness to continue working under the employ of the DSD. As such the qualitative approach ensured that the researcher is able to capture the multiple experiences and perceptions about the OSD policy as a recruitment and retention strategy.

3.5. Research Design

The research design outlines all the steps to be followed to achieve the end-result of the study (Hawking & Mlondinow, 2010). It includes plans that guide the researcher in identifying enabling and effective conditions that lead to the collection and analysis of data in response to the research question (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2009). In addition, Vosloo (2014) says it addresses the strategy of scientific inquiry into the research question by outlining the research methods and procedures to gather reliable and valid data. The author adds that the research design should aim to follow a logical and coherent approach to answering the research question and act as a blueprint in data collection measurement and analysis (Vosloo, 2014). Therefore, the collective case study design was followed. The collective case study approach concerns the concurrent or chronological studying of multiple cases in order to gain a broader

understanding of an issue (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011). The collective case study design clarified the perceptions of social workers with regards to the implementation of the OSD policy and to gain a better understanding of the context (Department of Social Development) that influenced their perceptions.

The collective case study design was utilised in order to get an in-depth description from a small number of cases of social workers (Mouton, 2011) as it was the context of this current study. According to Starman (2013, p.31) a case study "is a description and analysis of an individual matter or case […] with the purpose to identify variables, structures, forms and orders of interaction between the participants in the situation (theoretical purpose), or, in order to assess the performance of work or progress in development (practical purpose)". Therefore, a case study was used to identify and analyse how the participants engage with their employers within the DSD environment about conditions of employment and benefits. The case study design proved appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of both the perceptions and experiences of social workers working within the public service with regard to the OSD policy (Fouché & Schurink, 2011).

Various authors allude to the different advantages of utilising a case study design as follows: firstly, it allows the researcher to get a detailed analysis on real life situations as they unfold (Krusenvik, 2016). Merriam (2009) adds that through studying individual cases, one is able to gather in-depth information that was not anticipated at the formulation stage of the research process. Moreover, Yin (2009) found that the case study design enhances existing experience and improves understanding. Nevertheless, the case study design has disadvantages too. According to Krusenvik (2016) it is difficult to make generalisations from a single case as the studies are relevant to only a particular context or situation. However, it is important to note that generalisation was not the purpose of this current study. Rather, the purpose was to understand the perceptions and experiences of social workers on the implementation of OSD. Secondly, according to Yin (2009) case studies are only a preliminary research method and cannot be used to describe or test propositions.

3.6. Research Methodology: Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The research methodology concerns itself with providing a definitive overview of the research process and the techniques used in unearthing explanations and understanding of a

phenomenon under investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). In this section the population, sample and sampling procedure are discussed.

The population of a study refers to participants in a research study that share a collective of similar characteristics as individuals, families, groups or organisations, communities and events (Pitse, 2009). Within the context of this study, the study population consisted of all social workers employed within the Gauteng Provincial Department of Social Development. The Gauteng Provincial Department of Social Development is divided into five regions Ekurhuleni, Sedibeng, West Rand, Tshwane and Johannesburg. For the purpose of this study the population was social workers from the Johannesburg region.



Figure 1: Map of Johannesburg, Google (n.d.)

In the above section, a map of Johannesburg illustrates the location of the Department of Social Development and the population served by social workers. The Department of Social Development estimates that within the Johannesburg Metro region more than 598 public service officials are employed to cater and render social development services to various communities within Johannesburg (RSA, 2016). The Johannesburg Metro Region in Gauteng Province is considered a central point of entry to access economic opportunities within South Africa and is considered as the economic hub of Africa (RSA, 2016).

In addition to the study population of all social workers under the employ of DSD – Gauteng, key informants, some of whom are senior officials in the Department of Social Development

in Gauteng. As the study is about a human resources and labour related matter a labour union representative was included in the study population. As it was impossible to study the entire population of social workers in the Johannesburg Metro Region, a sample needed to be selected and studied. Strydom and Delport (2011) refer to a sample as a group of people or items that are measured or studied that form a representation of the entire population. Therefore, as Mujere (2016) argues, sampling relates to the process of selection of a suitable sample of the population in order to study the characteristics of the population in its entirety. Thus, a non-probability sampling technique was utilised (Strydom & Delport, 2011). Non-probability sampling refers to a non-random and judgmental sampling procedure where the purpose of the study is not to generalise findings but to focus on generating hypotheses (Marlow, 2010).

The Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. The purposive sampling technique was essential in enabling the 'judgmental' selection of participants that respond to the research question and address the research objectives (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). According to Marlow (2010), purposive sampling is effective in enabling the researcher to develop a sample that is inclusive of elements that are only directly related to the problem being studied. Through the purposive sampling strategy, the researcher was able to select relevant social workers that could respond to the research question and enable the researcher to obtain information that enriched his understanding of the perceptions and experiences of social workers on the implementation of OSD policy (Neuman, 2009). The purposive sampling strategy was also useful in selecting participants who shared knowledge and enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding into the OSD policy and the outcomes of the policy in the recruitment and retention of social workers. However, Mujere (2016) cautions that purposive sampling is prone to researcher bias due to its subjective and judgemental nature, since it involves subjective selection of participants. Moreover, the author believes it could therefore be difficult to prove that the sample selected was representative of the population and consequently leave the researcher having difficulty in convincing readers that the findings are logical.

In order to be able to select participants, prior permission needed to be obtained from gate keepers. In the recruitment of participants, the researcher approached the Human Resources Section within the Department of Social Development and requested a copy of the departmental staff establishment report that contains information of all social workers employed within the Department of Social Development. The researcher provided the departmental officials with

the “Permission to conduct research letter” (See Appendix 1) and the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (See Appendix 2) which explained everything about the envisaged study.

Participants had to meet the specified selection criteria to be selected:

- Social workers had to be employed as social workers in the Department.
- Social workers had to be registered with the South African Council for Social Service Practitioners (SACSSP).
- Social workers had to have been employed prior to the implementation of the OSD policy on the 1st of April 2009.
- Participants could be of any age, racial or ethnic group or gender.

In addition, key informants had to meet the following sampling criteria:

- There were no restrictions on the type of qualification possessed. Key informants did not have to be employed as social workers in the Department.
- Be employed prior to the implementation of the OSD policy on the 1st of April 2009.
- Be involved in the formulation, drafting, implementation and/or monitoring of the OSD policy.
- Could be any age group.
- Could be of any gender.
- Be in Senior Management within the Department.
- Be an elected official of a labour union organisation.

The trade union representative was selected by approaching the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) within the Department of Social Development. NEHAWU assigned a shop steward to participate in the study by following processes in relation to their policy. The inclusion of the trade union representative was crucial as shop stewards act as labour relations representatives in all issues concerning employees. They further played a critical role in the consultation, formulation and adoption of the OSD policy within the National Bargaining Council (See section 2.4.1.5 on the role of labour unions in collective agreements and employee relations). In total, the sampling size consisted of ten social workers and three key informants.

3.8. Research Instruments

The researcher applied semi-structured interview schedules to collect data. Fouché and Schurink (2011) argue that an interview schedule provides the researcher with predetermined questions to engage the participants in understanding their narrative. This semi-structured interview schedule allowed the researcher to develop questions that are open-ended and non-judgmental to allow the participant to engage and participate fully during the interview process (Greeff, 2011). The researcher was guided by the following principles when constructing the questions for the interview schedule: (a) basing the questions on the research objective, and (b) developing questions that were neutral; jargon and vague questions were avoided to prevent confusion (Greeff, 2011). This interview schedule was drafted to guide the researcher during the data collection process to address the issues at hand and investigate the perceptions of social workers relating to the OSD policy (See Appendix 5 & 6).

3.9. Pre-testing

According to Bless et al. (2013) a pre-test consists of testing the data collection instrument with a smaller sample prior to conducting the larger study. The pre-test of the research tool assessed the suitability of the data collection instrument. Strydom, (2011) states that the purpose of pre-testing the semi-structured interview schedule was to assist the researcher to fine-tune, correct and improve on the deficiencies of the research instrument before administering it in the main study. Two participants were selected from the study population to participate in the pre-test process. These participants met the selection criteria but did not form part of the main study. The pre-testing of the research instrument assisted the researcher in assessing the appropriateness of the proposed methodology and research instruments.

The key findings of the pre-test were that the questions were appropriate and understandable. In terms of the venue, the pilot results showed that the office space provided privacy. As such, the research tool was not changed after the pre-test. It further enabled the researcher to assess the length of each interview which showed that each interview could take between 45-60 minutes and therefore enabled the researcher to set appointments with this time frame in mind. Furthermore, the pilot study enabled the researcher to test the tape recorder to ensure that it

recorded accurately and provided good quality sound. Therefore, the researcher determined that he could proceed with data collection as will be discussed next.

3.10. Method of Data Collection

The qualitative research method utilises a variety of methods for collecting data (Marlow, 2010). These include questionnaires, observations, interviews, journal logs and secondary data. In qualitative research, information is collected primarily in narrative format through means such as interviews, writings, diaries, audio and video recordings, and close and systematic observation of individuals in their natural settings (Ngozwana, 2015). For the purposes of the current research study, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Face-to-face interviews are a data collection method that involves direct and physical interaction with the research participant (Oltmann, 2016) in accordance with a developed interview schedule. This type of interview allows for greater control of the questions and environment of data collection as well as offering flexibility and better quality of data collection (Bless et. al, 2013). This type of interview is used mainly when the subject matter is very sensitive, if the questions are very complex, or if the interview is likely to be lengthy (Oltmann, 2016). The subject matter was sensitive as it evoked emotions about the management bias during the performance review process and its effect on professional relationships.

