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PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: EXPLORING VIEWS OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE JOHANNESBURG CHILD PROTECTION FIELD

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A report on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree Master of Arts in Social Work in the field of Occupational Social Work

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Supervisor: Dr. Ajwang' Warria

DECLARATION

I, Busisiwe Myaka, hereby declare that this research report is my own work and that I have provided full acknowledgement for all the sources that I have used. This research report has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination.



……..	08/12/2021 ……..
Signature	Date

DEDICATION

My gratitude goes to my family, friends and colleagues for their unwavering support, thank you for believing in my capabilities. To my loving husband Thulani Blessing Myaka, words fail me as I can never thank you enough for holding our family together during this difficult journey, your efforts never went unnoticed. To my children, Zamaqwabe and Mdali thank you for being understanding when I could not play with you because I had this report to complete, I strive to be your inspiration so that you too can achieve beyond what I have. To my only surviving parent, my loving mother Ms. Ntsoaki Evelyn Mlangeni, thank you for being my pillar of strength, for working hard to ensure I get all the opportunities you never did. To my late father Mr. Eddie Bongizizwe Gumbi, I know you would be very proud of me. My greatest gratitude goes to God for the blessing of life, the strength He has afforded me, as well as the people He has brought in my life that have had such a vast impact on the person I am today.

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- To the child protection organisations in Johannesburg that permitted me to engage with their employees.

To God be the glory

ABSTRACT

The South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) developed a policy to encourage social workers to participate in continuous professional development (CPD). The CPD policy was aimed at ensuring that skills of social workers are adequately improved and promotes further development of the profession. Social work is a profession that tasked with ensuring the wellbeing of those in need and who cannot protect themselves such as children. As a result it becomes highly necessary for child protection social workers to improve on their knowledge base to ensure quality of services provision. The study was exploratory in nature and aimed to discover what the views of social workers in the child protection sector in the Johannesburg area were on CPD and whether or not they are actively engaged in CPD activities. Qualitative research methods were applied in data collection and analysis of research findings. The research design was a case study in order to better understand the phenomenon investigated. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a population of twelve social workers who were in the child protection field along with four key informants. The findings of the research study indicated some understanding and value of CDP as an important aspect of training and development for child protection social workers in practice. The study highlighted the types of CPD child protection social workers were engaged in as well as the impact of the child protection organisations they find themselves in. Further education on the importance of CPD participation should take place within organisations and the introduction of an occupational social worker would play an essential role in improving child protection social workers engagement in CPD.

Key words: continuous professional development, child protection, social work, occupational social work.

ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AASW	Australian Association of Social Workers
BASW	British Association of Social Workers
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
COVID-19	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) also known as Coronavirus disease
DSD	Department of Social Development
NASW	National Association of Social Workers
OSWPM	Occupational Social Work Practice Model
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
POE	Portfolio of evidence
SACSSP	South African Council of Social Service Professions
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Cover page	i
Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Acronyms	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Statement of the problem and rationale for the study	1
1.3 Research question	4
1.4 Research aim and objectives of the study	4
1.5 Research methodology	5
1.6 Theoretical framework	5
1.7 Definition of key concepts	7
1.8 Ethical considerations	9
1.9 Outline of chapters	10
1.10 Conclusion	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Social work	11
2.3 Child protection social work in South Africa	12
2.4 Legislation governing child protection social workers in South Africa	14
2.5 Statutory registration and professionalization	16
2.6 Continuous professional development	16
2.7 The relevance of continuous professional development in South Africa	20
2.8 Occupational Social Work	21
2.9 Conclusion	22

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction 24

3.2 Research approach 24

3.3 Research design 25

3.4 Research instrument 26

3.5 Area of study 27

3.6 Population, sample and sampling procedures 28

3.7 Data collection 30

3.8 Data analysis 32

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study 34

3.10 Ethical considerations 36

3.11 Limitations and delimitations of the research 39

3.12 Conclusion 40

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction 41

4.2 Demographic information of research participants 41

4.3 Presentation and discussion of the themes 43

4.3.1 Social worker's understanding of CPD 44

4.3.2 Nature of participation activities 47

4.3.3 Motivation to participation 51

4.3.4 Barriers to participation 55

4.3.5 The impact of the work environment 61

4.4 Conclusion 65

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction 66

5.2 Aims and objectives of the study 66

5.3 Summary of the main findings 66

5.4 Recommendations 69

5.5 Conclusion of study 70

REFERENCES 72

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Request for permission to recruit participants 85

APPENDIX B**:** Participant Information Sheet 86

APPENDIX C: Consent Form for Participating in the Study 88

APPENDIX D: Request for permission to use research instrument 89

APPENDIX E: Interview guide for key informant OSW 91

APPENDIX F: Interview guide for child protection participants 93

APPENDIX G: Interview guide for key informant training coordinator 95

APPENDIX H: Interview transcripts 97

APPENDIX I : Ethics clearance certificate 107

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

Child protection social work as a profession is aimed at advocating for and protecting the rights of vulnerable children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) (2015) state that child protection social workers use statutory authority to safeguard children through child focused and family inclusive interventions. Due to the nature of the profession, child protection social workers are required to have adequate knowledge and skills to investigate and implement adequate interventions to children in need.

To practice social workers in various countries are required to be registered with a professional body that maintains their credibility to practice. On 1st April 2010, the South African Council of Social Service Professions (SACSSP) introduced a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) policy in which registered members needed to maintain their membership by acquiring 20 CPD points through professional learning activities (Lombard, 2010). All social workers registered with the council and who wish to remain registered, must participate in CPD (SACSSP, 2019). The council measures competency through social workers providing a portfolio of evidence (POE) of different accredited trainings, readings and online activities a registered social worker has engaged in.

There have been previous studies conducted in other countries to explore whether social workers do engage in CPD activities (Beddoe & Duke, 2013; Brady, 2014). Although there is such literature at an international level, a gap exists as there is limited research on whether child protection social workers engage in CPD in the South African context. The study utilized the data collection instrument used by Brady (2014) in their study, but contextualized to the South African setting.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) (2018) states that child protection social workers are found in social worker led child and family organisations. Child protection social workers are tasked with instituting interventions in order to protect and safe guard children from any form of harm. To do so, a social worker in the child protection field needs to continuously ensure that they are adequately trained and keep abreast with information and skills to enable them to be effective in services being rendered to children and their families.

To be optimally effective it is important that child protection social workers continuously build on their knowledge base. The concept of CPD according to Halton, Powell and Scanlon (2014) is an activity that exists across many different professions, involving engagement in ongoing education and development throughout professional career. In many countries such as the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland, China, New Zealand and in South Africa, social workers are required to be affiliated to social work regulatory bodies and these are responsible for ensuring that social workers are compliant with the CPD policy. In most countries CPD is not only synonymous with social work discipline but is also encouraged in other disciplines such as in medicine, engineering and law. Lam, Yan and Liang (2013) state that there is no set international minimum standard for the required hours in continuous professional education as this is the responsibility of the social work regulatory body of each country.

Literature search indicates that several studies have been undertaken globally to ascertain the importance of CPD for social workers in practice (Beddoe & Duke, 2013; Devaney, 2015; Halton, Powell & Scanlon, 2015; Lam et al, 2013). The significance of CPD in social work is to maintain professional competence. However, challenges pertaining to CPD also exist as reported in several studies such as social workers attitudes, motivation, commitments and organisations (Devaney, 2015; Moriarty & Manthorpe, 2014). In New Zealand, Baddoe and Duke (2013) out of random selection of registered social workers found that although they were aware of being expected to acquire 150 CPD points over a three-year period there was low evidence of enhancement of reflective practice. In China, Lam et al., (2016) found that although continuous professional education is crucial in ensuring that social workers remain committed to the profession, it emerged that social workers engage in training for public accountability to comply with CPD points rather than for their own professional development.

In 2010, SACSSP adopted a policy on ongoing CPD for social service practitioners that was later revised in 2019 and was further being revised with possibility of implementation in 2021. The policy requires that all registered social workers must engage in CPD activities that have a CPD points attached to the learning activity. The minimum CPD points that need to be accrued by a registered social worker annually is 20 points or 40 per two-year cycle. CPD generally involves activities aimed at increasing knowledge, skills and professional competence that social workers engage in individually or in groups with other professionals (SACSSP, 2019). According to SACSSP, online activities are also endorsed if the social worker can prove that the activity has added to their knowledge base.

There were specific South African studies conducted aimed at identifying the challenges of implementation of CPD policy when it was introduced in 2010 (Lombard, 2010; September, 2010). These studies recommended that there needed to be collaborative ownership of all stakeholders involved being the council, employers and social workers for the policy to be effective. However, the available research on CPD undertaking in South Africa by social workers, particularly in the child protection field is not sufficient. The need for undertaking this proposed study is because there is limited research on CPD in the South African context particularly focusing on child protection social work.

The researcher has through personal experience observed that there are certain challenges to acquiring CPD training as a child protection social worker. Personal experience according to Davies and Davies (2007) is described as meanings attributed to a personal experience and can establish if there is common understanding of a phenomenon. As a practising child protection social worker having worked at three different non-profit organisations over the last four years it was challenging to participate in CPD training. The first factor was that CPD trainings are not free of charge and are often being charged by facilitators. Some organisations provide the trainings to social workers at no cost to the employee, but those working in organisations that cannot fund trainings are reluctant to fund themselves. It was observed by the researcher that this then made social workers demotivated to participate. Secondly, SACSSP does not seem to be actively assessing the compliance of registered members on CPD, leading to social workers not making compliance a priority. The third factor was a lack of support and encouragement to actively engage in trainings that can improve professional efficiency in the work environment. The introduction of an occupational social worker in the workplace as a means of support may possibly increase knowledge and understanding of CPD as one of their functions is the promotion of education and development. According to Du Plessis (2001), occupational social workers offer a service rather than a product in response to worker and organisational needs. Googins and Godfrey (as cited in Hughes et al., 2018, p. 379) define occupational social work as a specialised area in the social work discipline in which human and social needs are attended to in the work community for effective human and environment functioning. Educational and developmental needs identification is one of the programs that are developed by occupational social workers in ensuring that both needs of the employees and of the organisation are met. In light of this the study provided insight on what role an occupational social worker can actively play in ensuring all social workers within an organisation acquire CPD.

It seems CPD is an important activity that may assist in broadening the knowledge base of child protection social workers to enable them to be more effective. The researcher is aware that in South Africa, the majority of social workers are actively engaged in CPD activities, although there are limited studies on CPD implementation and uptake. The study hopes to encourage policy makers to measure the effectiveness of policies they implement for CPD. In exploring the views of child protection social workers the on CPD, relevant policy informed by the relevant beneficiaries may be recommended. In addition to this, this study hopes to shed some light on how child protection social workers can be supported to adhere to CPD policy as a way to enhance their functioning in the workplace through interventions of an occupational social worker. The researcher deemed it necessary to establish from child protection social workers their experiences on engaging in CPD activities to increase the current knowledge base on the phenomenon. The study results will be crucial to assist in policy drafting with insight on the recommendations of child protection social workers.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the views of social workers in the child protection sector regarding engagement in CPD?

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sought to understand the views of child protection social workers in Johannesburg regarding their participation in CPD. To achieve the aim, the following objectives were developed:

i. To examine the perspectives of the child protection social workers in understanding of CPD.
ii. To explore activities child protection social workers engage in as part of CPD.
iii. To investigate factors that motivate child protection social worker's engagement in CPD
iv. To explore factors that hinder social workers in the child protection field in engaging in CPD activities.
v. To explore the influence of work environments on social worker's engagement in CPD.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach that was applied in the study was qualitative exploratory research to explore the views of child protection social workers on CPD. The research design was a case study. Flick (2009) describes that case studies give a precise description of persons that are the subject of analysis and in this instance will be child protection social workers in Johannesburg. The population was child protection social workers in Johannesburg, purposive sampling was used to draw a sample size of 12 social workers within the Johannesburg child protection field. The data collection instrument for the study was a semi-structured interview guide that was used in the study by Brady (2014) in Ireland with questions altered to be in line with the South African context. Thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data with the researcher ensuring that during data analysed it was done so in a trustworthy manner.

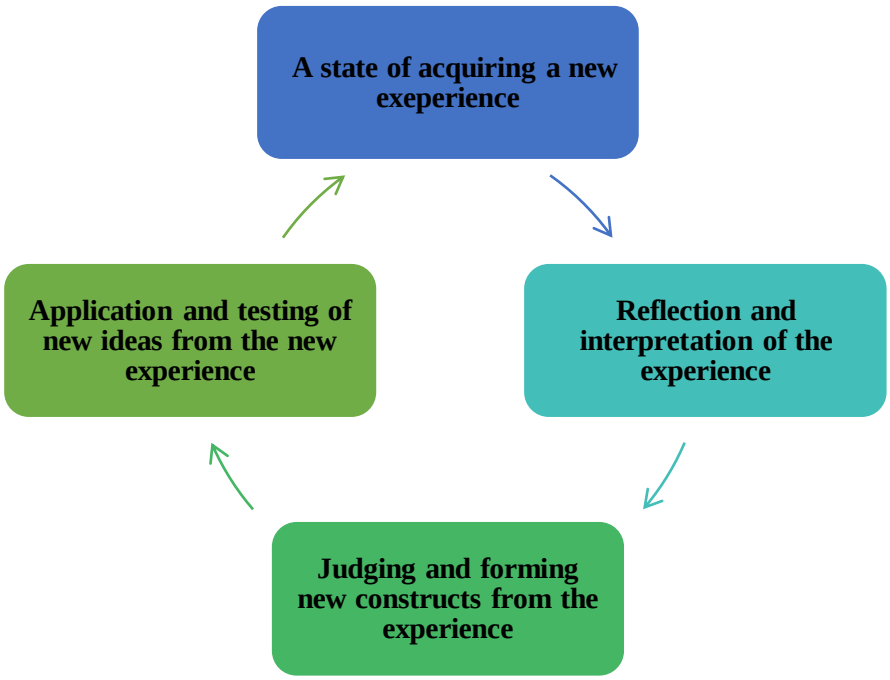
1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The process of learning is one where the individual involved in the process aims to increase his/her current knowledge base. This study was aimed at increasing the information available regarding engagement in CPD of social workers in the child protection sector. The theoretical framework for this study will be aligned to the learning theoretical framework. Anfara and Mertz (2014) describe theoretical framework as allowing the researcher to see and understand aspects of the research problem chosen for study. The experiential learning framework was applied in the study to understanding the views of social workers in the protection sector on CPD. The social work profession is a practical learning field as prior to obtaining the social work degree students are expected to have practical engagement with clients and communities therefore the learning process is both academic and experiential (Dhemba, 2012; Lam, 2016; Stavenga- de Jong et al., 2006). After qualifying, the process of learning continues. It is for that reason that social workers are expected to enhance their competency to enable them to be more effective. As previously indicated CPD is not a concept that only exists in the social work profession but also exists in many other professions. Learning in the social work profession does not end with the completion of the social work degree, but according to Jivanjee et al. (2015) social workers are involved in a lifelong learning process.

According to Beard and Wilson (2013), Kolb's experiential learning theory is derived from the works of previous scholars such as Kurt Lewin and John Dewey. These early scholars indicated that the learning process is one that involves observation, knowledge and judgement. The process of learning in social work according to Malmberg-Heimonen et al., (2015) in Norway

refers to acquiring a formal education and workplace experience which then enables the social worker to be professionally competent. It becomes evident that in South Africa and in the global community one cannot be a professional social worker without learning that lacks education and workplace experience. The concept of learning through experience was developed by David Kolb (1984) as the cyclical model of experiential learning see figure 1. Kolb's learning cycle according to Beard and Wilson (2013) follows a four step cycle. The first step is acquiring new experience. The second step in the cycle is when the learner takes time to interpret and reflect on the new experience. The third step is comprised of the formation of abstract constructs by judging and taking of the new ideas. The final step in the process is when the new ideas are put through the test by making decisions to solve problems based on the new experiences.

Figure 1. The Experiential Learning Cycle (Beard & Wilson, 2013)



According to Gibbs et al. (2005) there has been an increase in the use of the experiential learning framework in South African modern medicine based on realisation that ideas transforms through experience. Kolb's (1984) learning cycle applied in the CPD of social workers should allow the process of social workers acquiring new ideas that they will interpret and learn from. The model encourages active thinking and reflection of own learning. Other authors including John Dewey were reported to have similar conceptions of the learning theory

and according to Stavenga- de Jong et al. (2006) Kolb drew from them when he developed the Learning Style Inventory (LSI). The model asserts that there is an important link between an employee's formal education and the role the work environment plays in fostering professional and personal development (Beard & Wilson, 2013).

In the South African child protection field, the process of CPD should be in line with Developmental Social Welfare as well as the Service Delivery Model. As a response to societal inequalities that had been suffered in the past, "a developmental approach to social work was adopted based on the White Paper for Social Welfare" (Patel & Selipsky, 2010, p. 52). Just as in the developmental welfare approach which advocates for the development of people being served by social workers, the current study aimed to assess whether CPD was assisting in the development of social workers. If professional social workers actively reflect on own learning, the experience becomes more beneficial. It is thus imperative to establish what the experiences of learning has been for child protection social workers regarding CPD.

A model that can also be applied in practice for development of child protection social workers is the Military Social Work Practice Model that was created by Kruger and Van Brada (2001). The model according to Bouwer (2009), proved to be very successful in bringing about workplace change in the South African National Defence Force. Educational and developmental needs identification is one of the programs that are developed by occupational social workers in ensuring that both needs of the employees and of the organisation are met. Occupational social workers promote the maximum functionality of organisations through raising awareness of organisational issues and the improvement of communication processes. There is deficient research on whether the services of an occupational social worker has resulted in assistance to social workers.

1.7 DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY

1.7.1 Continuous professional development

CPD are learning activities which professionals undergo in order to increase on their acquired knowledge during training. CPD "aims at maintaining registration through enhanced knowledge, skills and experience related to professional activities, following the completion of formal training in social work and social auxiliary work" (SACSSP, 2019, p. 4). CPD activities can be undertaken individually, in groups, as online activities with the social worker keeping a record of the activities they have engaged in. Informal professional development activities are comprised of independent learning activities aimed at enhancing the professional development

of social workers. These range from work based learning activities, a professional activities, self-directed learning

1.7.2 Social work

Social work as a discipline that can be explained as one that serves to ensure the human rights, access and empowerment of all people in society. “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people” (IFSW, 2014). In South Africa, the Department of Social Development (DSD) (2011) has also adopted the same definition for social work. The emergence of the discipline according to Mapp et al., (2019) occurred in the late 19th century as a response to societal inequalities. As an global discipline it exist in many countries making it mandatory for social workers to be registered in order to maintain good standings within the profession (Fotheringham, 2018). Social workers are charged with ensuring that the interests and needs of those most vulnerable are met.

1.7.3 Child protection

Child protection refers to interventions that are aimed at the safeguarding of children. The social work profession has always been in the forefront of child protection services (Van Der Ruit, 2017). Child protection interventions which social workers are engaged are outlined in the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 that is based on section 28 of the Bill of Rights as set out in the South African Constitution, which details the statutory powers of those acting in the interests of children.

1.7.4 South African Council Social Service Professions

SACSSP is the professional body that social workers including child protection social workers should be registered. Rautenbach and Chiba (2010) state that in order for a social worker to be accredited in South Africa they have to be registered with the council. According to Sakaguchi and Sewpaul (2011), the council was established in order to determine the minimum standards for social workers and allied professionals as well as to regulate their professional conduct, training as well as compliance to the code of conduct.

1.7.5 Occupational social work

Occupational social work is refers to workplace interventions that are aimed at address the individual needs within organisations (Hughes, 2018). Occupational social workers are

entrusted in ensuring the workplace is fully functional by improving organisational communication as well as awareness on cultural differences (Du Plessis, 2001). With the introduction of occupational social workers in the workplace setting, employee's individual, group and organisational needs can be met.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to maintain ethical credibility the researcher submitted the research proposal to the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics (Non-Medical) committee as well as the Faculty of Humanities in order to acquire clearance to proceed with the research. The researcher maintained high ethical standards by ensuring that all participants engaged in the study voluntarily after having been provided with a background of the study. This was in line with principles that stated that the research must do no harm, voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality. The researcher encouraged participants' to familiarize themselves with the study by reading the information sheet which outlined the study purpose and procedure of data gathering. Consent forms were provided to participants in advance and were obtained from participants before the interviews took place. Participants were assured of their confidentiality being maintained through the use of codes and pseudonyms to disguise their identity in the research report and manner which the recordings and transcripts would be kept safe.

1.9 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The research report will comprise of five chapters, namely;

Chapter 1 introduces the research and is comprised of the statement of the problem and rationale of the study. This is then preceded by the aims of the research, an in-depth discussion of the theoretical framework and research methodology. The chapter also highlights ethical considerations applied when conducting the study.