Several advantages of the semi-structured interview are identified, Firstly, a semi-structured face-to-face interview allows the researcher to expand on concepts and problems being studied if participants find questions to be vague and confusing (Bless et al., 2013, p.121). Secondly, it facilitates the exploration of participants' experiences in detail through the usage of open-ended questions. However, Hofisi, Hofisi and Mago (2014) found that the lack of standardisation in face-to-face interviews raises reliability concerns. The authors further noted that travelling expenses to conduct face to face interviews can become costly to the researcher.

The researcher interviewed the participants at their place of work, in a closed boardroom to ensure privacy of the interview process. The appointments were made at the convenience and availability of the participants. The researcher further ensured that the batteries of the tape

recorder were always fully charged to allow for adequate recording time during the interview. The researcher brought with him to the interview different coloured pens, file dividers and enough paper to make notes during and after the interview. Data collection also included taking handwritten field notes based on researcher's on-site observations and conversations with those who were being studied (Markle, West & Rich, 2011). The recording of field notes captured the reflections of the researcher during the data collection process (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). The field notes were recorded immediately after an interview was conducted. In instances where more than one interview was conducted in a day, the researcher scheduled interviews with significant time breaks of at least 30 minutes between interviews in order to record field notes.

The semi-structured face-to-face interview allowed the researcher and participant(s) flexibility to explore further into the various aspects of the OSD and the outcomes thereof (Guest et al., 2012). In order to facilitate successful data collection, an audio recorder was used. The role of technology in qualitative research saw the introduction of the audio recording and transcription of interviews. The introduction of portable audio recording in the 1970s enabled researchers to transcribe, analyse, interpret and report the direct words of participants (Markle et al., 2011). Audio recording has been seen to enable accurate and clear recording of interactions with research subjects and allows for the easy storing and accessibility of data for future research (Yin, 2009). Guest et al. (2012) hold the view that audio recording increases the quality of field observation and enables researchers to notice the subtle ways that people communicate.

With the consent of the participants, interviews were audio taped in order to capture accurately the responses of the participants (See Appendix 4). The researcher used a mobile phone recorder to record the interview and a notebook to note non-verbal cues and key points raised by the participants. On average the interviews lasted between 45 minutes to 60 minutes, depending on the in-depth knowledge of participants on the research topic. The researcher engaged the participants for long periods during the data collection process until the point of saturation was reached where participants had shared all their knowledge and perceptions on the subject matter at hand (Yin 2009) and no new data was emerging.

3.11. Method of Data Analysis

Marlow (2010) describes data analysis as an inductive process of discovering connections and patterns in the data which can help to develop theoretical understandings. The collected data was analysed thematically following the qualitative research approach. Schurink, Fouché and de Vos (2011) assert that qualitative data analysis is not a linear approach but consists of a spiral flow and can be conducted through simultaneous means of processing raw data into meaningful categories. The researcher followed the steps of data analysis as offered by Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas (2013) and Schurink et al. (2011) as a guideline. The author's steps are pooled together in order to outline the detailed steps that were undertaken in the data analysis phase. These steps are described below:

3.11.1. Becoming familiar with the data

Planning to record the data is a crucial phase in the pre-analysis process as it outlines the method of data collection and the different equipment that will be used in data collection (Schurink et al., 2011). The preparation and collection of data has been discussed in detail in the above section outlining the steps and method followed to collect data (See section 3.10). Becoming familiar with the data as described by Vaismoradi et al. (2013) involved listening to the recorded data, transcribing the data and repeatedly reading the transcription in order to get a sense of the data. The researcher read the transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the collected data and to understand the views and experiences of the participants. The transcription of recorded data offered the researcher an opportunity to immerse himself in the data and gain meaningful insights about the gathered data (Schurink et al., 2011).

3.11.2. Managing the data

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) describe the process of managing data. Their view is that data should be managed to make sense of it. In this phase, the researcher archived the field notes in an arch-lever file according to each participant interview. The interview notes were sorted in the arch-lever file by creating folders marked with an identifiable participant code. This was followed by firstly listening to the recorded interviews, then by transcribing the recorded

interview into verbatim form and finally storing the data in a personal computer with a password to keep the data safe and secure.

Schurink et al. (2011) suggest keeping an inventory list containing step by step activities that need to be done in the data analysis phase. This refers to keeping a detailed list of what one already has collected and if there are any other activities required to be conducted to complete missing information. This includes keeping a record of completed field notes, notes that can be written later or need to be finished before analysis can begin. This was expanded by checking if recorded interviews needed to be replayed and whether or not the verbatim record has been drafted and corrected for errors.

3.11.3. Reading and writing memos

These steps were undertaken after the transcription of the data and reading the transcripts (Schurink et al., 2011). This was the beginning process of offsite analysis and coding as the researcher immersed himself in reading transcripts repeatedly to gain insight and understanding of the collected data. The researcher used different phrases and words to describe concepts and ideas as part of the analytic memos while reading the transcripts. As Neuman (2009) writes, the analytic memos are in the form of discussion of thoughts and ideas of the researcher during the writing of memos.

3.11.4. Generating categories and coding the data

This phase involved generating categories and coding the data to seek emerging patterns and ideas (Schurink et al., 2011). The researcher highlighted key words, using coloured dots and labels that described a particular phenomenon. Once particular segments, phrases or words were highlighted, the researcher would give it a name which then formed the code. As suggested by Neuman (2009), upon identifying similar codes, they were all gathered together to form a category and labelled with a common code as they described similar views. Through the coding and categorising process, interrelationships between the data and themes started to emerge around the common views that participants hold on the implementation of the OSD policy. This approach was in line with the open-coding approach and developing categories and themes as suggested by Neuman (2009).

3.11.5. Search for themes

Literature defines a theme as a descriptor that contains codes with common ideas and points of reference regarding a subject inquiry (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016). The search for themes was an extension of the generation of categories and coding of the data. For the purpose of the study, this entailed combining similar codes to arrive at a common theme that signified a thread of common underlying meaning and understanding of the participants' views. The purpose of the themes was to capture the common stories told by participants and their views on the implementation of the OSD policy.

3.11.6. Review themes

The act of analysing, naming and reviewing themes is crucial in the finalisation of relevant themes that respond to the research question (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The review of themes serves the purpose of ensuring that they make sense and carry the implicit meaning of what participants described and that they are relevant in responding to the research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This stage helped the researcher to review and assess the identified themes in order to determine if they are linked to the research aim and objectives.

3.11.7. Define themes

The researcher was guided by Vaismoradi et al. (2016) who state that theme definition is required to encapsulate the essence of what each theme means. The identified themes were defined and are described in detail in the findings section (See Chapter 4). The researcher noted that the identified themes were accompanied by sub-themes that expanded on the theme and detailed further the findings of the study. This resulted in integrating the themes and findings with literature to explain how the themes fit into the entirety of the data and research question.

3.11.8. Write-up

The last stage of thematic content analysis is concluded through reporting findings in a narrative format (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The researcher utilised the various themes to respond to the research question and presented them in written and text form (See Chapters 4

& 5). Literature control was used to integrate the findings with existing theory (Schurink et al., 2011).

3.12. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the criterion used to determine the quality of the data (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). It enforces the objectivity of findings of the research study (Babbie & Mouton, 2011). The term trustworthiness focuses on the four constructs that promote objectivity of the qualitative study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Schurink et al., 2011). These strategies will be discussed in detail to demonstrate how they were used in the study to ensure that the findings are not influenced by the researcher's bias.

3.12.1. Credibility

Credibility refers to procedures followed to ensure that the participants were accurately identified and described (Creswell, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the researcher had prolonged engagements with the participants, observing verbal and non-verbal cues and listened attentively during the interviews to ensure credibility of the study.

3.12.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent that findings can be applied in other contexts (Schurink et al., 2011). The original investigator is not responsible for transferability but rather the reader or another researcher to demonstrate that findings of study A can be applicable to study B that has a different setting and context (Schurink et al., 2011). This can be challenging as qualitative studies are concerned about understanding the meaning that subjects give to their experiences or contexts thus making it difficult to generalise findings to other settings and contexts (Saunders et al., 2012). The purpose of the study was not to generalise but to understand perceptions and experiences of social workers within the Gauteng Department of Social Development on the implementation of the OSD policy. Babbie and Mouton (2011) suggest that in order to ensure transferability the following strategies must be employed: thick descriptions and purposive sampling.

Babbie and Mouton (2011) describe thick descriptions as referring to collecting rich data with adequate and detailed reporting of the responses. As suggested by Mcur and Mulaudzi (2015), the researcher supplied rich and thick descriptions of the setting, transactions and the steps taken to process the collected data. This will enable readers of the research report to make a determination on how applicable the results are to their settings.

In this study context, purposive sampling was used as previously stated (See Section 3.7). Babbie and Mouton (2011) state that purposive sampling is critical in ensuring transferability as it maximizes specific information and the context in which it can be gathered as the location and participants are purposefully selected. By using purposive sampling of social workers employed prior to the implementation of OSD, the conditions for transferability of the study are made possible in reaching similar results in future studies. The perceptions of social workers were documented by the researcher using a digital recorder and taking field notes.

3.12.3. Dependability

Dependability is similar to reliability in quantitative research and helps to demonstrate efforts made by the researcher to adapt to changing conditions in the phenomena being studied (Schurink et al., 2011). Babbie and Mouton (2011) hold the view that credibility and dependability are interlinked and when credibility is proven it establishes the basis for dependability of the study. Babbie and Mouton (2011) further suggest that an inquiry audit be performed that examines the documentation of critical incidents, an account of how the inquiry was undertaken e.g. researcher's journal, examining the data, findings and interpretations and recommendations to ensure that they are linked to theory. The research process was logical and documented on paper in the researcher's diary in order to record the detailed account of the research process.