Chapter 2 introduces the literature that was reviewed in the study. The chapter presented that scope and nature of CPD in child protection social work.

Chapter 3 is a detailed description of the research methodology that was applied in the study. This chapter details the qualitative research process that were adopted. The chapter further presents the ethical considerations in detail.

Chapter 4 is a presentation of the research findings. The findings are presented in the form of themes and subthemes that emerged from the study and discussed in relation to the research literature reviewed and the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5 is the final chapter where the research findings and conclusions are recorded. In this chapter recommendations are made solely on the study findings.

1.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter served to be an overview of what the study aims to investigate. The statement of the problem and the rational of the study was introduced in order to indicate that there was limited literature in the subject of interest. The research question was presented, followed by the aims and objectives of the study. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and theoretical framework applied, i.e the experiential learning theory was discussed. The chapter also included the key concepts being defined as they provide context for the study as well as how the research study would be presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this review is to discuss findings in literature regarding continuous professional development, particularly for child protection social workers. A review in literature according to Yin (2016) is done to build on the topic chosen by reading available literature and identifying the gaps that exist. The literature review aims to offer deeper understanding of the chosen subject area by engaging existing research material in an attempt to answer the objectives of the study. The literature review will seeks to establish what factors contribute to the participation of child protection social workers in CPD. Aspects to be covered relate to; the description of social work, statutory registration and professionalization, child protection, legislation governing child protection in South Africa. The literature review will also look at the relevance of CPD in the country and the relevance of social worker's perceptions on CPD.

2.2 SOCIAL WORK

The social work discipline is one entrusted with ensuring the promotion human rights of all people. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (2017) the social work professionals aim to enhance the wellbeing of people particularly those who are oppressed, impoverished and vulnerable in order to guarantee the basic needs of all people are met. To do this social workers need to be adequately trained. Even in the South African context social work in is referred to as a discipline whose goal is to improve the lives of individuals, groups and communities with the use of social theory (Dumont & Sumbulu 2010). Globally it is deemed a requirement for social workers to undergo ongoing professional training in order to make sure they are kept abreast with the evolution of the profession and to make them professionally competent.

Although there is literature on studies conducted in New Zealand (Beddoe & Duke, 2013) and in Ireland (Brady, 2014) a gap exists in African literature due to there being limited information in Africa about child protection social worker's engagement in CPD. As indicated earlier like in other countries where there is regulatory bodies for social workers, SACSSP is the regulatory body for social workers in South Africa and one of its duties is in ensuring that social workers are professionally competent. This led to the introduction of CPD policy in 2009, which was later was revised in 2019. This policy according to September (2010), is aimed at providing client systems with quality service by ensuring that social workers are skilled enough to be

confident in service delivery. SACSSP (2019) policy has a point system frame-work which stipulates that all registered social workers are required to accumulate 20 CPD points annually or 40 CPD points on a two year cycle and various CPD activities may be engaged in such as trainings on risk assessments, awareness and counselling to achieve these credits. CPD activities may be engaged in by individual social workers, in groups and on online platforms. It also emerged through reviewing literature that due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, CPD activities may also be engaged more using online options.

2.3 CHILD PROTECTION SOCIAL WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

The social work profession as explained previously is tasked with the protection of those who are most vulnerable, the most important being children. Whitaker (2012) states that safeguarding children at risk requires working with broken families or securing alternative placement for the child should the current placement not be conducive. The definition of the child according to the South African Children's Act, Child Amendment Act and the Constitution is anyone below the age of 18 years. Children according to Schmid (2012) are made more vulnerable due to crime, HIV/AIDS, poverty, different forms of abuse, neglect and maltreatment. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) every country has to ensure that children are protected from any form or neglect, abuse, maltreatment and exploitation.

In 1990, member states in the African came together and adopted a human rights agreement, the Banjul Charter that only came into effect in 1999. It was named the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) also referred to as the Banjul Charter and was aimed at insuring that all members states implement laws that seek to uphold the rights of children. The charter states that it is the responsibility of the law to ensure that African children's interests are promoted and safeguarded due to most children finding themselves in unfavourable circumstances due to the socio-economic situation of many countries in the continent. (ACRWC, 1990). According to the BASW (2012) a majority of child and family social workers are employed by children's service departments. Such departments have complex legislation that requires the social worker to be able to offer the much-needed support and protection. According to UNICEF (2019), the key to ensuring that the needs and wellbeing of vulnerable children are protected is through investing in the child protection workforce. Investing in the child protection social workers takes many forms such as continued education, support and development.

Social workers in different fields in South Africa that may be in the private and public sector (Rautenbach & Chiba, 2010). Social workers play a vital role in addressing many social challenges faced by communities today including human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), substance abuse, crime, inequality and abuse. Development and empowerment are the basis of the social work profession and as a result social workers are deeply immersed in communities in order to assist in community development. The social work discipline has undergone many changes in South Africa especially in the transition of the state from apartheid era to a democratic one. Gray and Mazibuko (2002) highlight that the social work profession was deeply affected by the racial segregation that existed as there was different professional groupings making it hard for professional unity. In the apartheid era Africans were prevented from accessing the same social services as their white counterparts.

Although there has been developments in the profession over the years, South Africa is still faced with the challenge of recruiting and retaining social workers (Karisam, 2009; Mangena & Warria, 2017). In another study by Strydom et al., (2020) it was found that the South African child protection sector is in a crisis due to high caseloads as well as a lack of supervision. In both these studies it was suggested that for greater retention and effective child protection services, social workers needed to be provided with competitive salaries, improved working conditions as well as increased professional training. Social workers are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring social justice for society- especially for vulnerable groups such as children who cannot defend themselves from harm. The protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect are what countries should strive to uphold (UN, 1989). It is for this reason that given the distinctiveness of the discipline, social workers in South Africa should uphold the global child protection standards by familiarising themselves and constantly engaging in CPD to acquire knowledge on international trends.

Van De Ruit (2017) asserts that social workers have always been in the forefront in child protection during and after apartheid regardless of the racial divisions that existed. September and Dinbabo (2008) state that social work is a core profession within the child protection sector. For the profession to assert its importance in the new South Africa meant that it needed to assume a new identity, one that would be inclusive of all South Africans regardless of their race, culture and status. Hence, upon entering democracy the rights of children are set out in the Bill of Rights in Sec. 28 of the Constitution was the basis for the enactment of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended. According to Van Neikerk and Matthias (2019), the Children's

Act gives direction on interventions aimed at the protection of children by directing court proceeding in children's matters, the issuing of court orders, prevention and reunification. All interventions by the child protection social worker seek to ensure that the child's best interests are met. The study sought to understand whether CPD was indeed assisting in the delivery of these much needed child protection services.

2.4 LEGISLATION GOVERNING CHILD PROTECTION SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.4.1 Children's Act 38 of 2005

The Children's Act no 38 of 2005 was enacted on the basis of the Bill of Rights as set out in the Constitution. Prior to the Children's Act 38 of 2005 was the Child Care Act of 74 of 1983. According to September and Dinbabo (2008), the Children's Act aimed to replace the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 that had been developed during a time of vast inequalities perpetrated through the apartheid system. The rights and protection of children became a focal point in a democratic South Africa in order to comply with international standards in protecting the wellbeing of children. The transition from pre to post-apartheid has not been an easy one and so has the implementation of the Children's Act. A study on the challenges of implementing the Children's Act by Sibanda and Lombard (2015), discovered that social workers felt that they had not received adequate training on the Act and therefore making it difficult to implement due to lack of knowledge on provisions and regulations.

The child protection field in South Africa is governed by the Children's Act. It is described as a "principal act that provides for the care and protection of children and the rights, roles and responsibilities of children" (Patel & Selipsky, 2010, p. 66). However a study by Jamieson et al., 2017 found that social workers are not sufficiently trained on the Act and its specified regulations. Although implemented more than a decade ago it appears that adequate training on the Act is still a challenge as it was earlier established by Lombard's study in 2010 in their study. The study aimed to establish the views of child protection social workers in their application of the Act as it was their governing legislation.

2.4.2 The Developmental Approach to Social Welfare

The social development approach is widely used in South Africa. The approach is aimed at poverty eradication through inclusion, social and economic development. According to Patel and Selipsky (2010), developmental social welfare was developed on the prescriptions of the

White Paper for Social Welfare adopted in 1997. In order to do so the Department of Social Development utilized The White Paper for Social Welfare as a "framework for the transformation and restructuring of social welfare services in South Africa" (DSD, 2011, p. 12). According to Schmid (2012), the social development framework is used in the South African child welfare sector as a response to address challenges faced by families post the apartheid regime. The country was faced with inequality during the apartheid regime that brought many burden's such as poverty, violence and diseases that deeply affected families and communities. As a response to this when the country entered into a democracy existing legislation was amended in order to address the needs of the country's people, particularly the excluded vulnerable groups.

It is evident therefore that the social development framework is based from a premise of the human rights based approach and promotes the development of all people. According to the White Paper on Social Welfare (RSA, 1997), social workers are the key drivers of the social development model in the country as "the profession is ideally positioned to facilitate an integration of the Government's poverty alleviation strategies through appropriate referral." (Lombard, 2008, p. 30). In contrast, Patel and Hochfeld (2012) found that although the developmental welfare and social work are linked, a gap exists in South Africa as there are challenges in applying this theory in practice by social workers. The authors further suggest ongoing professional development in order to address this gap. Using experiential learning approach the study wanted to assess if indeed developmental theory that had been learnt by social workers was being applied in practice. It would also establish what role CPD plays in deeper understanding and application of service delivery by social workers to their recipients.

2.4.3 Social Service Professions Act

The SACSSP is established on the premise of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 that was previously known as the Social and Associated Workers Act. The establishment of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 according to Sakaguchi and Sewpaul (2011), made provisions on how the council would regulate all functions within the social work profession. The Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 indicates an in depth description on the objectives of the council, functions, constitution, powers, and the registration of members of the council. Patel and Selipsky (2010) indicate that the role of the Act is important for regulation and the control of social service professions including social worker, student social workers and social auxiliary workers.

Emanating from the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 is the Code of Ethics. According to Rautenbach and Chiba (2010), this refers to a guideline adopted in 1986 that all registered social workers should uphold that is in line with international professional standards of ethical professional conduct. In observing the SACSSP Ethics Code, the same principles that govern social workers being ethical are also the same that underpin the development model of social welfare which states that that social workers need to provide ethical services to their client systems.

2.5 STATUTORY REGISTRATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION

Social workers are required to maintain their statutory registration after obtaining their qualifications. This is done in order to improve the social workers competencies. According to Fotheringham (2018), when comparing the professional bodies of different countries what was found to be common is that they provide ethical codes for members, the regulation of continuous professional development of members, and the accreditations of trainings. Social worker is England and Ireland are expected to be members of statutory bodies in order to comply with requirements of the profession (BASW, 2012; Beddoe & Duke 2016). The AASW in their practice standards (2003) indicated that the standard of professional development is based is essential for social worker's to maintain their eligibility for membership to the council.

In South Africa the SACSSP responsible for the statutory registration of social workers. According to Sakaguchi and Sewpaul (2011), council is the statutory organisation responsible for the statutory registration and control of social workers and associated workers. The establishment of the council was latter followed by the establishment of professional boards. The SACSSP (2019) indicates that there are two professional boards for social workers and for child and youth care workers, whose functions includes education, training and development. The professional boards seem to be concerned with outlining minimum qualifications one needs in order to be registered with the council and further maintaining the minimum standards for CPD (SACSSP, 2019). Section 15.2 of the policy outlines the role of the professional board of social workers in setting criteria for maintaining CPD participation. While conducting this study, the current CPD policy (SACSSP, 2019) was being revised and prepared, thus could not be reviewed because it had not been released to the public and was therefore not accessible.

2.6 CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuous Professional Development can be described as learning activities a social worker is involved in order to enhance their application of cognition and expertise in their profession.

In reviewing literature, it emerged that professional development refers to activities a professional engages in for continued learning and increased skills development (Holman, 2009; Kennedy. 2005; Lam et al., 2016; Terus & Kartoglu, 2017). Brady (2014), describes CPD as formal activities in professional learning aimed at ensuring that professional competence is maintained and improved. Over the years, the importance of improved professional skills social workers has grown rapidly. CPD is seen as way in which social workers remain relevant by way of "maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise, and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a plan formulated with regard to the needs of the professional, the employer, the profession, and society" (Madden & Mitchel, 1993 p. 12). Lam et al., (2016) further highlights the fact that a basic social work qualification is not sufficient as social workers need to constantly renew and update their expertise in order to be effective in dealing with both old and emerging client needs.

The literature suggests that in social work there needs to be constant engagement in learning throughout his/her social work career in order to accumulate new skills and add to their professional knowledge base (Nissen et al., 2014; Rutter, 2013). Important to note is that activities in professional development are a dual process obtained through educational training and workplace encounters (Malmberg-Heimonen et al., 2016). According to Brady (2014), the reason why engagement in CPD is important for child protection social workers is that they need to have an advanced understanding of the child protection context that they work. CPD activities which child protection social workers may be involved in vary however it is imperative that they keep updating their knowledge on relevant legislation and ways in which they can better protect the interests of the children which they are entrusted. There are a variety of CPD activities that social workers may engage which "may include a combination of continuing education, guided professional practice experience (supervision or consultation), peer consultation, self and home study, publishing and teaching activities, and contributions to the profession" (Holman, 2009, p. 5). Engaging in CPD throughout the life span of one's social work career brings growth in the ever changing world which can be measured in different rewards as one "is rewarded with growth and salary as the lifetime of professional attributes as well as demands keep changing" (Chitturu, 2016, p. 69). The anticipated results of engaging in CPD is the development of the practitioner as they function in an ever changing world that demands they keep themselves informed.

In studying the development of CPD, Halton et al., (2014) states that engagement in CPD arose between the 1960's and 1970's after economic productivity was linked to education. With more productivity came more technological advances that meant that the normal degree was no longer sufficient, but rather further learning would enable social workers to keep upgraded with new development in the profession. After qualifying it is also a requirement for social workers to be members of a regulatory body. The BASW (2012), indicates that their new CPD policy framework is more flexible and allows participation in more informal and self-directed learning. Previous studies into CPD have been conducted in other countries that sought to investigate the social worker engagement in CPD. In Canada social workers are required to ensure they advance their knowledge in the social work field through at least 40 hours of professional development per year NASW (2019). Beddoe and Duke (2013) conducted a comparison of the different countries, citing that the AASW requires Australian social workers to acquire 30 points annually over three different categories of reflection, ethical practice and career development, whilst in New Zealand the prescribed CPD points to be acquired by social worker are 150 CPD points in a three year period.

Studies also show that child protection social work may be challenging and impacting on engagement in CPD. "Social work practitioners and managers consistently identified constant organizational change as corrosive of the good intentions of learning and development models" (Beddoe, 2009, p. 31). In New Zealand constant changes in policies make it difficult for the process of learning to occur. This however contradicts what Beard and Wilson (2013) state regarding the process of learning as they confirm that learning is a personal process that occurs even in painful and unfavourable conditions. CPD may be beneficial to both the employer and employee. According to the BASW (2012), as much as social workers should be proactive in their own development, employers should also provide opportunities for workers to meet own needs and thus improve service delivery to clients. Devaney (2015) also supports this as they reported that CPD is a shared commitment between employee and employer as both stand to benefit from the outcome of the CPD process.

According to Lombard et al., (2010) the decision to adopt a CPD policy as a requirement in order to maintain professional registration was taken by the SACSSP in 2001. This came after this much consultation was done by the council with other professional bodies and also policies of other countries. Following its implementation in 2010, the 2019 policy supersedes the 2010 policy and was again being revised during the compilation of this study. The aim of the policy is to insure South African social workers keep up with the developing trends in the profession

through “continuing professional development of a high quality” (SACSSP, 2019, p. 7). After coming into effect in 2010, South African social workers are anticipated to obtain 20 CPD points annually or 40 CPD points over two years (Lombard, 2010). After the completion of each training and development activity, each social worker is required to compile a portfolio of evidence indicating all the activities they have engaged. This portfolio of evidence may at any time be requested by the council as proof that the social worker is complying. Social workers are expected to work in fluid environments that are constantly changing and therefore the nature of the profession requires that they continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills (Nissen et al., 2014). Professional social workers are expected to maintain a high standard in their professional intervention by continuously being involved in professional development to keep abreast of new developments in the field. One would also consider that with the challenges experienced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic there will be further developments in how continuous professional development trainings are administered to social workers.

2.6.1 TYPES OF CPD ACTIVITIES

Individual activities

Beddoe and Duke (2013) indicate there is a variety of activities that social workers can be involved in at an individual level to continuously develop. These are awarded different points based on anticipated outcomes. Individual activities are those activities directed towards individual self-development. According to the SACSSP (2019), individual activities are a range of activities including online, self-study of scientific literature, formal learning programs, peer reviews and many others that an individual participates in online activities that an individual can partake in and can prove that they developed professionally.

Group activities

Group activities are those engaged as part of CPD in a group setting. Many trainings occur in the group settings whereby a group of not less than three people come together for the purpose of learning, sharing knowledge and skills development in the subject of interest in that profession (Lombard et al., 2010, p. 111). This is a good platform as it involves the sharing of knowledge, information and experience for greater transference of new experiences learned in the training. The SACSSP policy on CPD (2019) indicates that group activities can be in the form of conferences, workshops, small group discussions and information sessions. According to Lombard et al., (2010) the points awarded in a group activity are based on four levels which are participation, knowledge, skills development and duration of activity.

Online activities

The SACSSP defines online activities as training material having audio visual content such as recordings, video recordings and any other visual content related to the topic being engaged aimed at increasing the skills and knowledge of the participants. According to Maughan (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many education institutions to move away from contact learning to online means of communication. There are however challenges to using the online mode of learning which vary from connectivity issues to a lack of online resources (Teras & Kartoglu, 2017; Maughan, 2020). There is no disputing that technology is an enabler of learning interactions in the modern age and that is why online professional development programs have grown so popular (Teras & Kartoglu, 2017). SACSSP (2020), issued a notice during the scourge or the COVID-19 pandemic as a guideline to social workers on ethical social work conduct using technological means.

Portfolio of Evidence (POE)

According to SACSSP (2019) social workers need to compile a POE as a record of all CPD activities that have engaged. The purpose of the POE according to SACSSP (2019) is to provide evidence of the individual's engagement in professional development activities at the request of the council. This coincides with the BASW (2012) which indicates that all social workers in the UK need to have a portfolio of evidence that is proof of having participated in 15 days or 90 hours of CPD to re-register with their statutory bodies.

2.7 THE RELEVANCE OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The SACSSP (2019) policy has a point system framework which stipulates that all registered social workers, in order to maintain their registration need to obtain CPD points annually or per two year cycle. There are various CPD activities may be engaged in such as trainings on risk assessments, awareness and counselling to achieve these credits. CPD activities may be engaged in by individual social workers, groups and also on online platforms. "The CPD policy of the SACSSP is the result of a transparent, well consulted and research based process" (Lombard et al., 2010, p. 119). Since its initial implementation there have been many developments in the profession that have also involved the integration of technology as a fundamental part of professional development. The COVID-19 pandemic not only challenged individuals to practice social distancing in a bid to slow down the infection rate but it also challenged many professionals to move away from traditional methods of providing social

work services as well as acquiring training. It also emerged through reviewing literature that due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, CPD activities moved more rapidly to online platforms.

The benefits of CPD is that the social worker is kept informed about new research, legislation and developments in the profession that can enable them to be better effective. Such information according to "These activities may include a combination of continuing education, guided professional practice experience (supervision or consultation), peer consultation, self and home study, publishing and teaching activities, and contributions to the profession" (Holman, 2009, p. 5). The study aims to establish how CPD is perceived by child protection social workers in Johannesburg. Child protection as already highlighted is an important in championing the rights of the child and moreover this service is found in also non-profit organizations. Literature shows that there are challenges that are faced by child protection social workers are not only experienced in South Africa. According to Burns et al., (2011 p. 521), "both domestically and internationally, retaining social workers in statutory child protection and welfare work has been identified as a problem". In other studies, it was found that social workers in child protection often resort to leave the profession. According to Skhosana (2020), the child protection sector is faced with many challenges as the child welfare system was in a crisis. One such of these challenges is the limited resources often provided by the state to the non-profit sector. Sibanda and Lombard (2015) indicate that non-profit sector often struggles as the department of social development subsidies are often received late affecting the salaries of social workers. The challenges in funding also affect the possibility of organizational funded trainings. There is limited literature in South Africa that can give an indication as to whether child protection social workers may be also facing similar challenges.