3.12.4. Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the objectivity of the findings and if they are based on the inquiry or the bias of the researcher (Schurink et al., 2011). Babbie and Mouton (2011) suggest that in line the strategies to enhance dependability and to achieve confirmability, an audit trail should be kept to confirm that the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations were arrived at through the research inquiry. To enhance confirmability, the researcher kept the findings in

their original form based on the interviews. In order to confirm and strengthen the researcher's interpretations of the findings, reference was made to literature findings by other authors. Furthermore, verbatim quotes were included to support or contradict the findings of the research study.

3.13. Ethical Considerations

Ethical conduct is important in ensuring that any research that is conducted does not violate the rights of participants and that findings are reported accurately and honestly (Strydom, 2011). The section below highlights the ethical aspects taken into consideration during the research planning phase and during data collection in order to conduct ethically sound scientific inquiry. The following ethical issues were considered: informed consent, avoidance of harm, voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

3.13.1. Informed Consent

Informed consent is considered an important element in research as it allows participants to make an informed choice about participating in the study (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Informed consent aims to ensure that participation is voluntary and requires that participants are made aware of the purpose of the study, the imminent risks and benefits, how the results will be used and that participation can be withdrawn at any time (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The participants were given a Participant Information Sheet (See Appendix 2) explaining what the study was all about and the informed consent form (See Appendix 3) to sign as confirmation of their willingness to participate in the study and for the interviews to be audio taped (See Appendix 4). As such, no participant was given inaccurate information to participate in the study.

3.13.2. Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation is an important ethical issue in research as it gives participants the option to select whether they want to participate in a study or not and to be aware that the

decision not to participate will not be used against them in any form or shape (Babbie, 2013). Besides being given the PIS and Consent forms, the participants were verbally reminded that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study without suffering any consequences or prejudice. Furthermore, participants were advised that no incentives would be provided for participating in the study and therefore the motivation to participate in the study was voluntary without material expectation. As such, no participant was coerced to participate in the study.

3.13.3. Avoidance of harm

Avoiding harm to participants is considered a fundamental principle and ethical rule of research and that the researcher has an obligation to ensure that participants are not exposed to any harm whatsoever (Babbie, 2013). There was no risk posed to the psychological, physical, financial and spiritual wellbeing of the participants during and after the interviews were conducted. The researcher ensured that the safety of participants was paramount. As such, the interviews were conducted in a safe and secure environment that was not harmful or exposed the participants to any danger. The interviews were conducted in the work environment of the participants at a time and space that was convenient to them. Moreover, the level of risk to the participants was very low due to the nature of the research topic.

In the event of any psychological or spiritual harm, the researcher would have referred the participants to the Gauteng Department of Social Development Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to provide psychosocial support. The EAP programme is a Department sponsored programme that employees have access to free of charge where prior arrangement is not required to access the service. Participants were informed of the availability of the programme and that they could access it through contacting the provided contact centre (See Appendix 2). Participants were informed of their right to report any physical harm if such incident occurred. No incidents of physical, emotional, spiritual or psychological harm were reported during the course of data collection.

3.13.4. Privacy/ Confidentiality/Anonymity

Confidentiality and privacy are principles that are closely associated with identity and trust as the breaking of confidentiality and privacy have the potential to expose the identity of a participant and break trust between the participant and researcher (Padgett, 2016). It is important not to confuse confidentiality with privacy as the two are not the same. *Privacy* is related to protection of one's identity; confidentiality refers to the protection of information that is shared with a researcher by not making such information available to anyone except the researcher or researchers involved in a project (Bless et al. 2013).

In order to ensure *confidentiality*, a research project should not report the responses of participants publically but rather remove identifiable information when reporting findings (Babbie, 2013). In order to protect confidentiality, the researcher did not include questions requesting any identifying information in the interview schedule but instead used participant codes to identify participants. This extended to the discarding of personal identifying information of participants after deciding that no additional information was required.

According to Bless et al. (2013), *anonymity* is closely linked to confidentiality as both principles are concerned with making sure that participant information is not identifiable or research findings are not easily associated with a respondent. Babbie (2013) indicates that the protection of anonymity is important to ensure that participants' responses cannot be linked to any individual and that the participants' identity is protected. As per the guideline by Babbie (2013), the principle of anonymity was applied throughout the research process beginning from the first contact with participants to the publication of reports and findings. Strydom (2011) suggests that in order to protect the anonymity and *privacy* of participants, reports should refer to findings instead of information about individuals. In that way the identity of participants would not easily be traced as participant data would be stored in numbers instead of names. The researcher used numbers and symbols to identify the participants and throughout the data analysis and research report, the names of the participants were not referred to but rather participant numbers were used when reference was made to the participants.

3.14. Summary

This chapter began with a recap of the research question, aim and objectives of the study. This discussion was followed by an elaborative discussion of the research approach and the research design. The research methodology was discussed by outlining the population of the study, sample and sampling procedure. Thereafter, the research instrument and pre-testing were described. This description was followed by a discussion of the methods of data collection and analysis. Lastly, the trustworthiness and relevant ethical aspects taken into consideration were explored in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter identified the methodology that was chosen to empirically study the research proposition. The focus of the study was on exploring the perceptions of social workers in relation to the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy that was implemented in the Department of Social Development in 2009. The research question that guided the study was:

What are the perceptions of social workers in the Gauteng Department of Social Development in Johannesburg with regards to the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) *policy*?

To recap, the Occupation Specific Dispensation's (OSD) outcomes as a recruitment and retention policy were explored through the following research objectives:

- To establish the views of social workers on the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) as a recruitment and retention strategy within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.
- To establish the perceived outcomes of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) on the morale and productivity of social workers within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.
- To explore and describe any challenges experienced by officials in implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy (OSD) within the Gauteng Department of Social Development.
- To obtain the views of social workers on how to address the challenges associated with implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) within Gauteng Department of Social Development.

Therefore, this chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study that explored the perceptions of social workers employed in the Department of Social Development (DSD) in Johannesburg on the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy. The findings are presented and discussed using illustrative quotes. In addition, the theoretical framework that underpinned this study and relevant literature is integrated to support or dispute the findings. Firstly, the biographical data are presented and this discussion is followed by the themes and sub-themes that emerged.

4.2. Biographical profile of the participants

Thirteen (13) participants from the Gauteng Department of Social Development who met the sampling criteria were interviewed. This included ten social workers who were employed before the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) policy and three key informants consisting of two senior management officials from the Gauteng Department of Social Development and one labour union representative. Their biographic details are provided below:

Table 1: Biographical profile of the participants

Demographic factor	**Sub-Category**	**No.**
Gender	Female	8
	Male	5
Years of experience	5-10	5
	11-20	6
	20-30	2

Table 1 above shows that of the 13 participants who participated in the study, eight were female and five were male. The demographics are representative of the demographics in the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) population. During the 2017/2018 financial year, there were 80 524 female employees and 67 253 were men. (GPG-Management Information Support Services, 2018). In terms of years of experience as an employee of DSD, Table 3 also shows

that five participants had between 5-10 years of work experience, six participants had 11-20 years of experience, while two participants had between 20-30 years of experience within the public service sector.

In terms of educational background, eleven participants had a Bachelor of social work degree (BSW). Only one of the eleven participants held a Master's Degree in Occupational Social Work. One held a Higher Certificate in Administration Management while another participant held a degree in Human Resource Management. The majority, eight out of thirteen of the participants were employed as social workers while four participants played a management role in the Department: two were Supervisors while one was a Deputy Director and the other a Director. The composition and occupational levels of the participants reveal that the policy analysis and review process was inclusive of different policy actors (Cloete & De Coning, 2011). These different policy actors bring about unique knowledge, experience and skills sets in the review of policies and enhance the policy review process (Hill, 2013).

4.3. Empirical Findings

4.3.1 Introduction

The empirical findings presented below are based on four main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the thematic analysis process. These findings are presented in Table 2 below. The findings will be discussed thematically using direct quotes from the participants to support the presentation of the findings.

4.3.2 Themes and sub-themes

Based on the interview schedule (See Appendix 5 & 6), the participants' responses resulted in several themes emerging. For example, participants were asked questions relating to their work functions and responsibilities, their understanding of the OSD policy, their perceptions on the policy making and consulting process of the policy, their experiences during the introduction and initial implementation of the policy and challenges associated with the implementation of the policy. These themes and sub-themes are presented below.

Table 2: Themes and sub-themes from the data analysis

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Grade progression requirement	1.1 Administrative challenges 1.2 Excessive grade progression period
2. Absence of improved working conditions and tools of the trade	2.1 Poor working conditions
3. Ineffective Performance review system	3.1. Biased management 3.2. PMDS process delays career growth
4. Effectiveness of OSD Policy	4.1 Rigid and inflexible Policy 4.2 Disparities in salaries 4.3 Low salaries

Theme 1: Grade progression requirement

The findings of the study indicate that all the participants found the current policy's provision on grade progression to be a barrier to upward mobility and promotions. All the participants reported that it takes social workers employed in the department a minimum of ten years to be promoted into a different salary level and as such this limits their earning potential. They reported that this is not in line with labour market conditions and listed other helping professions such as psychologists and lawyers who experience quicker progression to other salary levels. This is line with the prescripts of the OSD policy which states that social service practitioners qualify to progress into the next salary occupational level (grade) upon completion of ten years of service (PHSDSBC, 2009).