2.8 OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Occupational social work refers to the rendering of social work services within the context of the workplace (Du Plessis, 2001; Hughes et al., 2018; Iversen, 2001; Mogorosi, 2009). It is "a field of practice in which Social Workers attend to the human and social needs of the work community by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environment" (Googins & Godfrey, 1987, p. 38). The Minister of Social Development, Ms. Lindiwe Zulu issued the regulations on the requirements for specialty registration of occupational social work in South Africa (DSD, 2020). According to the act the scope of practice for occupational social work includes; "the promotion of a culture in the

workplace to enhance human rights practises, social justice and productivity; and work focussed policy and programme development" (DSD, 2020, p. 71).

In application of occupational social work services in the workplace utilizes various models one such being the Occupational Social Work Practice Model (OSWPM) that was developed in order to guide social work intervention in the South African National Defence Force (Kruger & Van Breda, 2001). Occupational social workers use what is called binocular vision, that relates to having microscopic and telescoping view of a situation to understand the individual and the environments they find themselves (Kruger & Van Breda, 2001). The OSWPM has four positions they practice that are restorative, promotive, work-person and workplace interventions (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009). Restorative interventions refers to the promotion of client strengths to solve personal problems. Promotive interventions by enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals for their optimal functioning. Work-person interventions addresses changes in employees within the work organisation by assessing personal needs. Workplace interventions focus on the workplace by assessing organisational culture, structures and policies to bring about change. The study aimed to assess the learning process of child protection social workers in practice and assessing how the intervention from an occupational social worker would be an essential tool to insure that much needed services to children continue. There is limited literature on the role played by occupational social work in the non-profit organisations as well as with assisting social work personnel within organisations they are employed. As such the study would make valuable contributions to existing literature.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The literature review gave a background on what the concept of professional development is in the social work profession. It also showed how important service delivery is with the application of the integrated service delivery model. The majority of research focuses on highlighting the importance of continuous professional development as beneficial to the social work profession both at an international and local level. However there is not much literature on the views of child protection social workers regarding CPD. Evermore is the gap in literature on the perspectives of child protection social workers in South Africa. This presented the importance of ensuring CPD in the development of competent child protection social workers and how they can be supported in the workplace with services of an occupational social worker

to further develop their skills. The following chapter is an in depth discussion on the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher aims to detail how the decisions taken on how the research was conducted using qualitative research methodology in understanding the views of child protection social workers on continuous professional development. The chapter gives an overview of the research instrument used in the study. Further, the chapter also aims to describe the population identified and the sample selected. In addition, the chapter details the process of data collection and the manner that data was analysed. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the challenges and the limitations to the study.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

In general the research approach determines the strategy that the researcher followed in order to collect, analyse and report the research findings (Gravetter & Forzano, 2010). The research approach applied was qualitative exploratory research. Qualitative research refers to the exploration of individualistic meaning of phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Techniques in qualitative research enables the researcher to elicit information on meaning and experiences to gain more insight (Flick, 2009). Taylor (2005), argues that the qualitative researcher looks at the uniqueness of study participants and uses techniques such as interviews and observation to gather data in words rather than in numbers. According to Neuman (2014), an exploratory research is adopted in incidences whereby the researcher aims to explore a phenomenon of which little is understood. In this way, the qualitative data will seek to give deeper meaning and reasons causing the phenomenon to occur.

Although there is a CPD policy that is implemented by the SACSSP which registered social workers need to comply with, the researcher found that there is limited written research on social workers' engagement. The study aimed to determine whether social workers are actively engaged in CPD and whether they are complying with the CPD point framework as prescribed by the council. The study findings would also indicate whether this policy is effective. This particular study aimed to fill the gaps on limited written literature about CPD for child protection sector in the South African context. The study aimed to establish what the views of social workers in child protection are on participation in CPD. By doing this the researcher looked to advance knowledge by acquiring facts and concerns on the issue as it has not been

explored before or explored enough. Unfortunately contextualizing the study done in Ireland to South African setting may not yield a replicate of results as qualitative research is dependent on understanding the experiences of a phenomenon.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

After the research approach had been determined, the next step was to identifying strategies of inquiry. According to Creswell (2009) there are five approaches to qualitative research and these strategies of inquiry are important as they provide direction for procedures that would be followed in the research design. Fouché and Schurink (2011) indicate that in qualitative research design there is no step by step procedure on what direction the research will take but rather that the formula on what direction the research will take is designed by the researcher and not using those having been used prior. Research design refers to the proposal on how the desired data in the area of interest would be collected and analyzed. "A research design is a general framework for conducting a study" (Gravetter & Forzano, 2010, p. 190). According to Creswell (2009), the research design is the guiding plan from assumptions to data collection which then leads to analysis.

In the study, the researcher used a case study approach as a strategy of inquiry to better understand the phenomenon. Neuman (2002), found that case studies investigate the many features of a select number of case in order to understand how this affects the individual within the context they find themselves. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also agree to this by describing that in a case study, the aim is to acquire in-depth assessment of a phenomenon in a bounded system. The research design was a case study that meant that it was based on the participant's account on perceptions and experiences pertaining to their experiences on participation in CPD. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) established that in conducting a case study, the aim is to acquire in-depth assessment of a phenomenon in a bounded system. Creswell (2009) on the other hand argues that it can be either an individual case or even various cases occurring at one time or over a period. One of the strengths of case studies according to Neuman (2014) is that we get to understand and have more explanations about social occurrences. This type of design enabled the researcher to explore and describe factors that may be contributing to the engagement of child protection social workers in CPD in the Johannesburg area.

There are however disadvantages of case studies because at times are subject to criticism regarding their validity as "they should not only fit the specific individual, group, or event studied, but generally provide understanding about similar individuals, groups, and events"

(Berg, 2001, p. 232). This element of case studies also makes them more personal and emotional due to their detailed description of characteristics (Gravetter & Forzano 2010). Providing detailed description however does not mean that what is described is valid. Gravetter and Forzano (2010) further state that although a case study can provide specific details about a phenomenon, it fails to describe the why that phenomenon occurs. However, case studies get criticized for their lack of scientific evidence due to their generalization (Flick, 2009). Fouché and Schurink (2011), indicate that the generalizability of the nature of qualitative research makes it difficult to validate the findings. The aim was not to generalize in this study but rather to use a case study to offer better understanding of a phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, the researcher embarked on a collective case study. The current study aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the experiences of child protection social workers regarding CPD and contribute towards the existing knowledge.

Due to the non-directive nature of qualitative research, the aim was to acquire how the subject matter is perceived and understood in the words of the individual. As part of the research design that the researcher used to gather information from participants was through interviews. Gravetter and Forzano (2010) further stated that as part of the research design, it needs to draw comparison on the variables of individuals within the group of people being studied. The study aimed to establish the conditions that are similar or different values for varied child protection social workers that guide their participation in CPD.

3.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument "is a tool of collecting data" (Yin, 2016, p. 128). A semi-structured interview schedule was used for this study. The research instrument was not originally developed by the researcher but was requested and adopted for the South African context with permission granted from Dr. Eavan Brady who is an Assistant Professor at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland (See Appendix D). She had undertaken a similar study to explore Ireland's child protection social workers' engagement in CPD. The interview schedule was semi-structured as the questions was designed to source specific information from all the participants. The semi structured interview structure were administered by the researcher during face to face as well as virtual interviews with the participants in order to extract the required data. The researcher used different research guides for the different participants that are included in the research study (See Appendix E, F and G). This was done in order to ensure that there were different perspectives on the subject being studied. The level of structure of

"interviews may range from unstructured, semi-structured and highly structured" (Leavy, 2017, p. 262). Semi-structured interview guide are widely used because they allow the research subjects to express themselves more openly regarding their experiences (Flick, 2009; Neuman, 2014). "An interview guide is useful when the researcher has already learned something about informants through fieldwork or preliminary interviews or other direct experience" (Taylor et al., 2016, p. 123).

According to Shulman (2009) questions are used to elicit more detail about information being shared. The research schedule according to Tracy (2013) is a list of questions that have been arranged in the same order and are aimed at acquiring specific responses from the participant regarding the subject matter. The level of structure of "interviews may range from unstructured, semi-structured and highly structured" (Leavy, 2017, p. 262). The arrangement of the questions were designed in a less structured manner to allow an in depth discussion and reflection to occur from the participant as this aims to acquire information on how the experiences were to them.

3.4.1 Pre-testing the research instrument

The researcher conducted a pre-testing in order to determine whether the instrument to be used was adequate prior to the research experiment being conducted. A pre-test is done prior engaging in the actual study so as to "determine a subject's baseline prior to introducing the experimental intervention" (Leavy, 2017, p. 95). Strydom and Delport (2011), further suggest that doing a pre-test with fewer respondents matching the criteria of the selected participants, enables the researcher to identify certain trends and to test whether they can provide the relevant data. A pre-testing was conducted with two participants that fit the profile of participants that would engage in the actual study, however the two participants did not participate in the main study. The results from the pre-test were not used to form part of the study but rather test the authenticity of the instrument that was to be used in the actual study. The researcher established whether there are any precautions and alteration that need to be taken prior to the research data being collected. As a result, the researcher arranged the questions according to sections based on topic focus to enable participants to have clearer understanding of the questions. This process shed light on practicality of time allocations and other resources that the researcher needed to consider prior to data collection.

3.5 AREA OF STUDY

Johannesburg is located in the Gauteng province in South Africa and the city boasts itself as the economic capital of the country. Although being the smallest province in the country according to Stats SA in 2018 the population in the province was at nearly 15 million. The area of study sets the stage for collection of data because it can either make it possible or difficult for the research population to be identified based on specific participants' characteristics. A researcher needs to identify first "the appropriate setting for the research collection" (Berg 2001, p. 30). As the area of the study was social workers working within the child protection field in Johannesburg, the social worker participants recruited were employed in two different child protection non-governmental organisations (NGO) servicing Johannesburg central, north and south.

3.6 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The research population refers to the collective of individuals that the study focused on (Gravetter & Forzano, 2010; Strydom & Delport, 2011). Berg (2001) warns that in identifying a population the researcher needs to ensure that the population is suitable according to what the study aims to discover. In identifying the appropriate population the researcher was required to identify a collective of individuals that are part of group but have similar characteristics. Gravetter and Forzano (2010), further defined that this population with specific characteristics of the subject of interest for the researcher is called a target population. The population of participants was acquired from child protection social work organisations in which participants from them will provide rich data.

A sample is a portion of individuals selected from a population, which is used in order to represent the population in a study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2010). A sample is used as a general representation of the larger population in the study whereby the "idea of a large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are generalized" (Neuman, 2014, p. 247). The entire population of child protection social workers in Johannesburg unknown to the researcher therefore in order to avoid bias and generalizations the study used non-probability sampling. According to Gravetter and Forzano (2010), non-probability sampling is an unbiased strategy of selecting a sample from which the total number of individuals in a population cannot be listed.

The researcher used purposive sampling to draw a sample for the study. According to Creswell (2009), purposeful selection is done when the researcher selects persons that will aid in the research problem being understood better. Yin (2016) indicates that purposive sampling is

readily used in qualitative research to select the units that will deduce the required data in line with the objectives of the study. “When developing a purposive sample, researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population” (Berg, 2001, p. 32). Purposive sampling was found to be the most suitable because according to Brady (2014), it considers factors such as participant’s suitability, access to them, and their availability. Using social work skills of communication, negotiation and relationship building, the researcher drew a sample size of 12 social workers within the child protection sector in Johannesburg.

Taylor et al., (2016) indicates that informants forming part of the group being the focus of the study can be located in a number of ways. One such way was using the database of the Johannesburg child protection forum, the researcher was to specifically recruit participants from child protection organizations within Johannesburg. The sampling criteria for the study participants was: social workers working in the child protection field in Johannesburg; must be registered with the SACSSP; have minimum of two years working experience in the child protection field; must have previously engaged in CPD and should be available during data collection.

The researcher had initially planned to recruit through attending the child protection forum to provide member organizations with information about the study. However due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meetings were halted. In light of this, the researcher identified organizations that could be recruited from and approached them using a letter requesting permission to recruit (See Appendix A). The researcher explained to the management of each organization information relating to what the study was about and requested to be provided permission in writing for the researcher to recruit and conduct the research with members of their staff. Once permission was granted by management, the researcher began recruiting for participants and those interested in being a part of the study were provided with the Participant information Sheet (PIS) (See Appendix B). The provision of information about the study encouraged participants to voluntarily sign up to participate. This was the opportunity to give a background on the study by engaging with the social workers to provide them with the aims of the research.

Participants who fit the criteria and volunteered to take part in the study were then recruited. In purposefully selecting this sample, the researcher aimed to acquire data from the specific population that will result in rich data. Although the research was able to recruit, some of the challenges encountered during the recruitment process was that the researcher approached

different child protection organisations but there was no response from some organisations. The researcher also found in another organisation that even though the employer had permitted the researcher to recruit participants, the social workers indicated they were too busy to take part in the study. This speaks to the reactive nature of social work in the child protection field in South Africa as they are at the forefront of responding to the violations of children's rights that coincided to the findings of the study by Warria (2014).

In addition to the social workers, four key informants were recruited for triangulation purposes. The purpose of triangulation was to "produce knowledge on different levels, which means they go beyond the knowledge made possible by one approach and thus contribute to promoting quality in research" (Flick, 2009, p. 445). Once more purposive sampling was used to identify key informants that would provide deeper understanding of the phenomena. The key informants were a representative from the SACSSP, training coordinators from the organisations and an occupational social worker. The rationale behind selecting the four informants was that they are knowledgeable about the participation of child protection social workers in CPD. Triangulation is an important element in establishing whether different sources within the area of research will provide information that will favor the research question. In the study by Brady (2014), there was no triangulation of the data sources and the inclusion of the key informants in this study was ensure that there is increased validity in the data recorded. As there is limited information about this phenomenon utilizing the triangulation method the researcher aimed to acquire different lens perspectives on how CPD is perceived from several different perceptions and combine them in order to establish how this is perceived.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

Methods of data collection are based on the research design that has been chosen for the research study that is qualitative research. Due to the research being qualitative it indicates that the process of data collecting was flexible (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide that was administered by the researcher on a face to face and online virtual means due COVID-19 restrictions during the data collection process. Once the participants had consented to take part in the study, in-depth interviews with participants was used for the collection of data. The interviews with the participants all occurred at a time that was contracted on when the participants consented.

Gaining entry is also an important ethical consideration that the researcher managed to uphold. Leavy (2017) asserts that gaining entry into the field of research is essential. Strydom and

Delport (2011), concurs and further states that once permission is granted it is important to ensure that the targeted participants are provided with information detailing what the study seeks to uncover. Management of the organizations which participants were recruited for was asked to provide a permission letter confirming that permission was granted to the researcher to recruit social workers in the organisation to participate in the study. Both organizations asked for their identities to be kept anonymous. The research participants were provided with information about the study and should as a basis for further clarity should it be required.
The researcher took into consideration that the country and the world at large has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the country was under strict lockdown regulations at the time of data collection. This meant that the researcher had to deviate from traditional methods of data collection to online methods to minimise physical contact. As this was an eventuality the researcher had the option of acquiring written consent from participants by sending the consent form by email and once completed, asked the participants to send their signed consent forms to back to the researcher.

Although the country was under lockdown, the organisations the researcher had recruited from were operational due to social work being an essential service. Some of the participants indicated availability for face to face interaction, whilst others opted for online interviews at times suitable to them. Eight of the interviews were conducted face to face with participants who were comfortable with physical contact, keeping in mind that the conduct of the researcher was aimed at building rapport with the study participants (Tracy, 2013). The researcher also used Zoom as an online platform to interview eight participants who had consented to this as an option and have the necessary resources such as internet connectivity to engage in the research (See Appendix C). Using Zoom ensured that the researcher maintained face-to-face interviews with the participants. The shortest was 17.05 minutes and had been a result of the poor connectivity for the participant. To overcome this the researcher decided that if there was poor connectivity it was best to rather postpone the interview for another time. The longest interview was 45.08 minutes long. The duration of each interview was an average of 30.62 minutes per interview.

Probing was used in order for the participants to share insight on their experiences. Data was recorded with an audio/digital recorder with the permission of the participant (See Appendix C). The researcher also took short notes during the interview in order to take note of some of the non-verbal communication as well as reactions from the participants as this could not be detailed in the audio recordings. Strydom (2011, p. 335), confirms that field notes can be taken

as an account of observations made but should insure that this is not a hindrance to the data collection. During the data collection process the researcher made sure that they informed the participants beforehand that they would be making some notes during the process and whilst doing so they ensured that they maintained eye contact and were attentive to what the participant was sharing. Data collected using Zoom was in the form of video recordings and as such was kept safe to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. It was imperative that in data collection that the researcher follows the research design as it serves as a plan as to how the data should be collected.

Data keeping is also an important element in the data management process as it is important for data to always be protected and to also protect the interests of those who participated in the research. The Zoom video recordings that show interviews with the participants were destroyed once the data was transcribed as the transcripts will ensure that the identity of the participants are kept anonymous. The personal details of the participants were kept confidential and no identifying information were on the transcripts but rather utilised pseudonyms in order to disguise their identity. Data was only be collected after ethics clearance had been received from the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Non-Medical) (See Appendix I)

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers to a process whereby the collected data are arranged in order for the information available to be interpreted. This is termed as the qualitative research data analysis process whereby the researcher adhered to the data interpretation procedure. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. “If data have been recorded using technical media, transcription is a necessary step on the way to interpretation” (Schurink, Fouche & De Vos, 2011, p. 408). The author further suggests that transcription is an important part of data management and processing. Transcriptions of the interviews was made by the researcher. The interview transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study.

During the process of coding it is characterised by “bringing together and analysing all the data bearing on major themes, ideas, concepts, interpretations, and propositions” (Taylor et al., 2016, p. 181). According to Flick (2009), thematic coding is a process whereby data is arranged and coded in order to capture issues of concern or that have the deepest meaning for the

respondents. The method is mostly applicable in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to arrange the data collected in transcripts and to easily identify common themes that emerge from the data that according to Creswell (2009) is when the themes are connected, and interpretations based on the data are made. The researcher reflected on what are the views of social workers in the child protection sector regarding engagement in CPD and what lessons will be deduced from the study.

The following are steps of data analysis and interpretation that were followed and included: "(1) data preparation and organization, (2) initial immersion, (3) coding, (4) categorizing and theming, and (5) interpretation" (Leavy, 2017, p. 151).

Data preparation and organization:

Schurink et al., (2011, p. 404) indicates that this is the first step of qualitative data analysis. Saldana (2014), warns that an important part in data preparation and organizing is the storage of the data collected. After the data was collected, it was important to protect the interests of those who took part in the study. The researcher did so firstly by using pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the study participants. Therefore, it become important for the data to be stored in a safe manner by the researcher and to ensure that there is a backup of the data collected. During Zoom interviews the participants were informed that the interview would be video recorded and voice recorded on the voice recorder for back up. After completing all interviews the researcher did this by storing both the voice recordings and video in password protected storage device.

Initial immersion:

This is the process whereby the researcher familiarises themselves with the data collected. According to Leavy (2017) the researcher has to read and familiarise themselves with the data collected to get a deeper understanding of the material. During this process initial ideas on the data were developed by the researcher and gave direction on the way in which the information will be coded. The researcher conducted initial immersion by reading and going over the transcripts in order to familiarise themselves with the data.

Coding:

Yin (2016), states that coding refers to the process of assigning together words or similar phrases together to encapsulate meaning of the larger part of the information recorded. Coding according to Saldana (2014) refers to a way of arranging individual sections of data to form

categories that will lead to further interpretation. Leavy (2017) indicates that there are numerous coding approaches however they all ensure that larger amounts of information are made into smaller portions. These codes were identified by the researcher and different coloured notes were written in order to identify them from the different transcripts.

Categorizing and theming:

In categorizing information is arranged in different groups and patterns. Categorizing refers "to cluster similar or comparable codes into groups for pattern construction" (Saldana, 2014, p. 587). Once information is categorized themes develop. A theme according to Leavy (2017), emerges from the process of categorising as theming is about grouping together similar codes of data. Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunel and Snelgrove (2016) indicate that a theme arranges a group of repeating ideas with the aim of answering the study question. Once the themes have been arranged the data can be then be interpreted. From the codes that had been identified the researcher arranged the codes in the form of a pattern that generated the themes aligned to the study objectives.

Interpretation:

Leavy (2017) indicates that during interpretation the researcher aims to make meaning from the acquired. Creswell (2009) indicates that the process begins with the researcher reading and going over all the recorded information. As the researcher anticipated that due to the nature of qualitative research the data collected would be rich and therefore required a system to arrange the data for analysis. Strydom (2011) also concurs with this stating that once data have been prepared, classified and the themes are identified the research then interpret the data and acquire lessons from the study. Interpretation occurred when the researcher acquired meaning from the research data and was able to compile the research report based on these findings.