One of the participants stated the following on grade progression they echoed these sentiments:

"When I saw the job description it read that if you applied for a position of being a supervisor you need seven years to qualify but for a social worker to move from Level 7 to Level 8 you need 10 years. So you can see that when you compared to the past when we started working we needed three years to move from being a junior social worker to a senior worker. Now you

need 10 years to move from being a junior social worker to a senior social worker in comparison with only three years from the past" **(Participant 4-Social Worker).**

The participants further indicated that the OSD policy and this practice affected their level of morale negatively as they see limited possibilities of growth and career progression.

One of the participants stated the following on the policy's effect on general morale, echoed these sentiments:

"It has created a lot of stumbling blocks. It has made it difficult for social workers. I mean if you look at a post and it says 10 years, who is going to wait for 10 years? It decreases your morale to know that I will be in this position for 10 years. It's too much. So it has affected morale in a negative way" **(Participant 7-Social Worker).**

Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011) found that the lack of an effective advancement plan can lead to employee dissatisfaction and result in employees seeking alternative employment opportunities with other organisations. Shakeel and But (2015) found that promotions within organisations are viewed by employees as extrinsic rewards and can lead to continued commitment of an employee to an organisation. Clearly if promotion is denied or the process takes too long a time for employees to advance then morale will be affected negatively.

To help explore the social workers' understanding of the OSD policy, participants were asked to describe their understanding of the OSD policy, and the challenges associated with its implementation. Their responses are captured under the following two sub-themes as discussed in detail in the section below.

Sub-Theme 1.1: Administrative challenges

The study findings established that administrative challenges within the Department had a negative impact on the process of changing the job titles and salary grades for those who met the criteria for grade progression. This include those who have spent 10 years on a particular grade and those who have met the performance requirements as per the performance review policy for accelerated grade progression.

The participants reported that they were dismayed at the Department's ineffectiveness in processing the changing of grades and payments due to them. The participants criticised the

Department's HR division for its poor document management strategies such as missing performance reviews and delays in the capturing of performance scores to determine those who needed to be promoted to the next grade. It had resulted in a few employees being converted to new grades but not paid on their purported new salary grade which had then created disparities in salaries. One of the participants expressed their sentiments as follows:

"I received the money once and then after that I got documents from HR saying that they didn't find one of the reviews that were submitted that I performed above average so I need to resubmit and it was just a mess. They were also saying that if they do not find those reviews then I may have to pay back the money and I was like ok I did the submissions and you have copies so what happened to the copies because I'm not going to look for the copies myself, I submitted them to you, so I reported the supervisor and she had to do the re-submission". (**Participant 6-social worker**).

The view of the participant regarding the loss of documents within the Department and how it had affected the processing of incentives due is consistent with Muteswa and Ortlepp's (2011) study which revealed that poor administration within organisations impacts negatively on the morale of staff.

Furthermore, the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of clear communication from the Department of Social Development on the reasons for the delay in resolving salary progression issues.

Two participants articulated their dismay as follows:

*For example there are people who were supposed to get it last year but didn't and others who did get it, which doesn't make sense because everyone was supposed to get it but only a few people got it and no one knows why. Even if you get your ratings of four you still don't get OSD because they just keep saying… there is no money for OSD anymore. And even involving unions, nothing comes out of it. It's very discouraging, for some people." (***Participant 2-social worker***)*

Similarly, another participant stated:

"There is no coordination of services within the administration of this policy. Some of the reasons to be here is… we don't have a person that necessarily deals with issues of this policy. Because the experienced person that was here left and the position was never occupied, we

could not get the relevant person. And that is why we find ourselves in this dilemma". (**Participant 5 – Social Worker)**

These findings are consistent with Shakeel and But (2015) on the challenges that poor communication breeds within an organisation. The authors found that effective communication is the cornerstone of any organisation and can result in higher levels of job satisfaction, lessen conflict and misunderstandings.

However, one participant differed slightly on how the challenges in payments arose. The participant stated as follows:

*"And remember these are incentives and is limited to the employer and the budget. As much as people can say we want to have all these things… but if the money is not there, it is not there. But you must remember now there is also the issue of Treasury which says there is no more money for additional costs" (***Key Informant 3***)*

The findings show that the administration of the policy has been hampered by inefficiencies in the administration and budgeting processes as well as poor document management. The participants revealed that Treasury regulations and limited resources negatively impact on the budget and the ability of the Department of Social Development to make incentive payments to employees. Similarly, in a study involving nurses, Motsosi and Rispel (2012) found that professional nurses were dissatisfied with the implementation of the OSD policy. Within the context of that study, the researchers found that 72.0% of the participating nurses interviewed indicated that OSD was implemented unfairly leading to 54.1% of nurses feeling demoralised.

Sub-Theme 1.2: Excessive grade progression period

In the main, the participants expressed their dissatisfaction at the prolonged grade progression period. The period of grade progression was criticised by a number of the participants as they view the 10 years to move to the next grade as excessive, with many advocating for a reduction and relaxation of the requirement. The views on grade progression delays recurred consistently, with three out of ten participants expressing that it was one of the contributing factors to the decreased morale and lack of motivation amongst social workers. One of the participants reacted by saying:

"I was disappointed in how it was structured in terms of the movement of social workers, and their salaries." (**Participant 4 – Social Worker***)*

This similar sentiment was echoed by another participant when they stated the following:

*"I don't think it is attracting and able to retain, I don't think it is retaining, because there's like no movement, I'm stuck in one place" (***Participant 7 – Social Worker***)*

A similar view was expressed by a participant who said the slow upward mobility of workers was a contributory factor in the failure of the policy to promote the retention of social workers. One of the key informants shared their view and said:

"It is problematic, it is not a secret that everyone is complaining about it and they feel that they are not going anywhere because there is 10 years before you can be a senior social worker and there is something like 7 years to be a supervisor" **(Key Informant 1)**

In agreement, another participant had a similar view with regards to the OSD seeing it as not enabling the retention of employees. Participant 5 expressed the view that the policy cannot retain social workers due to the excessive grade progression and highlighted as follows:

"No, as I have said before it is keeping people stuck in one position for a long time it does not encourage movement" (**Participant 5 –– Social Worker)**

In addition, another participant was also dissatisfied with the manner in which the policy was administered and expressed their view on the grade progression period as follows:

"It is not nice to stay in the same position for 5 years and then after that you have to wait for 10 years, not because you are not capable… but because you are considered young and new in the post. Other professionals that you attended the same university with and who studied qualifications such as a BCom degree will be in a better position within 5 years than you. You will find that person is now a deputy director within 5 years. But with us… it is too long" (**Participant 2-Social Worker)**

Another participant who shared a similar view was discouraged and demotivated by the OSD policy provisions on the excessive grade progression period. They alluded to how discouraging the waiting period was and stated the following*:*

"But if you do not get something outside or you don't get a supervisory post in seven years' time.... then you will have to wait for 10 years and that is not motivating" (**Participant 8-Social Worker**).

These findings highlight how frustrated and demotivated the employees of Department of Social Development are about the period it takes for any employee to be promoted and to progress to the next level. The findings of this study confirm the view held by Mavimbela (2015) that organisations should promote the perception that the employer recognises the value that employees bring to the organisation. The authors add that the lack of an effective advancement plan can lead to dissatisfaction amongst employees. In support, Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011) assert that some employees could be encouraged to seek alternative employment elsewhere and this can increase the turnover rate. This finding revealed that due to the long period of grade progression, employees are disadvantaged. This affects the policy's objective in promoting career pathing and opportunities for its beneficiaries.

Theme 2: Absence of improved working conditions and tools of the trade

All the participants consistently spoke about the absence of improved working conditions and the lack of tools of the trade that they had expected would occur as a result of the introduction of the OSD policy. The participants expressed intense dissatisfaction with poor salaries, resources and working conditions that had not improved over the years since the policy was introduced. So, the participants were dissatisfied with the outcomes of the policy because they still lacked the tools of the trade such as subsidised vehicles, limited access to Departmental pool vehicles, computers and printers. This included poor working conditions with regards to office space, their safety when working in communities, salaries that did not improve, and as a result they lacked motivation and their morale was low. The participants also listed poor working relationships with supervisors as well as outstanding payments of incentives to those who had performed above the norm and lack of performance review bonuses as emerging challenges. The different factors are discussed in the form of sub-themes below.

2.1: Poor working conditions

The participants expressed the view that poor working conditions and insufficient tools of the trade overshadowed any positive outcomes of the OSD policy. The participants said that they

had expected that the introduction of the policy would bring an improvement to working conditions. One participant alluded to this view by that stating that:

"My understanding or my perception would be that this policy, I thought it came to make and improve salaries and conditions of the social workers at work. Not only salaries but also conditions in terms of the workload, to balance it and to improve salaries" (**Participant 1-Social Worker**).

Participants indicated that the poor working conditions they encountered created a perception that the OSD policy was ineffective in improving the integrity of the profession. It remained a high concern to the participants that, although the OSD is an extension of other organisational policies, its ability to contribute to the improvement of working conditions was not significant.

This finding was closely linked to concerns about low salaries and incentives paid to social workers based on their performance. Although this was a common view held by all participating social workers, a few key informants held a different view explaining that the OSD policy was merely a Human Resources (HR) recruitment and retention strategy and that issues of incentives and improvement of working conditions were the responsibility of management and were determined by allocated budgets. Therefore, the key informants felt that the social workers did not understand how the systems operate or had unrealistic expectations of the OSD policy. The key informant provided clarity in terms of the purpose of the OSD policy in relation to working conditions:

"Look, from my understanding, it doesn't necessarily address those. Remember it talks about occupational specific dispensation; it talks about your lifestyle as a professional and within the social work field. So those are, I mean working conditions are more the role of the employer, apart from the OSD. So even the subsidy was not even part of it. Subsidies came before OSD. Those are other things that should be addressed by the employer and organised labour in relation to the part of benefits to retain the employees. My understanding about it was more on the issue of retaining employees. I don't remember it having aspects of cars. If my memory serves me well…, those things were not there. There might have been incorporated in the OSD but they are not the brain child of the OSD. It was more on the issue of social work salary scale" (**Key Informant 3).**

This key informant went to great lengths to explain the challenges encountered with limited budgets and resources for social workers to carry out their duties. The participant explained as follows:

"*Remember this is incentives and whatever is limited to the employer's ability and the budget, as much as people can say we want to have all these things but if the money is not there it is not there*" **(Key Informant 3).**

The key informant went further to mention that these were areas of concern and required to be resolved in order to restore dignity and confidence of social workers to carry out their duties. *"The issue of the working environment and also the office space that we work in was one of the topics discussed at the Social Work Indaba, inclusive of tools of the trade, and working conditions"* **(Key Informant 3).**

It seems the issues raised by social workers are a long-standing unresolved issue, hence the expectation that the OSD policy was designed to address these issues. This is an area of concern considering that the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) notes that for the social welfare sector to provide effective services to communities, issues such as poor salaries and working conditions needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. However, 20 years later these issues are still persisting and act as a hindrance to effective service delivery and the retention of social workers. Calitz et al., (2014) add that good working conditions are considered as one of the factors that contribute to the retention of employees within an organisation and a lack thereof can increase the attrition rate within any organisation. As already discussed, (See Chapter 2 Section 2.2) the theory of motivation confirms that working conditions form part of hygiene factors that can motivate or demotivate employees.

Theme 3: Ineffective Performance Review System

As the study pointed out in Chapter 1 (See Section 1.1), the OSD policy is implemented in conjunction with the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) policy on Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). This study revealed that there are loopholes in the process of implementing the OSD policy. For instance, the study showed that the linking of PMDS to accelerate grade progression disadvantages officials and impacts on grade promotion. Some of the participants indicated that they lacked knowledge that accelerated

grade progression is linked to PMDS and expressed their disagreement with this policy provision.

In addition, the findings showed that some managers were biased because there is no uniformity in the process of conducting the performance appraisals. The participants felt that this is problematic because it causes administrative injustice. The participants found the process of accelerated grade progression to be ineffective because the PMDS review process is unclear. There was the perception that it was designed to disadvantage some officials, especially female employees, who may fall pregnant within the review cycle.

This finding was expanded to outline that due to their (employees on maternity leave or any other prolonged parental leave) absence they will be rated at performance level rating three which could affect their overall final appraisal score and therefore disqualify them from being granted accelerated grade progression. This is because employees are required to perform at an exceptional level (level four) for five consecutive years in order to qualify for accelerated grade progression. Therefore, the participants expressed concern that this process did not consider employees who could be absent to be on maternity leave or any other prolonged parental leave and thus their inability to perform and maintain an exceptional performance rating level. These sentiments are captured in detail under the following sub-themes.

Sub-Theme 3.1: Biased management

Within the context of this study, the participants found management to be biased in their administration of performance ratings. To justify their views, the participants revealed that performance reviews procedures were not uniform. This was often noticed between different managers especially in terms of allocating a 4 rating for exceptional performance. The participants stated that while one manager would require a written motivation to justify a particular rating, other managers did not consider such a motivation as necessary to justify a score. It was reported that this creates confusion and uncertainty amongst employees concerning how the PMDS and OSD polices are applied.

One participant highlighted the lack of uniformity in approach and bias on the part of managers in administering performance scores as follows:

"The way the performance review is done…, also we do not have a common understanding of how to do it. Ever since I started working here… there's never been a uniform approach to grading. So, it has now gone to this thing of relationships now with the supervisor. You get a good rating or above average rating if you have a good relationship with your supervisor. So, I fail to understand it" (**Participant 6-Social Worker**).

Another participant had a similar view. Their statement was echoed as reflected below:
"In order for you to get 4 you have to write evidence and submit it to the supervisor and if the supervisor is not happy you will get a 3 and after getting that three, no developments are planned for you to move forward so you don't get a direction or not told where you are going wrong" **(Participant 7-Social Worker).**

The findings reveal that the lack of uniformity has been associated with the type of relationship an employee would have with their supervisor. The participants revealed that the type of relationship a subordinate has with their supervisor determines the gateway to either receiving a good or bad rating. This is in line with the views by Sefora (2013) that unclear, and lack of uniform appraisal guidelines create a perception that there is bias and a lack of objectivity applied by managers during the rating process. This literature observation is reinforced by participants who expressed intense dissatisfaction and discontent about the lack of uniformity in administrating the PMDS process, the subjective nature of supervisors in administering performance ratings and lack of objectivity in the process.

As this is a sensitive issue, most participants were at pains to describe the emotive response during the performance review stage and how the lack of uniformity was impacting on professional relationships within the different units. The findings revealed that the bias of managers in the appraisal system can impact working relationships negatively and cause a rift between supervisors and subordinates. One participant highlighted how the performance review period was used by some managers as a way of being spiteful and demonstrating their power. The participant stated that:

"You will find that in other units everyone is qualifying… and they will tell you in another unit that we don't write evidence then you ask why are you not writing evidence? The policy is not consistently applied throughout all units and it creates conflict, hatred, we hate each other because of this performance evaluation because other managers will say, 'come evaluation I will show you'. But what you're supposed to do is if you see a mistake say, 'you're not doing

right, come let me correct you', [you] mustn't wait for that time and say, 'it's evaluation time, on this day you did 123'. It is a pain a serious pain" **(Participant 9-Social Worker).**

"I think this thing is open to manipulation, what if you find you do not get along with your supervisor it means after 5 years I will not benefit from the OSD. It depends on whether you are in the good books of the supervisor" **(Participant 8-Social Worker).**

This view is consistent with Javidmehr and Ebrahimpour (2015) that bias makes it difficult to make objective personnel decisions and can lead to difficulties in decision making with future incentives. These findings reveal the frustrations and unfairness encountered by participants when there is lack of objectivity in the appraisal process. This finding is contrary to the intention of the Departmental PMDS policy (DPSA, 2011) which states that it is intended to be developmental in nature and aims to uplift employees who are performing below average through the development of improvement plans to remedy poor performance. It is not intended to be punitive thus the findings state the opposite in that managers use the policy to settle scores, exert power and authority and punish dissent by employees. Selden and Sowa (2011, p.275) caution that human error may dent the objectivity of performance reviews as human factors such as "leadership style, stress, sexual and racial biases contaminate accurate and valid ratings".

Sub-Theme 3.2: Performance Management and Development System process delays career growth

The participants lamented that management used the performance review scores to discriminate against them and provide low scores as a way of punishing them. The bias in the application of the performance review system led to the participants suggesting for the de-linking of the performance review system from the OSD policy.

One participant shared the view that the link between OSD & PMDS is problematic and leads to a delayed career growth, hence the call for delinking of the two policies: The participant said:

"Grade progression is linked to PMDS and it is manipulated by supervisors that you're reporting to, because you know with supervisors sometimes you can be around the whole year and then find that at the end of the year you don't even get your performance bonus" **(Participant 4-Social Worker).**

Some participants further stated that they were not even clear about how PMDS and OSD function thus creating confusion. As such they called for the delinking of these two policies.

This is the view held by another participant on the effect of PMDS allocation and future incentives: *"So it seems that there are many flaws with the PMDS system and it impacts on the OSD and your relationship with your supervisor based on a system that is not fair. It also impact[s] on how you grow and how soon you get promoted to the next salary level so it delays your growth"* **(Participant 9-Social Worker).**

Although there is confusion and dissatisfaction by participants on the connection between the OSD and PMDS, research informs us that the retention of highly skilled and high potential employees is an important practice that all employers should engage in if they aim to be highly productive in the current competitive market (Towers Watson, 2014). This concept was not highly favoured by the participants and enforces the need to ensure that the foundation and application of PMDS is objective, must be based on principles of impartiality and promote the development and growth of employees (Selden & Sowa, 2011).

Theme 4: Effectiveness of OSD Policy

The evidence from this study revealed three factors that act as impediments to the effectiveness of the OSD in the retention of social workers. The study revealed that there is rigidity of the policy in its inherent requirements for recruiting social workers especially into supervisory and management positions. The findings revealed that strict requirements are enforced to the letter and make it difficult to deviate or be flexible about the requirements.

The study further revealed that the majority of the participants found the policy to be ineffective in retaining social workers. Instead, the participants were of the view that it created salary disparities between senior social workers and supervisors and that the entry level salary is low compared with other professionals in the public sector. The section below will provide detailed findings based on the sub-themes that emerged.

Sub-Theme 4.1: Rigid and inflexible policy

The OSD policy is considered as an HR policy designed to provide a uniform approach to recruit and retain social workers. This entails ensuring that social workers with the correct

qualifications, experience and expertise are hired for the right post. As reported by the participants, the policy provided uniformity in recruitment, but it was rigid and inflexible in some of its processes. This view recurred across the social workers and key informants who were interviewed. They indicated that the requirement criteria for social workers created an administrative blockage and was an impediment to recruitment. The participants viewed this as having a negative effect on the reputation of the policy and made it ineffective in achieving its main objective of recruiting and retaining social workers.

The lack of flexibility and inability to relax recruitment requirements was reported to pose a challenge for the Department. The participants indicated that the Department is forced to apply the work experience requirements when hiring senior social workers even though there could be competent social workers with less years of experience that could be considered. This was described by the participants as not aligned with other HR policy guidelines that give powers to recruiters to relax recruitment criteria in positions deemed either as scarce skills or difficult to fill thus not allowing the panel to use its own discretion in selecting suitable candidates.