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness refers to the researcher ensuring that the study undertaken has scientific rigor. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicate that trustworthiness refers to the manner in which the researcher is able to convince themselves and their audience that their findings are worth consideration in ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility:

The researcher aimed to present and demonstrate the research data in a credible and trustworthy manner through the process and decisions made in the research design. "A credible study is one that provides assurance that you have properly collected and interpreted the data, so that the findings and conclusions accurately reflect and represent the world that was studied" (Yin, 2016, p. 85). Credibility refers to identifying and describing the subject of interest in the research study (Schurink, Fouche & De Vos, 2011, p. 420). During the data collection the observations of participants formed part of ensuring credibility. Another way applied in this study was through coding, transcription and triangulation of data sources.

3.9.2 Transferability:

Transferability refers to the provision of a thorough description of the phenomenon being studied so that the findings of the study may be transferred to different contexts. Transferability is possible if the researcher provides an adequate description of the case being studied to enable comparison when the study is transferred to a different context (Shenton, 2004, p. 70). The researcher did this but studying the available literature both global and locally on the subject at hand. After having identified the gap that exists in available literature the researcher then studied the previous study by Brady (2014), and aimed to achieve transferability of the study in the South African context using the same instrument that was utilized in the previous study. Just as in the case of the Irish study, the researcher made the research methodology and instrument available to enable the transferability of the study to other research contexts.

3.9.3 Dependability:

Dependability refers to the logical arrangement of the research processes. According to Schurink et al., (2011), the researcher ensures the reliability of the study by documenting as well as auditing the research process. The process of auditing ensures that procedural dependability of the study can be confirmed (Flick, 2009). Creswell (2009) indicates that the research study process needs to be consistent. Prior to beginning the process of data collection the researcher conducted a pre-test in order ascertain the instruments authenticity. The researcher maintained consistency through checking the accuracy of the findings. Yin (2016) indicates that insuring consistency happens through keeping a record of the research processes and the data collected being recorded. The data obtained was recorded, transcribed and results recorded for transparency and further testing to occur as a means of testing the dependability of the study. The researcher insured this by following the same structure in conducting all the interviews with the participants and key informants.

3.9.4 Confirmability:

Qualitative research according to Yin (2016) indicates that being perceived as a credible researcher to participants begins with the researcher's attitude. The researcher needed to build rapport with the participants through being transparent and offering as much information as they require regarding the aims of the research. The participant information sheet was aimed at providing such information on the study (See Appendix B). Another way of ensuring transparency is acquiring the consent forms before commencing acquiring the research data from the participants (See Appendix C). This not only asserted the importance of their consenting to the study but also insured their confidentiality would be maintained in their participation in the study. Confirmability was insured through using the same interview guide with participants so that findings can be directly from the interpretations of the data (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher also used reflexivity in assessing subjectivity of own experiences in the research process (Flick, 2009). The researcher was constantly self-critical in their evaluations of the process.

Table 3: Summary of trustworthiness of the study

Credibility	• Observations of participants • Data coding • Transcription • Triangulation
Transferability	• Purposive sampling • Description of research methodology • The use of existing literature
Dependability	• Pre-testing • Same method in data collection and analysis
Confirmability	• Assuring confidentiality • Transcription • Reflexivity

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is was important that the gathering of research data be done in an ethical way and thus requiring the researcher to heed some ethical considerations. According to Flick (2009) researchers deal with ethical issues at any stage of the process thus it was important that there be principles to regulate engagement between the researcher and participants in the study field. Before the commencement of the study the researcher submitted the research proposal to the University of the Witwatersrand Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Non-Medical) in order to acquire clearance to proceed with the research. Ethics committees are responsible for insuring the research project upholds ethical standards (Flick, 2009; Stout et al., 2020). Data was only collected after ethics clearance had been received from the university (See Appendix I).

Once the research study was been approved the researcher had to uphold these ethical standards in the manner that data was collected and recorded. It is imperative that a researcher maintains ethical standards during research as social work research is an ethical activity (Stout et al, 2020). The basic principles that were adhered to be discussed next are; do no harm, voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality.

Do no harm: refers to ensuring that the wellbeing of participants is protected during the undertaking of the research and no harm will be caused. “Social research can harm a research participant physically, psychologically, legally, and economically, affecting a person’s career or income” (Neuman, 2014, p. 147). As social change agents it was important that the researcher be sensitive to issues that may emerge and cause ethical dilemmas. By doing so the researcher respected the individual’s human dignity, which according to Mapp, McPherson, Androff and Gable (2019) is about respecting the ability of people to make decisions which are best for themselves. The researcher constantly protected the welfare of those involved in the research by reminding them about the right to choose not to proceed if they felt they were uncomfortable at any time during the process without blame.

Voluntary participation: refers to participants voluntarily engaging in the study. According to Neuman (2014) people cannot be allowed to engage in the research process unless they have freely consented to doing so. Although participation is a human right according to Mapp et al., (2019) the researcher is liable to promote their rights when they participate. The researcher did not at any point during the process, coerce or force participants to continue or answer anything that they are not comfortable with. The participants were provided information about the study

and were continuously reminded that they can withdraw from the study at any point should they want to do so.

Informed consent: refers to acquiring permission before engaging participants in the study. Stout et al., (2020) describes informed consent as gaining ethical permission to conduct research from the participants. This also indicates that the researcher informs the participants about particular risks that may be associated in partaking in the study (Tracy, 2013). Participants were provisioned with factual information on the study and consented to participation by signing the consent forms. Information was only recorded with the participants consent.

Confidentiality: is the when the researcher keeps private information shared by individuals to themselves and not sharing with others (Gravetter & Forzano, 2010). The researcher protected all participants from any form of harm through constantly providing information beforehand so that the participants may know that they are entitled to not continue with the research should they feel anyway uncomfortable. "Codes of ethics and other researchers provide guidance, but ethical conduct ultimately depends on an individual researcher" (Neuman, 2014, p. 145). Ultimately the onus lies with the researcher to ensure they uphold and maintain the rights of all persons involved in the research as well as insuring that they discontinue should they feel that they are no longer comfortable in the process.

Anonymity: in research study it is important for the researcher to build good rapport with the participants which is about ensuring that the participants can trust the researcher with their privileged information. "Anonymity is the practice of ensuring that an individual's name is not directly associated with the information or measurements obtained from that individual" (Gravetter & Forzano, 2010, p. 124). Flick (2009) confirms that encrypting specific details is important in that it ensures that participants cannot be identified through information about the study. Assuring the privacy of participants also refers to the handling and storing of information appropriately to protect the interests of clients (Suppes & Wells, 2013). The transcripts with data from the participants did not have their names, nor those of the organisations they were recruited from but were represented by codes and pseudonyms to identify them.

Dissemination of data: the ultimate goal of the data collection process is to be able to share what the findings of the study are. "Dissemination refers to sharing or distributing the research" (Leavy, 2017, p. 45). The author further states that the research participants should be the first ones to be considered when the findings are shared. For this reason, the researcher indicated in

in Appendix B the researcher has communicated to participants that a summary of the results will be made available to them on request. If the research data is published, the participant's information will be kept confidential through the use of codes and pseudonyms. The names of the child protection organisations were protected by not including the permission letters in the report as per request. Participants were informed that the data collected will be kept stored for two years after publication, or stored for six years after completion if there are no publications emanating from it.

Reflexivity: during data analysis, it was a requirement for the researcher to conduct a self-assessment on their actions in conducting the study. This was done to establish whether there was no bias in the decisions taken when conducting the research. According to Yin (2016), the reflexivity is a process whereby the presence and actions of the researcher may be of an influence to participants and conversely influencing the researcher's observation in the research. Creswell (2009) indicates that due to the interpretative nature of qualitative research the researcher uses reflexivity to take note of own biases based on their background that might have an impact on how data is interpreted during the study

3.11 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS TO RESEARCH

The researcher had anticipated that it may be difficult to acquire the participant's availability as in the child protection field social workers are engaged investigations and being actively involved in communities. In total, the researcher recruited from four child protection organisations but the social workers in two of the organisations indicated that they were not available. Another factor that had an impact the availability of participants was the current Covid-19 pandemic that may limit contact the researcher may have with them. A delimitation that the data may be collected using Zoom video conferencing in order to limit contact between researcher and participants. The app also assisted in acquiring data when it is most convenient in terms of availability for the participants. According to Berg (2001), it is of high importance for the researcher to grasp the characteristics grouping that they aim to draw the sample from in order to plan for challenges that may occur. The researcher identified participants that were more available for data collection and flexible in exploring methods that they would be most comfortable with. The size of the sample and the location was another delimitation that the researcher has chosen in order to chosen on purpose in order to extract rich data from the sample.

Another limitation was that some participants were reluctant to express their views on the topic should the council or the organisations which they are based find out how they perceive the continuous professional development. According to Stout et al., (2020), social research may result in a conflict of interests in which their research subjects may indicate heightened vulnerability. “Participants could face negative effects on their careers or incomes due to involvement with a study” (Neuman, 2014, p. 150). Through application of research ethical principles, the researcher was able to foresee this scenario and was sensitive to situations that may make the subjects uncomfortable. The researcher ensured that participants are well informed about how their privacy and anonymity will be maintained through continuously providing information on the purpose of the study as well as the values of respect and self-determination for the participants to know their right to stop and discontinue should they be uncomfortable.

The type of methodological approach to be used as well as the size of the sample may make the researcher’s generalizations limited (Brady, 2014). According to Berg (2001), purposive sampling also lacks generalizability. This then means that the sample may not accurately represent the experiences of all child protection social workers in Johannesburg. However, the objective is not to generalize but as to give a representation of findings.

3.12 CONCLUSION

In summary the chapter detailed the research strategy that was undertaken along with reason that made the approach most suitable for this study. The sampling techniques along with methods of data collection were detailed. This was then followed by how data was recoded and transcribed. The chapter detailed how coding, theming and interpretation of the research findings was conducted. Through this process the researcher ensured that they adhered to the trustworthiness of the study as well as ethical considerations in light of the limitations that they experienced. The next chapter will indicate the empirical findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on presenting and discussing the empirical findings that emerged from this study. The chapter begins with indicating what the aims as well as the questions which the study aimed to address. The participants were represented using pseudonyms in order to protect their identity. The themes that emerged were found to be in line with the objectives of the study. These themes and sub-themes are detailed in this chapter by referring to the responses provided by the participants and the involvement of appropriate literature to substantiate the discussion of the theme.

4.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

In gathering data, twelve social workers in the Johannesburg child protection field were interviewed. The participants were from two child protection organisations and their involvement in the study was on a voluntary basis. Codes were used to represent the main participants whereas pseudonyms were used to represent the key informants. The demographic information of the participants is recorded in Table 1 below and it illustrates the codes of each participant, gender, qualifications and experience in the child protection field. The key informants had their experience in current position indicated. In addition to the main study participants, four key informants were interviewed in the study for triangulation purposes. The key informants were an occupational social worker, two training managers and a representative from the SACSSP.

Table 1: Demographic representation of participants

PARTICIPANTS: SOCIAL WORKERS	**GENDER**	**AGE**	**POSITION**	**QUALIFICATION**	**CHILD PROTECTION EXPERIENCE**
1) SW1	Female	28	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	4 Years
2) SW2	Female	27	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	3 Years
3) SW3	Male	34	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	3 Years

4) SW4	Female	39	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	4 Years
5) SW5	Female	34	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	7 Years
6) SW6	Male	33	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	2 Years
7) SW7	Female	39	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	3 Years
8) SW8	Female	28	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	4 Years
9) SW9	Male	37	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	6 Years
10) SW10	Female	48	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	2 Years
11) SW11	Female	43	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	3 Years
12) SW12	Male	30	Social worker	Bachelor of Social Work	4 Years
PARTICIPANTS: KEY INFORMANTS	**GENDER**	**AGE**	**POSITION**	**QUALIFICATIONS**	**YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION**
KIA	Female	58	Training Manager at organisation B	Bachelor in Social Work and Masters in Human Resources	4 Years
KIB	Female	61	SACSSP Representative	Bachelor of Social Work	5 Years
KIC	Female	Age not discolosed	Occupational Social Worker	Bachelor in Social Work and Honors in Psychology	27 Years
KID	Female	52	Training Manager at Organisation A	PhD in Education and Registered Counselor	4 Years

Table 1 shows that the child protection participants had post qualifying experience ranging between 2 - 9 years with an average of 3.8 years, whereas all the key informants had experience ranging between 4 - 27 years. The occupational social worker was the only key informant with 27 years in their field of practice. There were twelve participants interviewed with eight of the participants being female and four being male. In previous studies into the gender distribution

in the social work procession in the country, female social workers accounted for more than 80 percent of the overall social work population (Khunou, Pillay & Nethononda, 2012; September, 2010) as reflected in the demographics of this study. Similarly, the gender distribution in the current study indicates that the gender profile of social workers in the country has not changed much. Also noted is that there was one key informant who was not a social worker by training but was a training coordinator in a child protection organisation. The other key informants also did not have much experience in the child protection field but were knowledgeable. This indicates that all persons interviewed have knowledge on child protection as well as on the professional development in their respective professions. The longest interview was 45 minutes long and the shortest was 17 minutes. The average interview time was 31 minutes.

The themes to be discussed next are aligned to the objectives of the study.

4.3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE THEMES

The below table provides an illustration of the themes that were identified in the study. To describe and discuss the emerging themes, the quotations from participants were shared with the researcher during interviews, however any identifying information was withheld for confidentiality purposes. The themes that were identified in the data that was analyzed includes; social workers understanding of CPD, the nature of participation activities, motivation to participation, hindrances to participation and the impact of the work environment. The lens of the experiential learning approach will also be integrated in the discussion of the findings.

Table 2: Themes and sub-themes emerging from the empirical data

Theme	**Sub-theme**
4.3.1 Social worker's understanding of CPD	i. CPD for professional development ii. Social work in practice iii. Integration into specific social work field
4.3.2 Nature of participation activities	i. Topics covered in CPD engagements ii. Platforms of CPD engagements iii. Frequency of training
4.3.3 Motivation to participation	i. Improved service delivery ii. CPD point accumulation iii. Support

	iv.	Personal-professional development
4.3.4 Barriers to participation	i. ii. iii. iv. v.	Work commitments Finances Participant's lack of interest COVID-19 pandemic Lack of auditing and accountability for non-participation
4.3.5 The impact of the work environment	i. ii. iii.	Influence of work environment on CPD participation Provision of CPD in the workplace Programme development to encourage CPD engagement

4.3.1 SOCIAL WORKER'S UNDERSTANDING OF CPD PARTICIPATION

The first theme that emerged sought to comprehend social worker's understanding of CPD. Under this theme the sub-themes that emerged and are discussed are; CPD for professional development, child protection social work in practice, as well as work preparation and integration.

i. CPD for Professional Development

Each participant had been employed as a child protection social workers for a period of two years and above. The participants were aware that information changes with time and they needed to constantly update the skills they had acquired in order to develop further. The participants remarked as follows;

> "*CPD is like to upgrade your skills, your knowledge and your understanding in your line of duty as well as to increase the knowledge as we know that information changes every time, so we need to keep up on the latest information"* (SW11, 3 years' experience)

> *"…it takes place when you are qualified as a professional but it's to keep updating your knowledge and to keep yourself informed and relevant with the current situation and developments in the field."* (SW5, 7 years' experience)

"…it helps me grow as a professional then it also helps me a lot to grow because I need to keep up with what is happening in our profession as the more I don't attend training is the more I am left behind." (SW3, 3 years' experience)

The output of CPD engagement for them was the acquisition of a new skill. The majority of participants interviewed indicated to have knowledge of the importance of professional development. The participants indicated that it was important to maintaining professional competence by enhancing one's knowledge and skills in order to gain the much-needed skills and to further develop social workers. Participants showed insight and awareness on the fluidity of the profession, which requires them to be constantly aware of changes as they were developing professionals. According to the experiential learning theory the concrete experience, which is a phase whereby an individual engages in a learning activity to acquire a new skill (Cheung & Delavega, 2014). Therefore CPD is presumed to be a developmental process for social workers and is essential for professional competence. This was in line with the findings in the study that was conducted in Ireland by Brady (2019), indicating that social workers wanted to be kept abreast on new developments in the profession.

ii. Social work in practice

The participants further shared that social work practice was different as compared to what was learned in their undergraduate training. An emerging theme from the study was how CPD was valued as social work in practice by participants and was different to what they had learnt during their studies

"There is because we all know what we learn in university and what happens in practice is not the same. Most definitely the CPD training is always helpful to make us understand how things actually work in the real world because what's in the books and what is out here is not the same." (SW1, 4 years' experience)

Yes. As much as we did most of the basics is theory when you put that theory into practice because now we use different theories. When you go to an organization which is using a different theory you tend to feel out of place. So training on how to handle clients, how to express yourself, how to be professional, how to work. Us we are just taught knowledge and we need to implement it practically, so l think those from the university need all those in-house trainings and facilitation and supervision, professionalism; how to conduct themselves in work place. (SW11, 3 years' experience)

"I did not learn about statutory work while doing my social work studies so maybe if they introduce such things in our curriculum maybe we will be more aware of some of the things." (SW7, 3 years' experience)

Undergraduate training in South Africa according to Hochfeld (2010), involves theory and field work, with the aim of preparing social workers for the reality of complex cases they will come across in future. Further Botha (2012) confirmed that CPD was indeed the answer to bridging the gap between theory and practice for newly qualified professionals finding themselves in diverse social work settings. The information shared by participants indicated that formal training was inadequate to prepare them for the complexities faced in practice. In reality social workers work with clients dealing with different case scenarios and therefore making the generic nature of training received at undergraduate level not sufficient. According to Hughes et al., (2018), the role that could be taken by an occupational social worker within organisations is to assist in ensuring that entry level child protection social workers are prepared for the roles in the workplace through skills development initiatives. As per participant perceptions, CPD closes the gap by introducing them to new skills that can be practically applied when working with client systems.

iii. Integration into specific social work field

The field in which the study participants were based was child protection social work. An emerging theme in social worker's understanding of CPD was that participants shared that although CPD was necessary for job readiness, it also depended on the field of social work they were in. When asked the question due to the relatively generic nature of social work training in South Africa, do you think there is an automatic need for specific CPD after qualifying? Participants remarked;

"I would not say so, because the reason is we work in different fields, we have got hospitals, school social workers so you might find yourself when you just graduated you going to attend this training then you find two months down the line you got a job in something that has nothing to do with what you have attended, so better be employed first and then you attend training that will also empower you to function effectively on your specific field that you are doing." (SW3, 3 years' experience)

"I think the is a need for certain types to be able to prepare you and equip you to be able to work in the field because the theory you learned at university is different when

you get to working in the field… And I think especially in the child protection field I myself know that the theory that we did in university in terms of the children's act was very minimal and that is what you are dealing with on a regular basis. So yeah there definitely needs to be more relevant trainings to prepare social workers for their actual working environment." (SW5, 7 years' experience)

"I think it all depends on your organisation and as I said if there is one thing that social work does, as generic as your training is, it gives you that opportunity to work within an area of interest….So I think there are CPDs that speaks to a specific issue. I really think that there are CPDs that speak to a specific issue so my experience in cancer and disability, trainings that we attended spoke on that, they spoke on issues around palliative care, on issues around disability, on issues around health and so here this a child protection organisation and we are touching on issues around child protection." (SW8, female, 4 years' experience)

The study participants were all engaged in child protection field as a specialized field and not based on their generic social work training. Social workers in South Africa had specialized groupings within the profession and with these were different value systems that govern that specialization that may lead to "divisions within the welfare sector" (Sakaguchi & Sewpaul, 2011, p. 198). The study findings indicate that prior to engaging in CPD, newly qualified social workers needed to first find themselves in a specific field in social work to be able to engage in CPD relevant to that field. Brady (2014) agrees and further states that CPD equips newly qualified social workers with specialized skills to be more effective in their areas of operation. This reluctance served as a limitation to the scope of training they are open to attend. This sub-theme is also closely linked to the theme of barriers to CPD participation that will be discussed at a later stage in the findings. However, in experiential learning according to Beard and Wilson (2013), the learning process is a personal process that occurs when the person choses to engage in learning. Thus choosing which CPD was relevant played a vital role in engagement in CPD for the participants.