One participant explained their views and what they mean by rigidity and non-flexibility of the OSD policy as follows:

"It's the most rigid, non-flexible policy document that I have ever come across….. You will always need 10 years' experience to move to another level. It doesn't make a provision. It should have made a provision to say maybe someone with 9 years' experience. If you look at those posts it says 10 years' experience, so you need 10 years' relevant experience. Hence I am saying it is rigid. You know when people sit for recruiting, they are very strict on requirements, now these are not requirements crafted by internal HR. So even if we know that this employee is an Assistant Director: Foster Care, he's got the capacity, but the fact that he hasn't got 10 years' experience, we cannot promote him, unless we make him to act" **(Participant 1-Social Worker).**

Hausknecht et al. (2008) indicate that employee retention should not be isolated from the practice of recruiting correct and qualified people for the job as that contributes to facilitating retention practices in an effective manner. A rigid and non-flexible recruitment policy can contribute negatively to the recruitment process and the selection of suitably qualified candidates (Selden & Sowa, 2011). This undertaking echoes the views of the participants who indicated that the OSD policy makes it difficult to recruit deserving individuals as the main

requirement is experience instead of skills and ability to perform the duties of the advertised job. This in effect puts experience at the centre of the recruitment process and therefore restricts the recruitment process from seeking candidates who are highly skilled but have less years of experience. Mavimbela (2015) states that recruitment should not only rely on work experience but a culmination of work experience, skills, qualifications, ability to do the job, motivation for growth and fit-for-purpose. Machethe (2011) notes that the OSD policy falls short in being a complete and effective recruitment guideline because it is inflexible and inhibits the adjustment of recruitment requirements in seeking a suitable candidate for a job.

Effective recruitment and selection models are essential to organisations who aim to recruit highly performing individuals (PSC, 2015) as hiring the wrong people just to fill a vacant post can have dire consequences for the organisation (Quinn, 2014). Froschhieser (2008) adds that such consequences could result in low employee morale, low productivity and lost opportunities for the organisation. Therefore, the success of an organisation rests not only on the retention and compensation benefits it offers its employees but also on its ability to hire the right people for the right position at the right time (Turner, 2010).

Although the OSD policy is guided by internal HR guidelines and practice models (RSA, 2016), its prescripts on the conditions for promotion and recruitment of social workers into senior and supervisor positions is a bone of contention for participants. The policy thus impacts on the organisation's ability to hire the right employee based on capabilities, relevant knowledge and skills as it is restricted by the requirement that the potential employee should have a certain number of years of experience (Thebe & van der Waldt, 2014).

Another participant highlighted a separate challenge experienced during the recruitment and selection phase:

"The problem comes when we want to recruit for senior posts and you will find that social workers already employed by the Department will not find value in those positions because they are either earning the offered salary in terms of their personal notches or they do not have the required experience. And this has affected the recruitment process because now posts remain open for a prolonged period and we find it difficult to fill posts. Then the few who apply are usually looking for a change in duties they currently performing or for growth purposes" (**Key Informant 2**).

The contention by a Key Informant and other participants is problematic in relation to economic theory that highlights how organisations are tasked with the priority role of ensuring that they hire people with exceptional skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes (Brindusolu, 2013). Based on the findings, it seems the Department faces challenges in recruiting individuals who are highly skilled because of the rigidity of the OSD policy. The OSD Policy could find itself conflicting with other public service regulations underpinning the practice of recruitment and selection and therefore negatively impact the process of recruitment and selection of suitable candidates.

Appointing the right people for the job is associated with not only an increase in productivity but also employees staying longer within an organisation thus promoting retention (Public Service Commission, 2015). In conclusion, it is noteworthy to identify the link between the implementation of comprehensive recruitment and retention practices, and how incentivised compensation, effective performance management systems and extensive employee training can advance the knowledge, skills and capabilities of an organisation (Cummins, 2015). Effective retention practices enhance employee motivation, reduce turnover and promote the retention of quality employees while increasing turnover of non-performers in the organisation (Cummins, 2015).

Sub-Theme 2: Disparities in salaries

It was reported by four participants that there were incidents whereby senior social workers and supervisors were earning the same salary which was causing challenges in the management of subordinates by supervisors. Participants indicated that such salary determinations that do not take seniority levels into consideration resulted in lack of respect for seniors by subordinates and led to supervisors not being able to assert their authority.

Although managers have different corrective behaviour mechanisms at their disposal to manage unprofessional behaviour, supervisors reported encountering difficulties in addressing issues such as respect and being undermined due to having less experience than certain senior social workers. Regarding the dynamics between senior social workers and supervisors, participant 1 stated the following:

"Yes, there [were] a few petty people who threw tantrums towards one another. The argument was I have been here for more than 10 years and this one has been here for 5 years and I can't

be earning the same salary as them, we might as well be doing the very same job. There was this incident where you had a supervisor getting the same salary as a junior social worker… the very same person has to supervise this person. And these are the issues that were never addressed" **(Participant 1-Social Worker).**

The discrepancy in salaries is concerning and is consistent with the view held by Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011) that compensation that is not competitive has the potential to increase turnover. The authors hold the view that employees tend to leave employers who do not provide competitive salaries or whose pay dispensation and inequality are high and also who not dispense bonuses and incentives in line with a person's performance.

Another participant alluded further on the issue of discrepancies between senior social workers and supervisors earning the same salary by stating the following:

"So now imagine someone who has been on Level 8, it means they will move to Level 9 after 10 years which is the same as the supervisor. So if I'm a social worker then I move from Level 8 to Level 9 but I'm not a supervisor and somebody else aspires to be a supervisor, she also goes to Level 9, and then you see the discrepancy in terms of the responsibilities. We earn the same salary but our responsibilities are different. I have managerial responsibility and the other one doesn't have, he is only responsible for case load, but the salary is on the same level. So I think that is a challenge" **(Participant 9-Social Worker).**

Participants further reported that this aspect has the potential to affect the morale of supervisors and discourage aspirant supervisors from considering the position of being a supervisor due to non-attractive remunerative benefits of holding such a position. Calitz et al. (2014) confirm that such a discrepancy has the potential to affect negatively the provisions of the policy by encouraging officials to move into positions of senior management and reduce the supervisory pool. This finding emphasises the need for supervisors to help social workers navigate the different difficult cases and trauma experienced in the field and offer support to help them cope with occupational stress and burnout.

Speaking on relations between senior social workers and supervisors earning the same salary and the challenges it causes, one participant said:

"But it depends on maturity. One will compromise. The other is not aspiring to be a supervisor while you wanted to be a supervisor, so whose fault is it? It is not the person's fault who is not a supervisor but earning your salary. But now some will disrespect and say things like 'what

will you tell me, I'm earning better than you'. And they are usually senior and have more number of years. So I don't know how this can be changed" **(Participant 7-Social Worker).**

Another participant echoed the same sentiments by adding that:

"I remember one guy during consultation session did ask about the issue of being a social worker and having more years of experience and earning more than your supervisor, to say, why don't we give that person responsibility and supervisory roles. The consultant said 'you can't'. The OSD has nothing to do with that you earn more than your manager, or you have more experience. It doesn't work like that. You cannot punish that person because you feel that person can move and become a supervisor. If that person wants to be a supervisor, then they will apply and if he doesn't want, he doesn't want, then you leave them there. It's the system that allows it and gives that leeway; it's not the person's fault" **(Participant 2-Social Worker).**

This finding reveals that salaries should be linked to the amount of work and responsibility that an individual employee performs. This finding is in line with the Global Workforce study (Towers Watson, 2014) where it was found that salary packages must be competitive, market-related and based on the work done instead of a generic approach to compensation. They further found that compensation that does not reward performance and disparity has the potential to lead to a high turnover of employees and make it difficult to retain skills of employees. The theoretical framework indicates that employee retention aims to provide employees with adequate compensation and the ability to reach their financial and economic goals and as such, it supports the above finding.

Sub-Theme 3: Low salaries

Most of the participants reported that the social work profession is engulfed by low salaries in comparison with other social service and health professionals. Seven out of 10 participants described the salaries they received as menial and not market related. This is despite the public service offering the best comprehensive remunerative package within the social services sector with benefits such as permanent employment, performance bonuses, 13th cheque, pension contribution and medical aid (RSA, 2016) when compared with the NGO sector. The perceptions about low salaries were consistent amongst participants who have more work experience (more than ten years), about the slow material progression in their personal lives in

comparison with individuals with whom they attended University. They believe that the menial salaries they receive are not sufficient to justify the work they produce and to sustain an affordable lifestyle which can indirectly influence society to recommend studying towards a social work degree.

One participant described the difficulty in motivating students to study social work by stating that:

"even if you can check with the social workers when they motivate others to study social work, do they really promote the profession? Because after work they will be going to taxi ranks with the very same social workers who are encouraging them so they are only a few that will advocate for this profession" **(Participant 6-Social Worker).**

The participants dwelled further and compared the salary of social workers with other professions within the safety and security sector and lamented that the OSD has not significantly improved the salaries of social workers and supervisors by indicating that:

"No it is not improving the working conditions of social workers such as salaries, salaries is a very big deal because if you are a social worker and people can see you are a social worker and it looks like you're doing well in life before you even talk and tell people to do social work they will see for themselves that there is an improvement in this person's life, because you have been working as a social worker yourself for maybe 5 years. But not much has changed, you do not have much, then you find someone who you used to go to university with, that person is now driving good cars, everything is going well for him…Look at the prosecutors they come here after 2 years they go to Regional Court, you find that their salaries is even higher than that of the social work supervisor who has 10 years of experience. Imagine that is within two years they are at Regional Court and the salary is higher than that of a social work supervisor and both of them have been to university for 4 years. Even the entry-level, studying law is four years, am I wrong? No, so you just look at entry level and you will know what I'm talking about. Basically… it is not competitive" **(Participant 7-Social Worker).**

Competitive salaries across markets continue to lead the debate in the discussion of pay progression across multiple sectors (Maloa, 20111). Maloa (2011) found that the determinants of pay progression and competitive salaries are not based on compassion by the employer but rather are based on a number of factors such as an organisation's compensation philosophy, job performance, job grading, employee skill, job family, external equity and job tenure. His

findings are important in relation to this study as they offer a framework to understand the reasons for the pay disparities within the Department and the determinants that Departments can rely on for improved salaries.