4.3.2 NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN CPD

The second theme identified was the nature of participation in CPD. As part of the above-mentioned theme participants provided insight on the types of CPD trainings they had previously engaged in as well as the formats which these trainings were undertaken. The

section will cover the topics that social workers have covered in their participation in CPD engagements. The section will also cover the types of CPD platforms of the trainings they have engaged as well as the frequency of they receive the training.

i. Topics covered CPD

In uncovering the types of CPD engagements that participants were engaged it emerged that they were in line with the nature of their duties. In as much as there is a range of courses and topics that respondents had been offered as part of the CPD training, the two most common training topics participants had attended was on the Children's Act as well as Risk Assessment. In sharing about the Children's Act participants remarked;

> *"…even the Children's Act, there's always amendments being made to the Children's Act so you know we also had a training with (name of person and organisation withheld) and it was also CPD accredited and that really helped because there were certain things in the Act that we didn't understand and she basically clarified all of that for us, so now we can say (name of person withheld) said, so it really helps to guide us in our practice"* (SW1, 4 years' experience)
>
> *"Oh we did the Children's Act, the Code of ethics which I actually facilitated, we did HIV/AIDS one, we did the stats one, there is another one which we are actually doing next week"* (SW2, 3 years' experience)
>
> *"I attended a training, risk assessment which is something that I am not doing but after attending that training I felt like no I can do risk [assessment], I was able to go with another social worker and implement what I have learned. And I think that training was very useful because now I know what kind of questions we should ask when we are doing risk [assessment]…"* (SW7, 3 years 'experience)

According to Hope and Van Wyk (2018), child protection begins with risk assessment as that is when social workers begin investigations and decision making. Using proper risk assessment tools and process a social worker can establish whether or not a child is deemed in need of care and protection as per section 150 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005. In comparison to the study by Brady (2019), assessment was also a common training which social workers in child protection mentioned to have received. Similarly in a study conducted by September (2010), child protection and child justice was the second most common training attended after the implementation of the SACSSP CPD policy. The findings were also in line with those of

September and Dinbabo (2008) in a study conducted prior to the enactment of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 findings made was that social workers needed more training and development on the new act in order to enable efficient implementation of the act. Years later after the study was conducted, it seems that the findings are still valid and congruent with what was shared by the participants as they are still receiving ongoing training on proper implantation of the act in their services.

ii. Platforms of CPD engagements

CPD trainings are offered to social workers on different platforms. These categories are also outlined in the SACSSP policy on CPD (2019) and include individual, group and online activities. Emerging from the participants remarks was an indication that they were more involved in group activities which were done face to face as well as on online platforms.

> *What is currently available to me is mostly group activities, which I find it very helpful because we engage ourselves, we participate, we learn from each other you know because we come from different backgrounds, different experiences, some they got more experience some they are juniors as well so we learn among ourselves. Not to expect the one that is conducting the training to be like spoon feeding us. So we are engaging ourselves to empower each other.* (SW3, 3 years' experience)

> *Okay well what we've mostly been exposed to in terms of CPD at (details withheld) is workshops that take place once a month. We have also done journal reviews on one occasion, but most of the time its structured trainings that are done that are CPD accredited…… Uhm at the moment, the most recent one that we participated in was a webinar that was last week."* (SW5, 7 years' experience)

> *"Um, there's the two main categories of CPD activities that social workers can do is your group activities and individual activities. So, if I can just briefly refer to the individual activities, that include things like reading and you know, training on your own or postgraduate trainings, review of books and things like that. And then the group activities is where they attend in a group, some training on a specific topic. So, I think social workers tend more to concentrate on the group activities and not that much on the individual activities. Because with a group activity, CPD points are allocated prior to implementation. So if I attend a training, I already know I will get five points or 10 points or one point or whatever. While with the individual activities they need to include it in their POE and submit to Council and then it will be assessed and then the points*

will be determined. So, I think that's maybe why there's more of a focus on the group activities." (KIB, SACSSP representative)

The study findings provided insight that the majority of the participants had engaged in group trainings. In a study by Lombard (2010), it was reported that the three most common reasons for participating in group activities were because it met a learning need, was reported to be available and inexpensive. This did not seem to be the case in this study, but instead it appeared that participation was due to prior knowledge of points to be allocated for the activity. The study also found that it was group trainings that were more easily accessible to the participants. Some of the types of trainings the participants alluded to were facilitated using online platforms. This is in line with the prescriptions of the SACSSP policy on CPD (2019) which describes that online activities can be in the form of a group activity using electronic means. Spitz (2019) indicates that due to social work being a relationship based profession, learning is facilitated through maintaining interactional relationships. According to Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009), the concept of binocularity assists an occupational social worker to ascertain the issues affecting individual employees on a personal level as well as issues that affect the organisation as a whole. As group engagements appeared to be more favoured in the study, using occupational social work interventions may assist assessing the broader picture in causal factors for CPD engagements.

iii. Frequency of trainings

According to the study there was much insight on the frequency of CPD trainings social workers within the child protection sector were engaged. The participants generally indicated that they engaged in CPD trainings from time to time. In one organisation they indicated to have been frequently engaged in CPD activities on a regular basis.

"…there has been a number of trainings that we have done because what the organisation does is that every month the social workers and social auxiliary workers get together and there is some kind of training that is done that is CPD accredited." (SW5, 7 years' experience)

"That depends on (name of organisation withheld), I think for myself I do participate if there is trainings hosted at (name of organisation withheld) by internal or even by external people coming in, so it's quite often and I don't know since last year, the lock down you messed up everything so we haven't actually had like any CPD trainings for the past year now." (SW1, 4 years' experience)

"Let me talk about the previous years because COVID happened, but we attended quite a few in-house training that were offered here at (name of organisation withheld)" (SW11, 3 years' experience)

The participants generally indicated that they were frequently engaged in CPD activities with the frequency being every month or every other month. In contrast some participants indicated that although in the past they would acquire training often, the frequency had been affected by the outbreak of the novel corona virus (COVID-19). The outbreak of the pandemic led to restrictions on human physical contact to prevent further transmission and infection. In this particular study it was established that frequency was greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately disrupted engagements in CPD and will be discussed further in another sub-theme indicating how the pandemic has presented itself as a barrier to social work engagement. Due to participants appearing to not be as frequently engaged in CPD as they were before the outbreak of the pandemic an occupational social worker within the organisation plays the vital part of assessing which workplace interventions that may be applied to encourage frequent engagement.

4.3.3 MOTIVATION FOR CPD

In spite of child protection social work being a challenging field, the participants had a positive outlook on the benefits of CPD engagements. The study findings indicated that there were different motivators for social worker's engagement in CPD. These motivators served the purpose of either improving the social workers in their professional capacity as well as their personal capacity. The motivators for CPD engagements as shared by participants will be discussed in detail below;

i. Improved service delivery

Child protection in line with the development approach. When social workers intervene in child protection related matters the goal is to put the needs of child in need first as they cannot protect themselves. Participants shared that service delivery was a motive in them acquiring CPD training

"Because it has more trainings, most of their trainings they are in line with what we currently doing and then it assists us to offer a better service" (SW4, female, 4 years' experience)

"I think it is important because you, by attending the CPD training we get more understanding on how to deliver services to the clientele that we service, then as a social worker as well you gain knowledge."(SW12, 4 years' experience)

"I need to be innovative in the sense that I am able to, if it happens that let me put it like this I need to be innovative in how I interact with my clients. I need to be able to understand where they I coming from within the current time we find ourselves in. I cannot implement norms and values that were used six years to our current generation. It's totally different, their minds are liberated they are open minded. Constantly developing myself as a practitioner within the child protection field I will be able to meet my clients on that level." (SW8, 4 years' experience)

A majority of the participants were statutory social workers. Various authors confirm that the developmental approach in South Africa forms the basis for social work intervention to eradicate poverty by fostering the empowerment and participation of clients during interventions (Patel et al., 2012; Schmidt, 2018). Social workers are tasked with ensuring that the needs of their clients they serve are met and that the same clients are actively involved in their own developmental process. However, with that said, it has also been found that social workers struggle with the implementation of the developmental social work model. The study by Hope and Van Wyk (2018) found that the developmental social welfare approach was not being implemented as well as it should in practice by child protection social workers. The study indicated that more could be done to ensure that social workers continue to provide much needed services to those in need. In describing the scope of practice for speciality of occupational social workers, the occupational social worker using the developmental approach for client systems could also apply it to the work community. Staff training and developments are some of the tools crucial to occupational social work and evidence from this study shows that study participants appreciated that trainings improved their service delivery.

ii. CPD point accumulation

A study finding from child protection social worker's understanding of CPD was aligned to the accumulation of CPD points from the activities they engaged in. The participants' quotations below indicate that CPD point accumulation was a motivator for their participation;

"...CPD is a point that is you get from attending a certain training that also boosts you as a professional to grow." (SW3, 3 years' experience)

"It encourages you all the time because every time you attend a training you count how many CPDs am I getting and then you see that okay I am left with how many points to have my 20 points." (SW7, 3 years' experience)

"I say yes because we all know we need to as stated by the council that we at least get 20 points for the year at least." (SW2, 3 years' experience)

According to September (2010) to comply with the requirements of the SACSSP each registered social worker compiles a portfolio of evidence with 20 CPD points for each financial year. The points allocation of each activity are regulated by the SACSSP (2019) policy that indicates that each CPD provider is required to submit to the CPD accreditation panel in order to award points to each development activity. The findings of the study also did not clearly indicate if indeed the participants acquired the required CPD points annually as per requirements for maintenance of registration. Brady ((2014) noted that some participants in the Ireland study engaged in CPD only to maintain their professional registration. Similarly with the participants in this study acquiring CPD points was sighted to be one of the greatest motivators for participants to engage in CPD activities. The danger of this is that selecting CPD based on CPD point allocation may lead to non-compliance which according to SACSSP (2019) is dealt with according to the prescriptions of Sec 21 and 22 of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978. An occupational social worker's interventions may educate social workers regarding the various professional development activities that a registered social worker can engage in. Not engaging in training without the allocated CPD points does not mean that there has not been an increase in knowledge.

iii. Support

The sub-theme of supportive benefit of CPD was described in various ways. Forms of support perceived by participants were described as being able to share their new knowledge with other colleagues and as well as improving their relations with management as they get to learn more about what they as social workers experience in the field.

"…I do think that there is a big role, I think especially in terms of others colleagues or professionals you get to gain a better understanding of how other organisations work when you attend these trainings with different people from different organisations. I think it also enables you to be able to relate to your colleagues and your supervisors because you are able to speak about what you learnt." (SW5, 7 years' experience)

"Let's say for example if, there are other trainings that I didn't attend. My colleagues attended those so if I need help I can easily go and ask." (SW12, 4 years' experience)

"Hmm yes definitely, because you know sometimes when we sit, we discussing our cases with my manager we think back to that training about so and so and they said this and that, you understand so we try and apply that to cases." (SW2, 3 years' experience)

The supportive role of CPD was also described in how it plays a vital role in decreasing their stress levels. Some participants shared;

"I think it impacts positively because somehow you will feel like when you go to those trainings you are debriefing a bit. When you share those experiences, each and every social worker will come with their experiences and it's like a debriefing session at the end of the day." (SW7, 3 years' experience)

"…it also impacts on a positive way because remember this thing equips us to be well informed. Once I am being informed I will be less stressed. If I don't know what I am doing I will be stuck, I will be going around asking people to help me." (SW3, 4 years' experience)

The above excerpts from the participants indicates their perceptions on the supportive role of CPD. Not only was nature of the supportive role of CPD described in engagements with management through the provision of trainings, others staff members through engagements during trainings as well in terms of relieving work related stress. This is in corroborates the findings of Engstrom (2019) who established that social work practitioners appreciated having supportive relationships with their peers in the work environment and this study has shown that CPD training can contribute to implied lower stress levels at work and more positivity and productivity that are aspects which are crucial in any workplace..

iv. Personal-professional development

When participants were relating to their personal professional development, they indicated that CPD increased their level of comprehension on how to intervene in cases they are faced with. Participants shared;

"I think I feel more confident in whatever I do and especially be more knowledgeable let's say for example if it's something I am busy with so I become more knowledgeable as well." (SW10, 2 years' experience)

"I think it changes your mind set and you become emotionally intelligent knowing how to deal with clients, you have different tools now. You know that if I have this challenge I know which took to use and you become emotionally intelligent I've said you know how to deal with different people as people are unique." (SW4, 4 years' experience)

"Okay so we are implementing because obviously every day we are tasked with various challenges, so most of the times if I'm like in my office alone I always reflect on if what I am doing is according to what I have learned in these trainings, uhm am I doing the correct thing uhm so I also keep like a booklet with all the resources we get in these trainings so I can always refer back to it to ensure that I am staying on the right path." (SW1, 4 years' experience)

In light of the information shared, it was noted from the participants that one of their motivators to participate in CPD is personal professional development to avoid stagnation. The SACSSP (2019) CPD policy indicates that one of its core objectives is to promote a reflective learning process and it was in line with the comments from respondents that indicated that they went through a reflective process when they engaged in CPD to compare in reality to the complexities they face in practice. Chaung and Delavega (2014) agree with this notion because in experiential learning models show how social workers in practice learn to use own experiences to make sense of new information they learn. This further asserts that no learning can occur without reflection, understanding and experimentation (Rutter, 2013). In the study findings participants showed awareness that a consequence to non-participation was stagnation. All social workers should then strive to engage with and reflect on their newly acquired skills from CPD engagements. Through participation in CPD participants shared they develop more confidence in addressing client challenges

4.3.4 BARRIERS TO CPD PARTICIPATION

Although the participants shared they had insight on the importance of engaging in CPD, a number of reasons were cited by participants as being the cause of them missing out and will be discussed in detail below.

i. Work commitments

The nature of child protection work which required social workers to be mainly out in the field or engaging in other administrative work or addressing urgent matters related to children's

cases. This presented a challenge in that although some would have confirmed attendance in the trainings they were unable to keep to this.

> *"I have been very busy, I was aware of those dates given out but you find that I have to be out somewhere and attend to some urgent matters concerning children and the removal of children so I will skip those trainings."* (SW9, 6 years' experience)

> *"Okay, because you see with the high demands of our caseloads we normally find that on the week of the CPD course, you supposed to attend cases at court, you supposed to do investigations, look for the children's school placements, all sorts of things. So you can't jump."* (SW12, 4 years' experience)

> *I would say work itself, sometimes, like I said we try to avail ourselves but due to the nature of our work an emergency will pop out of nowhere and its one you really can't ignore so you have to choose do I attend training or the emergency, so I would say work itself is an inhibitor that prevents us from participating in training.* (SW2, 4 years' experience)

A majority participants shared their high caseloads were time consuming leaving them with little time available to attend trainings. This coincided with the findings of a study done by Skhosana (2020) that found that one of the causes of a high turnover of social workers in the NPO sector was a high caseloads resulting from a high demand of services. The nature of work commitments within the child protection sector requires social workers to be flexible in ensuring that children in need get much needed welfare services which unfortunately leaves limited time to attend CPD trainings. The largest barrier to social worker engagement in CPD was work demands which left limited time for participants to engage in training even if they had signed up for them (Brady, 2019; Lombard, 2010). The findings in this study confirmed that indeed social worker work demands served as an inhibitor to CDP engagement. The occupational social work practice model (Van Breda & Du Plessis, 2009) indicates that position four which are workplace interventions would be better suited to address this challenge within organisations. The occupational social worker would possibly develop an organisational strategy that will encourage a culture of having alternatives for engagements if social workers cannot attend due to work commitments.

ii. Finances

Study findings indicated that the finances was the biggest hindrance to participation in CPD activities for the participants. The participants shared that due to the cost of acquiring trainings that they wanted to attend but could not.

> *"For me, because you know there are other CPD's that are interesting that I want to do but sometimes I can't due to the cost."* (SW10, 2 years' experience)

> *"I think again financially some CPD trainings are very expensive and with us social workers earning so little, when you supposed to attend those trainings you reconsider should I or should I not. So financially it hinders us sometimes."* (SW7, 3 years' experience)

> *"Sometimes, if there is really good training, maybe specialised training, then it is costing uhm, it can cost quite a lot of money. And that might be a challenge for some of the social workers."* (KIB, SACSSP representative)

Studies in CPD have shown that social workers, particularly in child protection, struggle with the financial demands of trainings as they cannot pay for fees charged to attend trainings (Brady, 2014; Beddoe & Duke 2013; Skhosana, 2020; Lombard, 2010; Price & Kelly 2021). From the participants responses it emerged that their finances were indeed a hindrance to their participation in CPD activities. In the study by Skhosana (2020), it was found that finances was a major reason NGO's could not retain social workers was due to financial constraints including lack of funding and low remuneration for social workers. The cost of some CPD trainings were costly and automatically excluded social workers from the NGO sector. From some of the respondents it appeared that even in this day and age many years after the first implementation of the CPD policy by the SACSSP, social workers were still experiencing similar challenges when it came to finances and affording CPD trainings. Engaging in CPD at their own expense was financially costing and therefore a hindrance to their participation in CPD.

iii. Participant's lack of interest in CPD

The element of personal interest was also mentioned in the findings and it became apparent that some trainings were not attended due to participants feeling they were less interesting for them. Factors such as having some trainings being repeated also played a major role in this as participants shared;

"Many people have left the organization, maybe the courses don't change; although we have added some four courses. We have 12 courses that are accredited for CPD. People would say they want training courses, come training 4 or 6 people attend." (KIA, training manager organisation B)

"I will benefit from it if it is not repeating or is based on what I already know. I want every session to be facilitated on new topics so that I get to learn more but not to be repeating one thing because it will be like a waste of time for me. I want them to be different new topics." (SW9, 6 years' experience)

"I think it depends on the field you are in, if you attend a CPD that relates to the field you are in it becomes more important but if it does not maybe you won't have that much of an interest." (SW7, 3 years' experience)

The views from the respondents indicated that personal interest, repetition, and social work sector contributed to social workers choosing which training was appealing to them. The experiential learning theory asserts that the self-interest of the social worker is vital in the learning process as the process of grasping new skills requires active reflection and engagement (Cheung & Delavega, 2014; Kolb, 2015; Rutter, 2013). This means that without interest the participants will not take much from that CPD activity. The study provided insight on how introducing more training topics did not appear to help as social workers did not still show interest. The participants made it was evident that there is less engagement in training that is not appealing. Conducting research to establish possible developmental areas that could be intervened in by the occupational social worker could assist in the better engagement. An occupational social worker also assists in getting management to listen to the concerns of employees and have them addressed.

iv. COVID-19 pandemic

Another sub-theme that emerged as a hindrance to social work participation was the COVID-19 pandemic. "The current COVID-19 pandemic is caused by a coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2" (WHO, 2020 p.1). The outbreak of the extremely infectious COVID-19 disease among the human population meant that life as we knew it had to change, as such the manner in which social workers engaged in CPD activities also changed.

"I will say that in organisations if they can do it in-house like us here at (details withheld), we used to have lots of those before this Corona Virus pandemic and I think it's something which we still need to do more of."(SW2, 3 years' experience)

"You know considering the fact that we are living in a globalised world and there is corona and we are on, everything is now virtual, I suppose we just need to be to be taught on how to carry out counselling sessions on Zoom. How do we conduct home visits within the corona you know, I don't know if I make sense but you know. Because now we can't just walk into someone's house. So I suppose now we need to be told, but we need to have trainings around how do we interact from a distance." (SW8, 4 years' experience).

The outbreak of the pandemic also impacted the nature of trainings from face to face to the use of more virtual means. Lockdown measures due to COVID-19 resulted in alternative measures to be employed by social workers to continue crucial interventions even in the time of a global pandemic (Bright, 2020). The study by Berzin et al., (2020) found that there was limited education opportunities for social workers on the use of technology and suggested that there needed to be transformation in social work education to adopt more use of technology. These findings were empirical because with the outbreak of the COVID-19, social workers were encouraged to use more technologically supported interventions. To provide clarity on how social workers could continue intervening during a national lockdown, the SACSSP issued notice 6 of 2020 in order to provide guidelines on how social workers can continue with service delivery utilizing technology supported social work services also called e-social work. This would enable continued service Section 3.1.3(h) of the notice also indicates that social workers should acquire at least 5 CPD points in the field of e-social work and technology. It was evident from the participant's views that their frequent engagement in CPD activities had been harshly affected by the outbreak of the pandemic as they had attended far less trainings than in previous years. Although SACSSP had called for the increased participation in e-social work trainings, participants felt that there were limited trainings on these platforms that were offered to them.

v. Lack of auditing and accountability for non-participation

Lack of auditing from council served as a hindrance as there was no accountability or consequence that participants had experienced from the council. It was noted that only a few participants attributed their participation as being motivated by their council registration.

Council not being accessible to social workers it's a theme that emerged from the participants as seen below;

> *"Our council has not been doing its duty as I mentioned before in a normal society social workers were supposed to be audited but the lack of audit on its own makes me relax. Because I am not audited you only get audited if someone reported you and when they do report you they act you know you get emails whereas when you want to enquire something you never get a response from them. If you call them you never get a response, but if someone reports you know. So now in a normal society, in a normal working society if our council audited us if our council was constantly empowering us, constantly sending us information then I really do believe that social workers would be working towards professional development. So I think the lack of competence on the council's side."* (SW8, 4 years' experience)

> *"Not really, I don't think the council even cares if we get CPD points or not because I mean they have never questioned it to ask so a year has gone by why have you not participated in CPD so I don't think they have a clue what's going on with the social workers honestly, I mean they should also be, I know they offer programs in CPD training but they don't play an active role especially at (name of organisation withheld)."* (SW1, 4 years' experience)

> *"Because one cannot be taken out of the registration roll because they have not been attending"* (SW9, 6 years' experience)

> *"There are no consequences because the Council doesn't punish, although there is a law a rule, it's a requirement. But they never monitor whether a person attends or not"* (KIA, training manager organisation B)

According to the research participants, CPD was not prioritized currently due to the lack in involvement and monitoring by the SACSSP. This was in contrast with the study by Lam et al., (2016), in which CPD was seen as license renewal system utilized in various countries to ensure their members are accountable in practice. From the comments of the respondents it appeared that in South Africa, the regulating body which is the SACSSP was not playing an active role to regulate social workers. Fortheringham (2018) had warned that child protection social work without regulation poses a great threat to society. From the study participants there was no mention of a portfolio of evidence that will be used to monitor their engagement of social workers in CPD as per the CPD policy (2019).

As similar studies had been conducted in Ireland and New Zealand (Brady, 2014; Beddoe & Duke, 2013) the most imperative role of the social work regulatory body was to regulate member's participations. In looking at participant's views a gap exists between what the regulatory body in this country does as opposed to what happens in other countries regarding regulation. There seemed to be a lack of taking responsibility for not participation as it was the deemed that if they were not regulated. The danger of this was that there were consequences to social worker's non participation in CPD should an individual be audited and be found non-compliant.

4.3.5 THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

All the participants that were interviewed as part of the study were employed by child protection non-governmental organisations. An essential finding was the manner in which the organisation which social workers are employed contributes to their engagement in CPD. The findings from participants will be discussed below;

i. Influence of work environment on encouraging CPD participation.

The participants interviewed were from child protection organisations in Johannesburg and based on the findings made, they indicated that social workers working organisations played a vital role in their engagement. In both agencies training was provided for by the organisations.

> *"I remember at a previous organisation where I worked there was no opportunity to be able to do any CPD trainings and obviously as professionals we know that we have to accumulate 20 CPD points per year, so that was a bit of a concern for me actually as I was just starting out working. And then once I got to (name of organisation withheld) it was a lot more available because on a monthly basis we would have group supervision sessions and the manager would ensure that those trainings were all CPD accredited. So we would get our CPD points for the year within a few trainings. So that was something that was something that we didn't have to worry about. So I definitely think that it is encouraged."* (SW5, 7 years' experience)
>
> *"In my organisation they are encouraging it. As I said earlier that it is a training department so we do CPD trainings. So every year there is training so they encourage each and every social worker to attend those CDP trainings."* (SW7, 3 years' experience)

"…it now depends on how lucky you are, the lucky part I mean it depends on where you are employed because like I said it's not all organisations that provides opportunities to their social workers that must attend these CPD trainings. Some organisations it's like his man for himself, so if you don't do it for yourself then there is nothing they can do for you." (SW2, 3 year's experience)

In the study findings, participants highlighted that CPD trainings in their work organisations were offered and had played a vital role in their engagement. However some participants also shared that not having a training coordinator in one of the organisation, resulted in their reduced participation. It became evident that the majority of participants tend to depend on their organisations to acquire training and with there being no trainer they were not engaging in any training at the moment. There seemed to be a level of dependence by some participants as not being offered trainings within their work environments resulted in non-participation. However surprisingly when looking at the SACSSP (2019) policy on CPD there is no mention of what role organisation's that employ social workers could play to facilitate engagement of staff in organisations. A participant who is a key informant remarked;

"I think the educational side of occupational social work. And maybe that model that we have is that the third quadrant and the fourth one, which is macro. I think when I look at the organization from a macro point of view, and encourage ongoing learning, which is occupational social work specific."

The response from the key informant indicates how an occupational social worker would holistically encourage more leaning and development as part of CPD within the work environment by assessing employees in relation to their work roles to establish suitable interventions.

ii. Provision of CPD in the workplace

Training or CPD activities being offered in the workplace also emerged as a theme CPD from the study participants. In both organisations there was a training coordinator who was tasked with the facilitation of CPD trainings. The participants generally indicated to be engaged in CPD trainings from time to time when made available at their organisation. Participants shared how CPD was made accessible to them in them below;

"…with us we have easy access because we don't have to pay you know our organisation, I don't know how exactly they do it but we just get it for free. So it's easier

because you just go and attend. All you have to do is just to arrange your time" (SW4, 4 years' experience)

"Well in the organisation that am currently working for, the management do provide trainings that are CPD accredited so it's fairly accessible. It's not that we have to go out and search for various CPD trainings or things like that. Sometimes when there are trainings that we would like to attend we do normally get given the time off to attend, but you have to apply for leave for that day" (SW5, 7 years' experience)

"Oh we do receive quite a lot of support from our managers because normally they are the ones who arranges this for us, so that at least we don't pay because normally most of the things we have to pay, where we had to do it on our own I doubt that I would be able to pay for ourselves because they normally try to negotiate with the external trainers to do it in-house."(SW2, 3 years' experience)

"A training provider is "any person or body providing an approved CPD activity" (SACSSP, 2019, p. 5). Having the employer facilitate the provision of the training emerged as essential in ensuring trainings are accessible and that participants frequently engage in CPD. The provision of trainings within their work organisations was highlighted as a motivator of participation which is closely linked to the theme of motivation that has been discussed. Therefore participants shared that they depended on their employers to make provisions for their CPD through either providing the trainings or providing information on trainings that were available. As such some participants indicated that their participation was very limited in organisations that did not offer any training. There is limited literature confirming whether it is mandatory for organisations to provide for social worker training. However, Beddoe and Duke (2013) indicate that although organisations can assist social workers, ultimately the consequences of non-compliance falls on the individual social work practitioner. There is potentially a limitation to participants understanding that they too can provide own CPD training as there was no mention of self-provision or individual activities in CPD they could engage in rather than to depend on work organisations.

iii. Programme development to encourage CPD engagement

A few participants in the study suggested that certain programmes can be developed in the workplace for further CPD engagement.

"I think from the social work point of view there is no much importance that is placed on this kind of trainings, these CPD because you will find that it's supposed to be compulsory each and every one is supposed to be attending these trainings. Managers and everything they need to ensure that their employees they attend these trainings, because once you miss out of these trainings their very important. I think these other professions they function very well in their field of practice because they value these trainings a lot than what we are doing currently. So if we can look into that we can implement that the organization implement policies that will make sure each and every staff there is no year that passes without engaging or participating in such trainings. I think going forward it might help as well. (SW3, 4 years' experience)

"They have to do some research and design certain programme or maybe orientation for beginners because honestly statutory is just totally different from other types of social work so I think at statutory yah they have to design something, a manual or CPD training to initiate or orientation of new social workers because it takes time for the newly qualified to understand the whole thing in statutory because there is a lot of things to be learned like the reports, whatever you are doing in statutory I think it's very complicated. Yeah so I think they have to design a manual or something." (SW6, 2 years' experience)

"When they participate in CPD at (details withheld) is almost, I'm not going to say mandatory, we have had social workers who could not participate in some but it's part of their appraisal. So, for us, we believe to make the staff appraisal developmental and then to provide the training necessary for them to develop in those identified areas, and then the CPD just becomes an added bonus."(KID, training manager organisation A)

From the excerpts the participants in the study indicated that there were interventions that can be made in the workplace to encourage participation of social workers in more CPD activities. These interventions should all begin with the process of needs assessment. Some of the recommendations to improve participation in CPD was suggestions from the key informants was to align the CPD trainings to staff performance appraisals. This coincided with the recommendations of September (2010), to make CPD linked to performance management. Becker, Antuar and Everette (2011) found that one of the key elements of employee performance management systems in NGO's is learning and development. Not only would this encourage participation it would also make it mandatory. The participants also indicated that they would gain more in CPD if all levels of the organisation are involved. This means that

direct line supervisors and managers should also receive training as they too also need to develop and better understand what the social workers are faced with in the field. The development of programs that would encourage more engagement of staff development initiatives using needs assessment can be conducted by an occupational social worker based in that organisation.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the main findings of the research study through the process of data analysis. A number of themes emerged from the study that would give more insight on the views of social workers in the Johannesburg child protection field on continuous professional development. The themes identified were social worker's understanding of CPD, the nature of CPD training they were involved in. The study also established social workers motivation to engage in CPD as well as hindrances to participation. The last theme that emerged was the role that organisations and the workplace plays in social worker's CPD participation. A description of the study findings and recommendations are to be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter discussions on the main study findings are described in detail. The study findings will be summarized in this chapter and from them a conclusion will be made. The study aimed to discover the participation of child protection social workers in CPD. Based on the study findings recommendations will be made.

5.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives developed for the study were aimed at understand the views of child protection social workers in Johannesburg on their participation in CPD. The objectives outlined were as follows:

i. To examine the perspectives of the child protection social workers in understanding of CPD.
ii. To explore activities child protection social workers engage in as part of CPD.
iii. To investigate factors that motivate child protection social worker's engagement in CPD
iv. To explore factors that hinder social workers in the child protection field in engaging in CPD activities.
v. To explore the influence of work environments on social worker's engagement in CPD.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

In this section the main findings of the research will be discussed. Each theme is in line with the study objects listed above.

Objective 1: To examine child protection social workers in understanding of CPD

This objective was aimed at gathering the perspectives of child protection social workers were regarding CPD. In relation to the first sub-theme participants forming part of study appeared to have an understanding that CPD was essential for maintaining professional competence. There was understanding that they needed to continuously update their skills. The second sub-theme regarding social work in practice indicated that the participants perceived that what they had learnt as part of their training was very different from what they were experiencing in child

protection practice. As social work in practice is far more complex to what is learned at university, CPD afforded them insight on how to handle everyday challenges that they were not thoroughly prepared for at an undergraduate level. As such CPD bridged the gap between theory and practice. The final sub-theme that emerged was that CPD was understood to be important for integration into social worker roles. In the field of child protection social work, one participant shared that at undergraduate training there is not much emphasis on the Children's Act 38 of 2005, yet in practice, they were expected to implement this important piece of legislation. CPD assisted in better familiarization of the important sections which spoke directly to their line of work. However, when it came to integration of the participants into specific work roles, CPD appeared to be have a limitation as the types of training the participants opted to attend needed to be in line with their work.

Objective 2: To explore activities child protection social workers engage in as part of CPD

From the study findings participants shared on the nature of activities that they as child protection social workers engage in as part of CPD. Participants shared that they had been exposed to a variety of CPD trainings. The majority of topics they had received training on were centered on child protection. Through participant insights there were two types of trainings that the participants had in common, and these were on the Children's Act which was the governing legislation for child protection in South Africa as well as risk assessment. In child protection social work, risk assessment is an important part as that is when the social worker assesses the child situation to establish if any harm may emanate should the child's conditions not be improved by a social worker's intervention. This means that the social worker needs to have insight on the repercussions of their failure to act to protect the interests of a child. It emerged that there was the need to continue receiving training on the correct implementation of the act.

The participants went on to describe the platforms which these CPD trainings were made available to them. Also was noted was that the prevalence of CPD trainings was in the form of group trainings as well as workshops. The participants and key informants indicated that this was a common platform of engagement in CPD which was available to them. Surprisingly there was limited mention of individual activities in the study. A key informant shared that they believed this was the case due to the fact that group activities are assigned CPD points prior engagement, whereas with individual activities this was not the case. In describing their frequency in engagement, participants indicated that CPD had been previously made available

to them often. Although the prevalence of training was in group form there was also an emerging trend that showed that the frequency of attending trainings had decreased. The study uncovered that in one organisation it was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective 3: To investigate factors that motivate child protection social worker's engagement in CPD

Different factors were shared by participants as being motivators for their participation in CPD. The first factor was that engagement in CPD resulted in improved service delivery. Due to social work being a service orientated profession, it was not alarming to discover that participants wanted to deliver on services and with engagement in CPD they were able to do so. Another finding from the study was that CPD was understood in terms of point accumulation. Participation shared that their motivation to participate was driven by the need accumulate CPD points. However the study failed to establish whether or not participants had been compliant in accumulation to retain their membership. The last sub-theme was CPD explained in terms of its supportive nature. The environment of CPD engagements allowed for social workers to come into a space whereby they could share about their experiences as well as learning from each other. Participants further stated that it was not only beneficial to them but improves relations with the people they report to as they begin to have an idea of what they face in practice. Support was also described in the sense that CPD also improved the mental health of social workers by reducing stress. One participant remarked that stressful cased were not as bad after social workers realise that they were frustrated due to not knowing what to do. Lastly a motivator to participant's engagement in CPD was for personal professional development. Participants alluded to their growth as social workers as well as in their personal capacity as they learnt the importance of critical reflection.

Objective 4: To explore factors that are a barrier social workers in the child protection field in engaging in CPD activities.

Participants shared that there were a number of factors that formed a barrier to them actively engaging in CPD. The most commonly mentioned factor that prevents their active engagement was due to work commitments. Although they would want to attend trainings sometimes their work does not allow them to do so. There were some participants who shared that they had not engaged in any trainings in the past few years due to the nature of the work they do. However, contradictory is that the study also found that personal interest was also a motivator to participants choosing which trainings to attend which then served as a limitation. There were

complaints regarding repetition of trainings and this mad the participants opt not to engage. The other hindrance to participation shared by participants was finances as they could not afford to self-fund their participation but depended on the employer to provide them with training. In one organisation there was no training coordinator therefore social workers had not engaged in training since the coordinator had left. The COVID-19 pandemic was also shared t currently be a hindrance to participant's participation this year. Due to the outbreak, physical contact was restricted, this meant that the traditional method of face-to-face contact for trainings had to change. Other means of training had to be employed on different platforms which social workers were not accustomed and needed further clarity and training on their use. There was also a mention of lack of auditing and accountability for non-participation, which according to the participants is due to council's lack of auditing.

Objective 5: To explore the influence of work environments on social worker's engagement in CPD.

In this objective there was understanding that the work organisation was perceived as a learning organisation for participants. There was more engagement in CPD as the organisations that the participants were employed as both provided CPD trainings for their employees. There was the perception from participants that their current organisations were good for CPD engagement as they provide trainings for their employees. Participants indicated that more CPD trainings need to take place in the work environment as social workers failed to engage frequently due to work commitments and affordability. The key informants on the other hand indicated that there needs to be program development such as performance appraisals to ensure that social workers are compliant in engaging in CPD.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study proposes the subsequent recommendations based on findings:

5.4.1 Future Research

Social Work CPD is an area which requires ongoing research particularly in the South African context. The study in Ireland by Brady (2014) provided much insight on the perceptions on CPD by child protection social workers. The current study presented findings showing that not much research has been done in the field of CPD in child protection social work particularly in South Africa. As such this demands that more research be conducted in the field to investigate CPD engagement of social workers in relation to the required standards as set out by the

SACSSP policy on CPD. The new/revised CPD policy to be implemented by the SACSSP could also provide an interesting policy development and implementation study.

5.4.2 Occupational Social Work

CPD proved to be a crucial tool of educating, developing and supporting social workers as they face different complexities in the profession. The role of an occupational social worker can be crucial role one for social workers in the employ of child protection organizations. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic an occupational social worker could ensure continued CPD engagement through newer technological avenues and thus ensure compliance. Occupational social workers could also advocate and champion for recognition of training activities which do not have CPD points allocated.

5.4.3 Policy

The study has shown that more could be done to develop policies that would educate social workers on the importance of CPD as well as ensure that social workers commit to engaging in CPD. Educational programs can be conducted in conjunction with the SACSSP for further awareness and understanding of the SACSSP CPD policy. It is important to raise awareness that all training can be beneficial and even engaging in training without CPD points does not mean that there has not been an increase in knowledge or the development of a new skill. Policy development to include a shift from contact to e-social work initiatives such as online or virtual trainings particularly due to the current Covid-19 pandemic that has accelerated more technologically assisted social work interventions. These programs would further educate social workers on alternatives in CPD accumulation as the study showed limited engagement in individual activities. Another way to encourage CPD engagement proactively can be linking it to performance appraisals. Therefore, organisations can develop strategies linked to appraisals to ensure that individual and organisational targets are set monitoring and evaluating the acquiring of CPD to ensure compliance.

5.5 CONCLUSION OF STUDY

The study aimed at establishing the participation of child protection social workers in CPD, which is what the statement of the problem as well as the study objectives formulated aimed to uncover. During literature review the available literature in CPD was at a local and international level identified that a gap existed in identifying child protection social workers engagement in CPD. The third chapter indicated the methodology that was adopted in the research data

gathering process. The experiential learning theory was employed as the theoretical framework to analyze the findings of the study in order to understand social workers process of learning when engaging in CPD activities. The findings of the study were presented and established social workers perceptions CPD. The study found that participants were engaged in CPD activities in their professional careers however the nature of the profession also presented factors that were affecting their engagement. Firstly the study showed that social workers were cognizant of the functions of CPD in improving their practice and they were engaged in CPD. The organisations which social workers are employed also play a crucial role in engagement in CPD.

In conclusion a recommendation made by the study is that the introduction of an occupational social worker in organisations may be essential in encouraging social worker's engagement in CPD participation as well as education on the prescriptions of the SACSSP CPD policy. The practice models in occupational social work further were aligned to the prescripts of the experiential learning theory as that is where the application and testing of newly learnt ideas occur. The study presented empirical findings showing that the developmental approach can also be applied to child protection social workers in promoting their participation and development. As such the continuous development of social workers in practice can be further assisted by organisations playing an active role through development of policies that drive the further understanding and acquisition of CPD.

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APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4472 • Fax: 011 717 4473 • E-mail: socialwork.SHCD@wits.ac.za

14th December 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO RECRUIT RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS FROM YOUR ORGANISATION

My name is Busisiwe Myaka. I am a postgraduate student at the University of Witwatersrand registered for a Master's degree in Social Work. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am undertaking a study on continuous professional development (CPD) by exploring views of social workers in the Johannesburg child protection sector. I hope that the information gathered will increase further understanding on CPD.

As your organisation specializes in child protection, it would be the ideal place for recruiting participants for the study. Should you grant permission, your employee's participation will be entirely voluntary. I will personally consent them and they will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalties. Furthermore, I shall arrange an interview at a time and place that is suitable for them. The interview will last for 45-60 minutes. There are no benefits attached to participating or not participating. They are also entitled to refuse to answer any questions that they feel uncomfortable to answer. I will also request them for permission to record the interviews. No one expect me and my supervisor will have access to the tapes. These recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet or computer with a password for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. Personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information, including names of the organisations participating, will be included in the final research report, journal articles or presentations.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact me on Busisiwe.gumbi@gmail.com or 319361@students.wits.ac.za (email) or 082 796 2102 (cell). You may also contact my research supervisor, Dr Ajwang' Warria, on Ajwang.Warria@wits.ac.za (email). We shall answer your questions or concerns to the best of our ability. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) chair-person, Prof. Jasper Knight through Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za (email) or on 011 717 1408 (tel).

Attached, find the study proposal and ethics clearance certificate. Should my request be granted, may I request to have a formal confirmation or permission letter to conduct research at your organisation for my records.
I look forward to a positive response regarding my request.
Yours Sincerely,
Mrs Busisiwe Myaka (Occupational Social Work Student | University of the Witwatersrand)

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Busisiwe Myaka, and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Witwatersrand registered for a Master's degree Occupational in Social Work. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am undertaking a research on participation in continuous professional development by exploring views of social workers in the Johannesburg child protection sector. It is hoped that the information gathered will shed some light about the views of Johannesburg based child protection social workers on continuous professional development. The study aims to discover whether child protection social workers participate and see value in continuous professional development activities. Further it will investigate what motivates and hinders their participation in continuous professional development.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. If you accept my invitation, your participation will is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without any penalty. If you do agree to take part, I shall arrange an interview with you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last for 45-60 minutes. There are no benefits attached to participating or not participating. You may continue or withdraw from the study at any time and you are entitled to also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable to answer. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to minimise physical contact the interviews may be done using the Zoom app. The researcher will arrange with you to establish and ensure that there is secure connectivity for interviews conducted on Zoom. I will acquire your permission first for interviews to be audio-recorded should conducted face to face and also permission to record the session should we be using the Zoom app. No one expect me and my supervisor will have access to the audio or data. The Zoom video recordings that show interviews with the participants will be destroyed once the data has been transcribed as the transcripts will ensure that the identity of the participants are kept anonymous. These audio and interview schedules will be kept in a locked cabinet for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. Be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential by using pseudonyms and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

If you have any questions regarding the study please contact me on 082 796 2102 or my Supervisor, Dr Ajwang Warria on Ajwang.Warria@wits.ac.za (email). We shall answer them to the best of our ability. If you also wish to receive a summary of the results of the study; an

abstract or summary of the results will be made available on request. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) administrator Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za telephone 011 717 1408.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this study.