The findings by the participants coincided with suggestions by one of the key informants and six out of ten participants who advocated for job evaluations to be conducted in order to re-evaluate and determine the value of the social work job in relation to other jobs within the Department of Social Development. The participants advocated for the re-grading of their job descriptions in order to increase the value of the position and in so doing to improve the salaries for entry level social workers. The suggestion was made further that the job descriptions of social workers should not be generic but rather be based on the objectives of the White Paper for Social Welfare. This is significant as the White Paper (RSA, 1997) also views poor salaries as one of the major issues that need to be addressed.

The views of the participants are captured in the following statements:

"I believe that if the employer could review how we do our work and make sure that even if we have a similar job description, they consider individual strengths and include that in our profiles. We could focus on the areas we excel in and the Department will reap better benefits where our skills are maximised" **(Participant 10-Social Worker).**

"You see, if the Department could enter a job evaluation process and maybe upgrade the entry level from Level 7 to Level 8. That would be a start. Of course… that would go hand in hand with changing our job profile so that we are given responsibilities that are performed by a person at Level 8" **(Key Informant 1)**

"You know, if there is one thing I'd suggest as a review of the policy would be for job evaluation to be done to review our roles because I believe we do more but get paid less. The department has always shied away when we ask for job evaluations. Instead we are told it is a national process and cannot be done at the provincial level" **(Participant 8-Social Worker).**

This finding demonstrates the plurality of views held by participants on the policy and its outcomes in the promotion of social service practitioners. While some participants considered that the salaries of social workers are generally low in comparison to other professions, others held that the introduction of OSD policy had brought about an improvement in historically low salaries of social workers, recognition and the rewarding of skills and experience, and had increased salaries of entry level social workers. The latter participants stated that the

improvement in salaries recognised their skills and experience. The participants argued that the increase of historically slow salaries was experienced only at inception of the policy but due to saturation, have not seen significant salary increases after that.

4.4. Summary

This chapter highlighted the findings of the study in relation to the research question and objectives. The profiles of the participants were captured in terms of their biographic profiles and the findings were reported in line with the themes and sub-themes that emerged and responses from participants were expressed in direct quotes and statements to describe the views.

CHAPTER FIVE

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The research study aimed to explore and describe the perceptions of social workers in the Gauteng Department of Social Development in Johannesburg, on the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy. The researcher interviewed social workers in the Gauteng Department of Social Development as policy practitioners and developers, with the view to understand how the OSD policy for social service practitioners was implemented. The data was analysed thematically. Literature and the theoretical framework were integrated to enhance the credibility of the findings. In this chapter, a summary of how the objectives were achieved is presented. This discussion will be followed by a presentation of the key findings. The main findings will then inform the conclusions to be drawn by the researcher. Thereafter, the researcher will formulate recommendations based on the key findings and conclusions for the Departments of Social Development and Public Service and Administration. Additionally, recommendations for policy improvement and future research are advanced.

5.2. Achievement of objectives

Objective 1: To establish the views of social workers on the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy as a recruitment and retention strategy.

This objective was successfully achieved in the empirical study section of the research report. The views of social workers on the OSD policy have been established and discussed in detail in Chapter 4 as emerging themes and sub-themes (See Table 2).

Key Findings:

- The empirical findings revealed that participants found the OSD policy to be not effective in recruitment citing that it is rigid and inflexible.

- The empirical study further revealed that the policy is more attractive to the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector.

- The empirical findings indicated that the effective implementation of the OSD policy is hindered by administrative and financial challenges.

- The study further revealed that the lack of promotion was demoralising employees and resulted in social workers considering to leave the profession or enter other social sciences fields which do not apply the OSD policy as a recruitment and retention policy.

Conclusions

- The ineffectiveness of the recruitment and retention policy in particular the work experience requirement, especially for supervisor positions, was problematic. Here the minimum requirement for consideration is seven years of experience after qualification as a social worker. Most participants expressed dissatisfaction with this requirement and viewed this as gatekeeping and delaying the progression of professionals.

- The retention component of the policy is reliant on the availability of resources, sound financial management and managerial discretion in the allocation of budgets to cater for retention benefits. These benefits are inclusive of subsidised vehicles, sufficient and roadworthy fleet cars, and laptop allocation. The participants noted that a lack of effective working conditions and availability of resources to execute their duties negatively impacted on the policies' ability to retain their skill. Participants held the view that social workers are retained by default because they cannot move upward due to grade progression requirements.

- The overall perception by the participants centered on their dissatisfaction with the policies' requirements for promotion into management positions, citing the high number of years of experience required. This resulted in participants feeling demotivated and thus impacted on the policy's ability to attract and recruit suitable employees.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Department of Social Development review its recruitment approach in order to have a flexible recruitment policy.

- The Department of Social Development to consider developing mechanisms to enhance their administrative procedures and resolve identified challenges.

- The Department of Public Service and Administration together with the Department of Social Development consider investigating new measures of promoting Social Workers in an effort to reduce the grade progression period.

Objective 2: To establish the perceived effects of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy on the morale of social workers.

This objective was achieved in the empirical findings section (See Chapter 4 Table 2), where a theme emerged that the grade progression period had a negative impact on the morale of social workers. The literature review (See Section 2.2) further described how a hampered relationship between supervisor and supervisee could affect the morale of employees.

Key Finding:

- The OSD policy requirements for job promotion and the difficulty in offering suitable retention strategies have impacted negatively on the morale of social workers. The policy was viewed as delaying the promotion and upward mobility of practitioners in that a certain number of years of experience is required to progress to the next salary grade.

- The OSD policy has failed to achieve its intended goal of recruiting and retaining social work professionals. The rigidity of the policy and difficulty in the filling of vacant posts due to entry level requirements set by the OSD policy were perceived as major challenges that impacted on the policy's ability to attract and recruit suitable employees.

Conclusion

- The OSD policy requirements for grade progression means that social workers could be earning income on the same salary band for at least a period of 10 years without enjoying any promotion. In other circumstances, social workers would need to qualify for accelerated grade progression based on high performance. This requirement was seen as a deterrent that discouraged social workers and affected their morale negatively. In effect, this revealed that a demoralised workforce has a negative impact on any organisation's 'bottom line' and impacts negatively the Department's ability to effectively achieve its mandate of providing efficient social services to the public.

- The participants described this challenge as a problem as it limited internal employees from applying for vacant posts due to the required number of years to progress to another grade. This was exacerbated by the policy's lack of consideration of further education in mitigation of experience when selecting suitable candidates for positions. This led participants to feel discouraged to seek further education such as a Master's degrees as it did not increase their prospects of employment in lieu of experience. This was found to negatively affect their morale and prospect for growth within the organisation and encouraged participants to consider alternative employment and which in turn would increase the turnover rate within the Department.

Recommendation

- The OSD policy should be reviewed and the review process should include social workers as people that are directly affected by the policy with the view to obtain their experiences, views and input on how to improve the policy.

- It was recommended that the review of the policy should consider relaxing the minimum requirements for supervisor positions.

- The review of the policy should have an end goal of being flexible and allow HR practitioners the discretion to consider suitable work experience and qualifications in the filling of vacant positions.

Objective 3: To explore the perceptions of social workers on the challenges experienced in implementing the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy

This objective was realised in the empirical chapter (See Table 2), where themes and sub-themes emerged on the various challenges that were encountered in the implementation of the OSD policy. These themes and sub-themes (challenges) have been discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of the research report.

Key Finding:

- The main finding of this objective was that participants felt there were a multitude of challenges that engulfed the OSD policy's effective implementation. This finding is consistent with the undertaking that a fair career development and planning system should ensure that all employees understand what skills are required to grow professionally and to be rewarded based on performance and monitor that all efforts are linked to the organisation's business objectives.

- Participants also stated the link between the usage of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) to allocate appraisal scores in order for employees to qualify for accelerated grade progression was problematic.

Conclusions:

- One of the challenges listed by the participants related to the excessive period of grade progression to move from one grade to another. Participants found this aspect of the policy to be problematic as it delayed upward mobility of social service practitioners. One of the critical factors for a promotion strategy identified by the participants included a combination of minimal number of years, consideration of performance, skills and educational qualifications.

- The findings indicated that participants found that the usage of the PMDS system was not effectively implemented due to the perceived biased approach utilised by managers to reach a final score on their performance review. They stated that managers were subjective in the allocation of performance scores and used the appraisal system to discredit genuine high-performing individuals. This impacted on their ability to

progress quicker to the next grade. These experiences encountered by the participants led to feelings of being demotivated and robbed of opportunities for career advancement and therefore highlighted the PMDS system as a hindrance to career development and pathing.

- One of the key problem highlighted was that the policy of rewarding social service practitioners with attractive packages for remaining at the production level instead of entering management had resulted in unintended consequences. The policy was intended to encourage social service practitioners to remain at the production level and offer attractive packages to employees who remained at production level and not enter management level. Senior social workers now found themselves earning equivalent salaries to their supervisors although having different responsibilities. This result in strained relations between supervisor and subordinates, hampered respect and created difficulties for supervisors to assert their authority over their subordinates. This can then impact on employee's feelings about work and their motivation to perform effectively if there are strained relationships between supervisor and subordinate.