Yours Sincerely,

Busisiwe Myaka

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

Title of project: Participation in continuous professional development: exploring views of social workers in the Johannesburg child protection field.

Name of researcher: Busisiwe Myaka

I, …….., agree to participate in this research project. The

research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I can confirm that the researcher has assured me that my participation is voluntary and may withdraw at from the study should I wish to do so.	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded for face to face interviews	YES	NO
I permit the researcher record the interview conducted on Zoom video conferencing	YES	NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used after this project has ended, for academic purposes	YES	NO

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4472 • Fax: 011 717 4473 • E-mail: socialwork.SHCD@wits.ac.za

22nd May 2020

Dear Prof. Brady,

RE: PERMISSION TO USE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT FOR A SOUTH AFRICAN STUDY

This is a request to use the research instrument you developed for your study, published under the title "Child protection social workers' engagement in continuing professional development: An exploratory study."

My name is Busisiwe Myaka, a social worker based in Johannesburg (South Africa). I am currently pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Occupational Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am working on my research project as part of fulfilling the requirements of the Masters programme. My proposed research topic is "Continuous professional development (CPD): Exploring views of social workers in the child protection sector in Johannesburg." The study is being supervised by Dr. Ajwang' Warria (who can be contacted on Ajwang.Warria@wits.ac.za). Data collection is envisaged for late 2020 or early 2021 depending on the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Johannesburg.

CPD is a crucial area in Social Work that is worth exploring. However, there have been limited studies that have been generally conducted in South Africa and none with social workers in the child protection field. Kindly share and allow me to contextualize and use the instrument you used during data collection for the above-mentioned study. I have checked with my research supervisor and this is permitted at Masters level. Full acknowledgement of your role in the initial development of the data collection instrument will be given in my research report and any future publications and presentations.

I look forward to a positive response regarding my request. You may contact me or my supervisor if you have any queries.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Busisiwe Myaka,

Occupational Social Work Student | University of the Witwatersrand

WITS UNIVERSITY

Busisiwe Myaka <319361@students.wits.ac.za>

Permission to use research instrument for South African study

4 messages

Busisiwe Myaka <319361@students.wits.ac.za> 23 May 2020 at 22:18
To: bradye3@tcd.ie

Greetings Prof Brady

Kindly find the attached letter as per my request on Linked in when I made contact with you. I will greatly appreciate your assistance.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Kind regards
Mrs Busisiwe Myaka
Masters Occupational Social Work student

Prof. Brady_Request_22 May 2020.pdf
175K

Eavan Brady <BRADYE3@tcd.ie> 25 May 2020 at 08:16
To: Busisiwe Myaka <319361@students.wits.ac.za>

Dear Busisiwe,

Many thanks for your email and it is fantastic to hear about the study you plan to carry out with social workers in the child protection sector in Johannesburg.

I am very happy for you to use (and adapt as necessary) the interview guide I developed when carrying out my Masters research. Please find it attached to this email.

I would really love to hear how this research goes and what you find – would you be happy to share a summary of findings or indeed your thesis when you have completed the research study?

If you have any questions at all do please feel free to email me!

With bets wishes,

Eavan

--

Eavan Brady, MSW, PhD

Assistant Professor in Social Work

School of Social Work & Social Policy

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANT OSW

Introduction

If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer please let me know.

If you wish to stop at any time just let me know also.

General Information

1. Highest Qualification:
2. Years practising post-qualifying?
3. Years of experience in current position?
4. Age:
5. Gender:

Participation

1. Could you tell me a bit about your professional understanding of CPD?
2. Tell me about social workers participation in CPD?
3. What type(s) of CPD are they expected to have done?
4. Tell me about social workers reasons/motivations for participation in CPD?
5. What outcome(s) would you hope for social workers in participation in CPD?
6. What changes do you notice in social workers following participation in CPD?
7. Do you believe they have an opportunity to build upon and implement your learning they have
8. completed participation in a CPD activity?
9. Tell me about social workers generally feeling supported to participate in CPD?
10. How available is the Council for social workers to enquire about CPD?
11. Do you feel social workers are supported to participate in CPD and meet the requirements of council?
12. How available is CPD in terms of easy or difficult is it for them to access the CPD that they require in terms of time off, funding etc?
13. What do you think inhibits or reduces social work participation in CPD?

Within a Child Protection Context

1. Do you have experience in the child protection sector in your professional capacity?
2. If yes was it as an social worker or working with employees in that sector?
3. Could you tell me a bit why/ why not you feel CPD is important in the context of child protection social work?

4. What are the benefits of CPD, if any, for child protection practice?
5. Do you feel it improves practice, if so how?
6. Does the impact of participation in CPD vary depending on the type of CPD you engage in?

Occupational Social Work

1. Do you feel CPD is encouraged in organisations?
2. Do you find that participating in CPD impacts on social worker's stress levels? If so is this positive or negative?
3. Would you say the introduction of an occupational social worker can make a difference to child protection social work practice?
4. Do OSW have a large role to play in supporting social worker's engagement in CPD, if yes how so?
5. Are there interventions specific to occupational social work that can assist in participation in CPD?
6. Do you think CPD policy within child protection organisations exists?
7. If yes, are they effectively implemented? If no can it be developed?
8. Do you think an occupational social worker ensure the developmental and educational needs of child protection social workers are met?
9. What recommendations can you make for active CPD participation in organisations that may facilitate staff development and promote best practice?

General

1. Given the relatively generic nature of social work training in South Africa do you think there is an automatic need for specific CPD after qualifying?
2. Do you have an opinion on how Social Workers compare with other professionals in terms of participation and importance placed on CPD?
3. How do you feel the statutory registration with SACSSP of social workers impact on CPD participation?
4. Do you have any general recommendations for CPD policy makers/trainers/employers on how your role as an OSW may encourage participation in CPD for child protection social workers?

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILD PROTECTION PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer please let me know.

If you wish to stop at any time just let me know also.

General Information

1. Qualification: Diploma, Degree, Masters, Other
2. Years practising in social work post-qualifying? In general
3. In Child Protection
4. Area of Child Protection work?
5. Grade of Social Work position?

Participation

1. Could you tell me a bit about your personal understanding of CPD?
2. Tell me about your participation in CPD, how often do you partake in CPD activities?
3. What type(s) of CPD have you done?
4. Tell me about your reasons/motivations for participation in CPD?
5. What outcome(s) would you hope for from participation in CPD?
6. What changes do you notice following participation in CPD?
7. In your opinion, how do you build upon and implement your learning once you have
8. completed participation in a CPD activity?
9. How do you think you are supported to participate in CPD?
10. How easy or difficult is it for you to access the CPD that you need in terms of time off, funding etc?
11. What do you think inhibits or reduces your participation?

Within a Child Protection Context

1. Could you tell me a bit why/ why not you feel CPD is important in the context of child protection social work?
2. What are the benefits of CPD, if any, to child protection practice?
3. Do you feel it improves your practice, if so how?
4. Could you give an example of how participation in CPD has made a difference to your practice?

5. Does the impact of participation in CPD vary depending on the type of CPD you engage in?

General

1. What is the nature of CPD that is available to you? Can you provide examples?
2. Do you feel CPD is encouraged in your organisation? How or how not?
3. Encouraged in theory or in practice?
4. Do you find that participating in CPD impacts on your stress levels? If so is this positive or negative?
5. Does CPD have a large role to play in supporting your work, along with team members,
6. senior workers, if yes how so?
7. Do you feel there is a need for specific types of CPD that aren't already available to you?
8. Given the relatively generic nature of social work training in South Africa do you think there is an automatic need for specific CPD after qualifying?
9. Do you have an opinion on how Social Workers compare with other professionals in terms of participation and importance placed on CPD?
10. How do you feel statutory registration with SACSSP of social workers will impact on your CPD participation?
11. Do you have any general recommendations for CPD policy makers/trainers/employers that may facilitate your development as a practitioner? Encourage participation in CPD? Promote best practice?

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANT TRAINING COORDINATOR

Introduction

If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer please let me know.

If you wish to stop at any time just let me know also.

General Information

Pseudonym:

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Highest qualification:
4. Years practising post-qualifying:
5. Years of experience in current position:

Participation

1. Could you tell me a bit about your professional understanding of CPD?
2. Tell me about social workers participation in CPD?
3. What type(s) of CPD are they expected to have done?
4. Tell me about social workers reasons/motivations for participation in CPD?
5. What outcome(s) would you hope for social workers in participation in CPD?
6. What changes do you notice in social workers following participation in CPD?
7. From your experience, in what ways do they build upon and implement the learning after participation in a CPD activity?
8. From your experience tell me about social workers generally feeling supported to participate in CPD?
9. How available is the Council for social workers to enquire about CPD?
10. How available is CPD in terms of easy or difficult is it for them to access the CPD that they require in terms of time off, funding etc?
11. What do you think inhibits or reduces social work participation in CPD?

Within a Child Protection Context

1. Could you tell me a bit why CPD is important in the context of child protection social work?

2. What are the benefits of CPD, if any, to child protection practice? Explore: improving services, reducing stress, peer support
3. What are some of the consequences for child protection social workers not participating in CPD?
4. How can child protection organisation in South Africa encourage and support their social workers to participate in CPD?

General

1. How does SACSSP encourage social workers to engage in CPD?
2. How do you feel the statutory registration with SACSSP of social workers impact on their CPD participation?
3. How do social workers compare with other professionals in terms of participation and importance placed on CPD?
4. Given the relatively generic nature of undergraduate social work training in South Africa, do you think there is an automatic need for specific types of CPD after qualifying? Yes or No. (Explore either responses)
5. Do you have any general recommendations for CPD policy makers/trainers/employers that may encourage participation in CPD for child protection social workers?

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

General Information
Psydonym: SW8
Gender: Female
Age: 28
Researcher: If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer please let me know. If you wish to stop at any time just also let me know?
SW8: Okay.
Researcher: In terms of your qualification do you have a Diploma, Degree, a Masters, or Other?
SW8: Degree, honours degree
Researcher: How many years have you been practicing post-qualifying?
SW8: I started practicing in 2016, so it's almost 5 years, this year it will be 5 years.
Researcher: In that experience how many years do you have in the child protection sector?
SW8: I started in child protection since October 2019 so it's almost 2 years.
Researcher: So what's the current area of child protection that you work?
SW8: Foster care.
Researcher: And your grade of social work is it entry or junior, is it a supervisor or management position?
SW8: It's a junior, it's an entry level.

Participation
Researcher: Okay so now we are going to be dwelling in the participation questions. Could you tell me a bit about your personal understanding of CPD?
SW8: The last time I heard about CPD was at varsity so my understanding back then it was that it's personal development professional development you know and one thing that I know about is that is compulsory and that there is specific point that you get and one thing I pick it up for me is that in a normal society social workers were supposed to be audited for quarterly basis or six months or yearly basis and to check if you have because one thing about is that you must have specific CPD point at the end of the year but at the end of the particular period. So in a normal society you must be audited but is not happening therefore that is why as am saying right now the last time I had CPD point was at University.
Researcher: And in terms your participation in CPD, how often do you participate in CPD activities?
SW8: I would say so far I think I have attended I think six or five trainings.
Researcher: What were those types of CPD trainings? The topics that were covered?
SW8: Oh the topics, children's act, assessment and intervention, child abuse, what was the other one, I think it was professional development and taking care of yourself as a professional oh and gender based violence and then I can't remember the last one.
Researcher: And then all these topics that were covered were they in group setting or was it individual?
SW8: It was in group setting.
Researcher: And were they in group setting, workshops, what was the. Or was it individual, what was the setting?
SW8: Oh it was group settings, all group settings
Researcher: Tell me about your reasons for participation/ motivations for participating in CPD?
SW8: I think for me right now it's just a matter of personal development and professional development. Wanting to improve yourself as a professional.
Researcher: What outcomes or expectations would you hope for from participation in CPD activity?
SW8: I suppose better understanding of the particular topic that is being covered because social issues change from time to time. So it's important that we are constantly aware of the new trends of new challenges. But yeah for personal development, professional development and to have a better understanding of the particular issue at hand and to improve yourself as a professional.
Researcher: What changes do you notice following participation in CPD activity?
SW8: Better understanding of your work. You become confident as a professional. Better work morale
Researcher: How do you actually build upon and implement your learning once you have completed participating in a CPD activity.

SW8: That's an interesting one, because not everyone maybe within your department attends, so now it's the thing that you will try to implement what you have learned maybe in the manner which you write your reports, in the manner which you engage your clients, in the manner which you intervene you know with the community or with clients. But it's a bit difficult because I don't want to say we are stagnant as social workers but we have a crisis as social workers whereby remuneration wise we are not properly awarded so that on its own causes stagnation. So it would happen that I would attend and six of my colleagues don't attend and I am the only one that attended, I am the only one with that knowledge so you are sitting with 6 rotten apples so it's challenging to mend new ideas to social workers, new ways of doing things, it's challenging considering the times social workers are working in South Africa
Researcher: How do you think you are supported to participate in CPD?
SW8: There is no information around CPD, you would only know about CPD if it happens that you associate yourself with people that are personal development orientated for a lack of a better word. So if you do not associate yourself with people that want to develop themselves professionally then the word CPD alone it's, you know. So what would happen is that you would see a poster and hear that there is training say oh nice topic let me go but then think I am busy I have court or have this so I won't go. But if you associate yourself with people that want to develop themselves professionally then and people that speak about CPD's and if you know about CPD's then you will think let me attend because I need these points. But if you don't know get support its just training there and yeah.
Researcher: And just to further elaborate on that as well, how easy or how difficult is it for you to access CPD that you need in terms of maybe getting time off or funding and other factors?
SW8: For me the major thing was that the topics that I was mostly interested in were expensive it was one thousand something, so the issue of expense was a thing for me and the other thing was time. Like here at Jo'burg child welfare we are fortunate in the sense that we have a training department but now the days whereby the training would happen that on that day I have a lot of admin to do, You know maybe I need to go out because now remember because of lack of resources we use cars on a daily basis and use them on a rotational basis. My days are Mondays so there is no way I can go for a training on a Monday because I only have a car on Monday so everything I do, I make appointments for Monday. So those things as well they also contribute to one's ability and ones accessibility to trainings so forth. So its money, its resources, time as well. So but on days whereby I am in the office and I have time, because what would happen is as social workers we have a lot of cases but it would happen that I am able to balance work, I don't have crisis I would be able to attend.
Researcher: Okay because the next question would have asked, what do you think therefore inhibits or reduces your participation in CPD? So I don't know if it's mainly the ones you mentioned money, resources and time.
SW8: Its money, resources, time, for me personally it's not a matter of lack of wanting to, I love knowledge, I enjoy knowing what is happening in the world. It's not even laziness or lack of interest but I really enjoy learning. For me mainly it's just a matter of financial means, resources at work, time as well.

Child Protection
Researcher: So these questions are within a child protection context.
Could you tell me a bit why/ why not you feel CPD is important in the context of child protection?
SW8: As I mentioned earlier we have a lot of new trends, social issues change. There is a new trend of how children used to react to situations those years is not the same as they would react presently to situations. So constant professional development as person who works within the child protection sector assists in the sense that you are able to meet your client's needs at that particular time that they are living in. We are living in a globalised world, social media, so it's a globalised world so as a professional I need to be innovative in the sense that I am able to, if it happens that let me put it like this I need to be innovative in how I interact with my clients. I need to be able to understand where they I coming from within the current time we find ourselves in. I cannot implement norms and values that were used six years to our current generation. It's totally different, their minds are liberated they are open minded. Constantly developing myself as a practitioner within the child protection field I will be able to meet my clients on that level. We have issues around globalisation, human trafficking comes with migration, and so human trafficking 10 years ago was not what it is today. Today it has changed form, today it's I

don't want to say normal but it has changed its form. So these types of trainings within child protection assists us as social workers to understand these different changes in the society.
Researcher: Okay because the follow up question to that is what are benefits of CPD, if any to child protection practice?
SW8: I suppose they speak to that, you become aware of what's happening around you. For example I remember there was a debate so now this debate was on consent, it was a medical debate but if I could remember properly there was a family and the child needed a blood transfusion and it happened that the family are from a particular religious belief, they belong to a particular church. So now this child's doctor was torn in between, they wanted this chid to save the child but the parents were saying no they cannot. So as a social worker, if one attends these development professional training one will be able to understand both sides of the doctor and the family and you will be able to mediate and assist accordingly. Even with the issue around corporal punishment it's a very interesting topic and a broad topic as well so as professionals we need to constantly empower ourselves so that even when we are faced with such. We grew up being beaten at school and it made sense for us to get a hiding. I knew that if I didn't do my homework I was going to get a hiding but I cannot implement those ideas on this generation because they reason and they need to know why are you talking to me like that, why are you hitting me, why are you angry at me you know. So it's important that we continuously develop our profession so that we empower our parents, empower our health care professionals.
Researcher: Do you feel it improves your practice?
SW8: It does, it does
Researcher: How so?
SW8: You become aware, more than anything information, knowledge moulds you as a person, it builds on how you interact with others, on how you interact with your work. You become a better practitioner if I was to say, even in the manner in which you conduct yourself you interact with your clients. The services that you provide, so you are likely to provide efficient services to your beneficiaries
Researcher: Could you give an example on how participating in a specific CPD made a difference to your practice?
SW8: I think it was the children's act training. I think the reason why it's really made an impact is because we are living in times whereby there is a lot of controversy around child maintenance, father participation in a child's life, co-parenting you know as there is a lot of controversy around that. So I attended this training and they spoke about father's rights to children. So as much as I have been practicing in this sphere I did not know that for example if a father has been paying maintenance and if a father has been active in a child's life they can actually approach the high court and get guardianship over a child. So there has always been that thing that, especially in our black communities you give birth to a child so that child is yours. If you pass on that child will live in your family. What would happen is that you would hear a lot of men saying that this family will not allow me to see the child. Her family, I am unable to because I am now married so I am unable to. So you know it gave me an understanding to why some men would say that I want to be part of my child's life but the maternal side refuses. Because as a woman and it's something I made a conscious decision that every woman, if a woman says this I believe them because women are excluded from the society. But attending that made me realise that men are also being abused and one of the ways in which we could deal with gender based violence is if we were to work hand in hand with men. So that training on its own it gave me an understanding that we cannot just assist with women without working with men. We need to assist this man in order to assist this woman. So that training it gave me knowledge on parental rights, co-parenting, on maintenance
Researcher: Does the impact of participating in a CPD vary depending on the type of CPD you engage in?
SW8: I think honestly it all depends on your interests as a person because now if for me person if I am interested in issues around fatherhood, issues on woman participation in the economy, in issues around women, I am more interested in issues around parenting. So I would do an injustice to myself if I attended in the disability or cancer environment. I worked for two years there, part of the things did not interest me that much. I think it all depends on your interests as a person, more than anything I think it's just unfortunate that social worker does not financially award social workers. But if there is one career that gives you an opportunity to work within your interest it's social work because it gives you that opportunity to do what you love as a person. If you love disability, if you enjoy working with the

elderly, if you enjoy working with children, it gives you that. So if it happens that I work within a disability organisation and I enjoy gender based violence or maybe child abuse issues so whatever I do won't really. So I think it all depends on your interests as a person, your passion as an interest. So if you were to attend training that speaks to you as an individual, what interests you what you are passionate about then you are more likely to participate in it.

General

Researcher: Okay, so this is the general section which is the last section of the questions.
What is the nature of CPD that is available to you?
SW8: I think because now I am within a child protection agency it's more around child protection. And then outside like maybe for example outside of child protection hey are a bit expensive. So at least here within this organisation it's free, now outside it's around R1800.
Researcher: Which you wouldn't be able to. So the next question from the previous one was going to say can you provide examples which you have already. So the next one is do you feel that CPD is encouraged in your organisation, how so or how not so?
SW8: It is, but the language that is used.
Researcher: When you say language?
SW8: I mean not everyone would know what is CPD and it's not that, but the language. Like your previous question, are you encouraged to understand, is there support to understand so the lack of support as well, the lack of encouragement as well. So you know as much as we have programs and we have a trainer and a sheet of these are training days. There is no human support so now it's a matter of there is CPD points alright there is training oh I have attended that training
Researcher: So would you say then encouraged in theory or in practice?
SW8: Both
Researcher: Okay. Tell me do you find that participating in CPD impacts on your stress levels? If so is this positive or negative?
SW8: You know if you attend something that you enjoy it gives you a confidence and a better understanding of your work and the area in which you are working within as a result of that your confidence goes high and if your confidence is high your chances of being stressed out are low. So stress comes from not understanding what you are doing. Stress comes from a lot of work and not understanding what you are doing, lack of motivation, lack of direction. So I think with me, my trainings have really assisted me in terms of that because now I have an understanding.
Researcher: Does CPD have a large role to play in supporting your work, along with your team members and senior workers etc?
SW8: Yes it does
Researcher: And how do you think it does?
SW8: Because remember we are a child protection organisation, we work in foster care, so now when we attend trainings in child abuse, children's act, personal development, personal development as a professional. Those trainings assist us in the sense that we are able to, I don't know even how to put this but they are in alignment with what we do. You cannot be a social worker in foster care but do not have an understanding of the children's act. You cannot be a social worker in foster care and not understand what abuse is, the characteristics of abuse, how abuse shows itself in one's life. How trauma affects one in their adult life you know. CPD trainings have helped us understanding attachment. Maybe for example we have children in foster care and as a result of that, these trainings help us understand the children we are working with you know and as a result we are able to provide more efficient services to these children you know event though we might not get to them. Because with the work that we do one thing that I realised is that it has a life-long effect, so even though one becomes successful. Successful in a sense that they get a job an education and so forth but the trauma always lives with them. So if we constantly empower ourselves as social workers then we will be honestly somewhere somehow be able to assist these children.
Researcher: You somehow touched on something similar to this question that I am going to ask will give you an opportunity to elaborate more.
SW8: Okay.
Researcher: Do you feel there is a need for specific types of CPD that aren't already available to you?

SW8: Yes, I think so. You know considering the fact that we are living in a globalised world and there is corona and we are on, everything is now virtual, I suppose we just need to be to be taught on how to carry out counselling sessions on Zoom. How do we conduct home visits within the Corona you know, I don't know if I make sense but you know. Because now we can't just walk into someone's house. So I suppose now we need to be told, but we need to have trainings around how do we interact from a distance. You are inside your home, I am outside, how do we have a rapport without you feeling she does not want to enter my house or without me being offended by the fact that you do not want me. So I suppose with the times we are living in now we need trainings that are in alignment with our current situations that will speak to our current issues right now. Things are not normal.
Researcher: Alright, given the relatively generic nature of social work training in South Africa, do you think there is an automatic need for specific CPD after qualifying?
SW8: I think it all depends on your organisation and as I said if there is one thing that social work does, as generic as your question is, it gives you that opportunity to work within an area of interest. Even with this it will all depend on a person and what they are interested in. So I think there are CPDs that speaks to a specific issue. I really think that there are CPDs that speak to a specific issue so my experience in cancer and disability, trainings that we attended spoke on that, they spoke on issues around palliative care, on issues around disability, on issues around health and so here this a child protection organisation and we are touching on issues around child protection
Researcher: Do you have an opinion on how social workers compare with other professionals in terms of participation and the importance placed on CPD?
SW8: I think if more than anything currently in South Africa social workers are unhappy as a result of that it shows itself in how we do our work and how we carry ourselves as professionals, in the activities that we participate in as social workers, in the trainings that we participate in as social workers. So now you have unhappy professionals, you have these compulsory trainings. You have these social issues that are constantly changing, you have a system that is not for you as a professional, somewhere somehow all of those spheres will someway somehow suffer. So I think, man I can't even put this, more than anything it's not like social workers don't want to attend trainings. It is not that social workers are unlike other professionals, I think that they are constantly empowering themselves because they are supported, financially there is means on a resource basis there are means. So with us social workers we work with abandoned, we work within the forgotten communities, abandoned communities and in carrying out our work we don't have resources and us as well we are not financially awarded. So now how am I going to be productive in training, how am I going to be, you know in order for me to think about professional development I need to meditate, I need to reflect, I need to be healthy mentally. So we have social workers whose mental health are really low especially now during Covid-19, we working during Covid-19 but you know no one really asks you how you are doing, are you okay as a professional. The fact that we are constantly going out, removing kids, so you know our mental health, we need have a mental, your mental health needs to be okay in order for you to say you know what am going for training because learning requires energy and if your mental health is, what's this word, is impaired, if your mental health is impaired you will not have the energy for reading or for sitting down or listening. You lose interest easily. So it's not a matter of social workers are lazy or stagnant or social workers do not participate in trainings, it's just that the lack of resources the lack of support the lack of just support for social workers, we feel abandoned.
Researcher: Okay, how do you feel your statutory registration with the council of social workers will impact on your participation in CPD?
SW8: Oh I have never really thought about that, I have never thought about that so, I have never really thought about it
Researcher: Okay but you do know that CPD is a requirement for council for you to maintain your registration
SW8: Yes, so now the other thing is our council as well it's only picking its leg just now. Our council has not been on par you know. Our council has not been doing it's duty as I mentioned before in a normal society social workers were supposed to be audited but the lack of audit on its own makes me relax. Because I am not audited you only get audited if someone reported you and when they do report you they act you know you get emails whereas when you want to enquire something you never get a response from them. If you call them you never get a response, but if someone reports you know. So now in a normal society, in a normal working society if our council audited us if our council was

constantly empowering us, constantly sending us information then I really do believe that social workers would be working towards professional development. So I think the lack of competence on the council's side. Council is only picking its feet now, there has been a lot of incompetence on the council's side in all honesty. The fact that we have one office in South Africa does not make any sense to me. That on its own speaks to a lack of, I don't want to say accountability, but it speaks to a lack of, man it does not make sense for people from Cape Town to have to come to Pretoria. That on its own speaks to the lack of seriousness when it comes to issues of social workers, when it comes to issues affecting social workers. With other professionals they can literally register anywhere with their council, there is access, with us there is, like now I heard that they want to increase fees I mean in all honesty we have a lot of unemployed social workers and that is a reality, how do we and remember it is a prerequisite for each social worker even though you are unemployed to have a, to be registered for that year right in order to practice. So now I am unemployed, already raising that R400 is going to be a problem so now they want to increase it to R600 how is that feasible in a country like South Africa that is not even a developing country, so if more than anything as much as council requires us to have CPD points, the council also needs to step up, the council also needs to take themselves seriously so we as social workers can take our profession serious. I don't know if you get me or I even make sense but yeah. But there is a lot of discrepancies with council and as a result it is showing in how we as professionals carry ourselves because our very body that is supposed to carry us. The very body that is supposed to protect us and ensure that we are practicing ethically is not doing its job.

Researcher: So the last question is, do you have any general recommendations for CPD policy makers/trainers or even employers that may facilitate your development as a practitioner, encourage participation in CPD or even promote best practice?

SW8: Hmm (laughs), do I have any recommendations, I suppose the money, make it more accessible to social workers even those that are not practicing, make it accessible to them, you know make it accessible to them, it's an issue of accessibility. Accessible financially, resource wise, encourage social workers, go and educate social workers again, we need re-education if it's the correct word. Re-educate us as social workers again because even the institution that you train at as a social worker plays a major role because now not every institution emphasised on CPD points and so forth, so with us we were fortunate we had people from the council to come in teach us what the council does and that's when you know there is a council, okay there is CPD. So with other people they have never really had that opportunity you know so come and re-educate us, tell us again, tell us who you are, what you require. If you are council come and tell us I am the council I am here, I am your body, this is what I expect from you on a quarterly, 6 monthly or a on a 12 month basis. This is what I expect from you, this is how I will go about carrying out my audits, these are my assessment tools, this is how I will, these are the tools that I will use to ensure that you as a professional are doing justice to the communities that you are serving. This is how as a body I will ensure that you as a professional are mentally and emotionally okay. This is how I will make sure that you are empowered. Because you cannot expect me to have a file ready at the end of the year if I am unemployed, because now in all honesty now I am unemployed, I am at home and there is courses online and its money, *(details withheld)* offers trainings but it's for its staff. So I am a social worker I have graduated in 2014, there are people that graduated in 2015 and they are still at home so that person does not have a file basically you know. So come and re-educate us again as well even when I am at home and I am unemployed because social workers stay at home. I worked for a *(details withheld)* organisation and we didn't have CPD trainings, I worked for 2 years you cannot expect me to have a file because the people now I was working with did not provide us with those trainings. If I wanted to go I had to pay, I am already not paid so why would I want to go book for a CPD training with a social worker at *(details withheld)* who charges R2000 for that. You know so yeah it's an issue.

Researcher: Okay, thank you very much.

General Information
Pseudonym: SW1
Gender: Female
Age: 27
Researcher: If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer please let me know.
SW1: Yeah, ok cool
Researcher: If you wish to stop at any time just let me know also.
SW1: Okay
Researcher: Let me just increase the volume here because I feel like it's not on max. Okay so the first question this is the general information section.
In terms of your qualification do you have a Diploma, Degree, a Masters, or Other?
SW1: I have bachelor's degree and a post graduate diploma
Researcher: Okay, tell me how many years have you been practising in social work post-qualifying?
SW1: I think it's about under 5 years now, about 4 and a half years
Researcher: Okay, and tell me that social work experience is it in general or specifically in child protection social work?
SW1: Okay so initially I was in medical social work, so I was working for *(details withheld)* and I worked there for about 9 months and then I came to and I have been at *(details withheld)* since, praying for a new job but am still here (laughs)
Researcher: (laughs) okay, so in terms of child protection is it statutory?
SW1: Yeah it's statutory.
Researcher: Ok, alright and your grade of Social Work position, is it entry level, mid, management?
SW1: Yes, its entry level.
Researcher: Okay entry level okay.
SW1: Yeah

Participation
Researcher: Okay, so now we get to the fun part, what the study is mainly about. In terms of participation,
Can you tell me a bit about your personal understanding of CPD?
SW1: Oh I think that CPD obviously is ongoing development so you know enhancing your skills, knowledge by attending various trainings, not just keeping up to date with what's relevant in the field, that's my understanding of it.
Researcher: Okay, tell me about your participation in CPD, how often do you partake in CPD activities?
SW1: That depends on *(details withheld)*, I think for myself I do participate if there is trainings hosted at *(details withheld)* by internal or even by external people coming in, so it's not quite often and I don't know since last year, the lock down you messed up everything so we haven't actually had like any CPD trainings for the past year now.
Researcher: Okay, and what are those types of CPD have you done previously?
SW1: Okay so we've done one from what I can remember, we've done one regarding ethics, and then *(details withheld)* also did one on compassion fatigue, oh and we have one next week by the way, we have one on GBV, so that one is next week Tuesday and Wednesday, I think it's about 6 CPD points that we'll be getting if we attend, so but the others I can't really remember hey.
Researcher: Ok so thinking back to the ones that you have attended before, tell me about your reasons/motivations for participating in CPD activities?
SW1: I don't think I really had a choice but to participate, but yeah no I like I enjoyed all the trainings because you know it becomes very insightful attending these things as well because sometimes we reach a point where we think okay do I really know a lot about this and you attend these trainings to refresh our memory or increase our knowledge so I think my motivation will mainly be you know enhancing my skills.
Researcher: Okay, what outcomes would you hope for from partaking in CPD?
SW1: What outcomes would I?
Researcher: Would you hope for from participating in CPD?

SW1: Shuu, uhm. I think the outcomes is mainly, like I said you know to increase what we know already and touch up on our skills because I think sometimes we forget we social workers we sometimes forget we human as well and so for example the compassion fatigue CPD training that we did attend it made us realise that okay we need to take self-care and look after our ourselves as well, so it opened up some doors for us as well.
Researcher: Tell me what changes do you notice following participating in CPD?
SW1: The changes, like personally when we did the ethics training for example, it made us really think like certain things are we really being ethical or are we just doing it because we feel it's the right thing, so after the ethics training for example we started doing things differently just to be in the ethical boundaries and to protect ourselves.
Researcher: Okay in your opinion, how do you build upon and implement your learning once you have completed participation in a CPD activity?
SW1: Okay so we are implementing because obviously every day we are tasked with various challenges, so most of the times if I'm like in my office alone I always reflect on if what I am doing is according to what I have learned in these trainings, uhm am I doing the correct thing so I also keep like a booklet with all the resources we get in these trainings so I can always refer back to it to ensure that I am staying on the right path.
Researcher: Okay, how do you think you are supported to participate in CPD?
SW1: Supported wise, I think like we get CPD trainings at *(details withheld)*, so that's basically the only support we get right now. Personally I don't embark on these programmes or trainings individually out of my own, I always rely on *(details withheld)* because it is also very expensive some of these CPD, yeah so, you were saying
Researcher: I wanted to say a follow up to that is how easy or difficult is it for you to access the CPD that you need in terms of funding or time off to partake in them?
SW1: Getting time off is not very easy, I remember when I started at *(details withheld)*, I was actually part of like a workshop type of thing but is done over a few months and I actually had to leave it. You know that's a major problem with us, so we can't do it in our own time because you won't be granted the leave for this.
Researcher: So you are saying its better its *(details withheld)* that actually facilitates the trainings on site
SW1: Yes exactly, and also what has also happened now is that *(details withheld)* has actually started to make it in house training so she submitted a few manuals to council for approval of CPD. So we do have in-house trainings and like I said we have the external people coming in as well
Researcher: Okay so being in an environment like *(details withheld)* where there is *(details withheld)* who actually gets trainings accredited for you, what do you think would then inhibits or reduces your chances of participation in CPD? Is there anything that would stop you from actually participating?
SW1: I don't think there would be anything that would actually stop me, the only thing is that sometimes it clashes with our caseloads so sometimes you would have to be in court on the days that they schedule the trainings like for example next week on the 25th I have two cases at court but they scheduled training, so really it's difficult to work around it.

Child Protection
Researcher: Hmm I see, I see, okay, alright, so we are done with the participation section we are getting now to questions based on within a child protection context. So first of all could you tell me a bit why/ why not you feel CPD is important in the context of child protection social work?
SW1: Oh it's really important because I mean the child protection field there's a lot of changes take part every day, I mean we can't say that child protection is the same now as it was 10 years ago. So in terms of the child protection field like maybe attending CPD programs where it's based on report writing or also court because we know that DSD is always changing forms and report templates so it's very important to have these CPD programs just to keep us up to date with what is happening in the field and we can always learn a lot from other professionals.
Researcher: Okay so then what would you say are the benefits your child protection practice?
SW1: Most definitely hey, because when I started at *(details withheld)* I knew nothing about child protection, so I relied on all these trainings and colleagues in order to where I am at today.
Researcher: Okay, as a social worker do you feel it improves your practice, and if so how so?

SW1: It does hey, like I said the ethics training part, sometimes we tend to discriminate clients, we tend to do things that is not correct so being guided through these programmes its really beneficial and it also helps you to be protected as a social worker and even the Children's Act, there's always amendments being made to the Children's Act so you know we also had a training with *(details withheld)* from DSD I think two years ago and it was also CPD accredited and that really helped because there were certain things in the act that we didn't understand and she basically clarified all of that for us, so now we can say *(details withheld)* said, so it really helps to guide us in our practice
Researcher: Okay because my follow up question was going to be please give an example of how participation in CPD has made a difference in your practice, so that training you had with *(details withheld)* it did?
SW1: Yes it did
Researcher: Okay so does the impact of participation in CPD vary depending on the type of CPD you engage in?
SW1: Can you repeat the question please?
Researcher: Does the impact of participation in CPD vary depending on the type of CPD you engage in?
SW1: It does hey, it really does because obviously all the CPD programmes are different, so we learn different things and we are impacted in different ways from each programme.

General
Researcher: Hmm okay, so now we get to the last section which is the general section.
SW1: Okay
Researcher: What is the nature of CPD that is available to you? And please can you provide examples?
SW1: So currently like I explained, actually are you meaning what types of CPD are available for us right?
Researcher: Yes
SW1: Okay right for example the GBV programme that we are attending next week, that's from an external company coming in, that's arranged by *(details withheld)* and then during the lockdown what happened is that they gave us each tasks to do. So I was tasked with designing an HIV training manual, so *(details withheld)* is also working to get it accredited, I think *(details withheld)* also did something regarding HIV because that is also a field that is growing by the day and not many of us know how to deal with a client who is HIV positive, so she did that training as well. *(details withheld)* also does a lot of trainings regarding personal care, she says she is going to have a refresher of ethics, she wants to a mediation training as well so she is planning on getting all of these accredited by the council.
Researcher: Okay so it's quite a variety of trainings, so the next question would be do you feel CPD is encouraged at *(details withheld)*?
SW1: It is most definitely
Researcher: How so?
SW1: They understand the importance of it and they also, like we all studying part time but they do understand that these programs, it's important for the council definitely to provide proof that actually received trainings but then again Jiss also focuses a lot on growing their staff members so that's why they go for programs that are CPD accredited in order to enhance our skills and to help us grow as professionals.
Researcher: Okay would you say that at *(details withheld)* it's encouraged in theory and in practice or just in theory not in practice? Am going to act dumb here.
SW1: It's definitely in practice because the training they get for us is linked to our case loads and what we are battling with in order to help us.
Researcher: I see, I see, do you find that participating in CPD impacts on your stress levels? If so is this positive or negative?
SW1: It depends on how you are feeling on that day of the training because with *(details withheld)* we are always complaining because her trainings include a lot of homework and writing and stuff so it gives us anxiety and we are always telling her that we are stressed as it is so don't give us more work.
Researcher: Okay I see so it depends on the type of CPD being offered and the facilitator as well as to what other activities will be in line with the CPD.
SW1: Yes

Researcher: Okay tell me does CPD have a large role to play in supporting your work, along with team members, senior workers and if so how?
SW1: It does hey, to give an example *(details withheld)* hasn't been practicing as a social worker for a while so sometimes she joins in these CPD trainings and she actually says she didn't know a lot of the things she learns from the trainings and I think that goes across the board there is a lot of things we still learning, I mean we all still young in the field and still need to know things so I feel it does.
Researcher: Okay, do you feel there is a need for specific types of CPD that aren't already available to you?
SW1: Yeah so that where *(details withheld)* comes in, for example for mediation, we've actually said to her look we battling we certain clients to get them on common ground, we need a program or training that will assist us to mediate so she whenever we enquire we give her the topics and then we say *(details withheld)* assist get the programs drawn up and get it accredited with the council. So we have quite open communication at *(details withheld)* so whenever we feel that we need a certain training and we need it to be CPD accredited *(details withheld)* does it for us.
Researcher: Tell me then given the relatively generic nature of social work training in South Africa do you think there is an automatic need for specific CPD after qualifying?
SW1: There is because we all know what we learn in university and what happens in practice is not the same. Most definitely the CPD training is always helpful to make us understand how things actually work in the real world because what's in the books and what is out here is not the same.
Researcher: Do you have an opinion on how Social Workers compare with other professionals in terms of participation and importance placed on CPD? So remember CPD is an activity found even in other professions, how do you feel it compares with other professions, our profession?
SW1: I feel that social workers have a long way to go in terms of that because I feel other professions are continuously attending these trainings. They are more active when it comes to CPD, when it comes to social workers we've gone a whole year without CPD training so that's not a good thing for us. I think there needs to be some improvement for example have a training every two months or every quarterly just so that it's on going. Because if I can give an example my husband he works in sales and they are required to basically read an article and answer questions on it every month to get CPD points so its ongoing compared to some social work.
Researcher: How do you feel registration with SACSSP of social workers will impact on your CPD participation? Does you registration with the council have an impact on you participating in CPD?
SW1: Not really, I don't think the council even cares if we get CPD points or not because I mean they have never questioned it to ask so a year has gone by why have you not participated in CPD so I don't think they have a clue what's going on with the social workers honestly, I mean they should also be, I know they offer programs in CPD training but they don't play an active role especially at *(details withheld)*.
Researcher: Do you have any general recommendations for CPD policy makers/trainers/employers that may facilitate your development as a practitioner? Encourage participation in CPD? Promote best practice?
SW1: I think that comes back to what I said previously, they need to rethink like how often CPD trainings are held. They should actually maybe make it compulsory in such a way that it gets done more often and maybe proof gets sent to the council, I don't know how it's going to work but I think that would be my recommendation that…. More CPD trainings to basically grow more professionals than not to anything at all.
Researcher: We have come to the end of the interview, thank you very much.

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX I: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SOCIAL WORK) CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Protocol number: SW20/08/03

Project title: Participation in continuous professional development: Exploring views of social workers in the Johannesburg Child Protection field

Researcher/s: B Myaka, student number: 319361

School/department: SHCD Social Work

Date considered: 28 August 2020

Decision of the committee: Approved (Minimal risk)

Date ratified: 20 November 2020

Expiry date: 30 November 2023

Date: 12 December 2020 **Chairperson:** Prof E. Pretorius

Cc: Supervisor: Dr A Warria

Declaration of researcher(s)

To be completed in **DUPLICATE** and **ONE COPY** returned to the Administrative Assistant, Room 8, Department of Social Work, Umthomoo Building Basement or e-mailed to Fezile.Ndebele@wits.ac.za

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorised 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. **For Masters and PhD an annual progress report is required.**

SIGNATURE DATE 14/12/2020

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

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