Recommendations

- The key recommendations that emerged were for the Department to consider delinking the PMDS from the accelerated grade progression and for the consideration of a different performance measurement system that would be logical and objective with little room for human interpretation and error.

- Further there is a need for the Department to consider the adjustment of salaries and remunerate its employees accordingly to minimise potential conflict and discrepancy of salaries.

Objective 4: To determine the views of social workers on how the challenges associated with the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation policy could be addressed

The different mechanisms of improving the motivational levels of employees were outlined in the literature review chapter (see Section 2.2). The literature review summed up the different

retention factors that can be implemented by employers to enhance their retention rate, maintain a productive and healthy workforce (see Section 2.3).

Key findings:

- The main findings of this objective were significant for this study as they related to recommendations on how to improve the implementation of the OSD policy.

- The findings further revealed that there was a need to improve the working conditions so that they can complement the OSD policy provisions of improving salary grading of social workers.

Conclusions:

- The main consensus amongst all participants was a call for the review of the policy with the following considerations such as reconsidering the number of years of experience required for promotion to supervisor level. This included a consideration to reduce the grade progression period to less than 10 years. This provision would relax the conditions for promotion and extend the eligibility of social workers to become supervisors and move to higher salary grades.

Recommendations:

- The Department of Public Service and Administration to increase its budget allocation for salaries and benefits in the midst of difficult present economic challenges.

- The Department should establish a task team to investigate views of social service practitioners in order to find solutions on how to resolve the various challenges encountered within the field.

5.3.1. Recommendations for Department of Social Development

- Review the OSD policy by considering the views of key role players on how the policy can be improved to be more effective.
- Allocation of budget for resources in order to improve tools of the trade.

- Prioritise the improvement of working conditions of all employees within the Department in order to complement the provisions of the OSD policy on retaining employees for longer periods.

5.3.2. Recommendations for Department of Public Service and Administration

- Review the OSD policy by considering the views of key role players in how the policy can be improved to be more effective.
- Establish a committee that will facilitate the process of policy review.
- Initiate a National job evaluation process to review the job profiles of social workers.
- Develop guidelines for effective implementation of the OSD policy.
- Provide capacity building on effective implementation of the OSD policy.
- Commission research on recruitment and retention within public service to inform and improve recruitment and retention practices within the workplace.

5.3.3. Recommendations for Social Work Practice

- Advocate for improved working conditions and the review of the OSD policy through internal channels.
- Investigate best practices on how to improve the role of social workers within the public service.
- Investigate the delays and backlogs in the improvement of working conditions for social workers within the public sector.
- Investigate the root causes of strained supervisor-subordinate relationships and their impact on service delivery, employee conduct and performance.

5.3.4. Recommendations for Future Research

- Future research should consider a larger sample to study the impact of OSD policy in the Social Services Profession on a national scale with the inclusion of samples from each Province.

- Future research should consider commissioning a larger study that involves more districts offices in the Province on the working conditions of social workers within the Department of Social Development.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Approval to conduct research within the Gauteng Department of Social Development

GAUTENG PROVINCE

INTERNAL MEMO

Enquiries: Dr Solo Mokoena
Tel: 011 355 7865
File No: 2/9/10

TO : MS A HARTMANN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL: SUPPORT SERVICES

FROM : DR S MOKOENA
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND POLICY COORDINATION

DATE : 5 MARCH 2015

SUBJECT : APPLICATION FOR STUDENT RESEARCH APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN FACILITIES REGULATED BY THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the memorandum is to request approval of an application by Sipho Sol Mathebula, from the University of Johannesburg, to conduct a research project within facilities regulated by the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

2. DISCUSSION/MOTIVATION

The Department supports compilation of research that falls within its mandate and stands to benefit and grow from the information generated. Thus taking into account the afore stated, Sipho Sol Mathebula, from the University of Johannesburg, has approached the Gauteng Department of Social Development for assistance in conducting the research study. The title of the research study is:

"The perceptions of Social Workers employed in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme"

The proposed research study is very fundamental in terms of contributing to the existing body of knowledge. In addition, the research findings will be utilized to enhance the planning process of the Department.

It is important to note that the research topic and scope of the research is completely defined by university requirements and respective individuals' interest. The Department supports as the subject falls within its mandate and stands to benefit and grow from the information generated.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be no financial implications for the Department.

4. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the research proposal submitted by Sipho Sol Mathebula be approved since it is in line with the Departmental mandate and information generated will contribute towards the planning process of the Department.

Dr S MOKOENA
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH & POLICY COORDINATION
DATE: 06-03-2015

Recommendation approved/~~not approved /approved with amendments~~

MS A HARTMANN
DDG: SUPPORT SERVICES
DATE: 11/3/2015

GAUTENG PROVINCE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: Ms Keitumetse Komane
Tel: +27 (0)11 355 7892
File no: 2/9/13

MR SIPHO SOL MATHEBULA

Dear Sipho Sol Mathebula

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you for your application to conduct research in the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

Your application on the research **"The perceptions of Social Workers employed in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme"** has been considered and approved for support by the Department as it was found beneficial to the Department's vision and mission. The approval is subject to the Departmental terms and conditions as endorsed by you on the 4/03/2015.

May I take this opportunity to wish you well in the journey that you are about to embark upon.

We are looking forward to a value adding research and a fruitful co-operation.

With thanks.

Ms. A Hartmann
Deputy Director General: Social Development
Date:

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

The perceptions of Social Workers employed in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme

Good day

My name is Sipho Sol Mathebula and I am a post graduate student registered for the MA in Social Development degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. As one of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research into the perceptions of Social Workers in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme (OSD). It is hoped that this information may enhance our understanding of the perceptions of social workers on the implementation of OSD.

I hereby wish to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and there will be no adverse consequences, should you decline to participate. If you agree to take part in the study, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. You may withdraw from the research at any time, and you may also refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. With your permission, the interview will be tape recorded. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept in a locked cabinet and password protected personal computer for two years following publication or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

As the interview deals with workplace issues and perceived impacts of workplace policies on productivity, there is the possibility of emotional distress. Should you therefore feel the need for counselling following the interview, I have arranged for counselling to be provided free of charge by the ICAS Southern Africa. They may be contacted at 0800 611 169. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study. I may be contacted on (011) 227 9138 or 076 966 4508. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study, an abstract will be made available on request.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely

Appendix 3: Consent Form to collect data

Consent form for Participation in the Study of

The perceptions of Social Workers in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme

I _____, hereby consent to participate in the research project conducted by Sipho Sol Mathebula. The purpose and procedure of the study have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular items or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that my responses will be kept confidential.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 4: Consent form for the Audio Taping of the Interview

Consent form for the Audio Taping of the Interview for the Study of

The perceptions of Social Workers in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme

I _____, hereby consent to the tape recording of the interview with Sipho Sol Mathebula. I also agree to allow for direct quotes to be incorporated into the study, and understand that my confidentiality will still be maintained at all times. I understand that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for Social Workers

The perceptions of Social Workers employed in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme

Interview schedule for Social Workers

Part 1: Demographic Information

Gender of participant: Male/ Female

Age:

Race:

Qualification/s:

Number of years employed as a Social Worker:

Part 2: Open-Ended Questions

1. Describe in detail your daily duties as a Social Worker?
2. What is your understanding of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) policy?
3. Describe your reactions when the draft policy on occupation specific dispensation was announced in 2007?
4. Describe your experiences with the introduction and implementation of the occupation specific dispensation within the Department?
5. In your view, what have been the challenges associated with the implementation of the OSD policy?
6. In your view, what would be the best way to address the challenges associated with the implementation of the OSD policy?
7. In your view, what have been the positive outcomes of the OSD policy?
8. What are your views on the OSD policy as a recruitment and retention strategy for Social Workers?

9. Do you believe that the OSD policy has played a significant role in the promotion of social workers? Yes/No? Explain?

10. Do you believe that the OSD policy has had an impact on the morale of social workers? Yes/No? Explain?

11. Do you believe that the OSD policy has offered suitable career opportunities and improvement in the grade progression of Social Workers? Yes/No? Explain?

12. Any other comments?

Appendix 6: Interview Schedule for Key Informants

The perceptions of Social Workers employed in the Department of Social Development in Johannesburg on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme

Interview schedule for Key Informants

Part 1: Demographic Information

Gender of participant: Male/ Female

Age:

Race:

Qualification/s:

Role within the Department of Social Development:

Part 2: Open-Ended Questions

1. Describe your duties within the Department/Public Service?
2. What is your understanding of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) policy?
3. What were the factors that informed the drafting and adoption of the OSD as a policy?
4. Describe the process that was followed to design the OSD policy?
5. To what extent has the Department been able to attract and retain Social Workers?
6. What indicators were adopted to measure the successful implementation of the OSD?
7. What are the challenges associated with the implementation of OSD?
8. How can the challenges associated with the implementation of the OSD be addressed?
9. What are the positive outcomes associated with the implementation of OSD?

10. What role has OSD played in improving career paths and grade progression of Social Workers?

11. What role has the performance review system played in the implementation of OSD?

12. What role has the OSD policy played in service delivery outputs?

13. What effect has the OSD policy had on the morale of Social Workers?

14. Any other comments?

Appendix 7: Ethics Clearance Certificate

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Mathebula

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/02/29**
PROJECT TITLE	Perceptions of social workers employed by Dept of Social Development in Jhb on the implementation of the occupation specific dispensation scheme
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr S Mathebula
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human & Community Development/Social Work
DATE CONSIDERED	20 February 2015
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	23 February 2017

DATE 24 February 2015 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor : Professor E Kaseke

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor Senate House, University

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES