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The implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection within the Amajuba District Municipality, KwaZulu Natal.

By

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of family preservation programs is compromised by practical inconsistencies, capacity, human and organizational resources. These are key challenges that ultimately impact the provision of services to families. Inadequate services to preserve families often contributes to a substantial number of children having to be removed from their families to be placed in alternative care. Families have limited or no access to preventative services and a paradigm shift to developmental social services are not taking place. There is a perceived increasing trend by most social workers that the placement of children in facilities becomes an end in itself, instead of being a means to an end.

A qualitative approach was used to collect data from the social workers, who are mandated to implement family preservation services to families and children. In-depth interviews were conducted to ascertain the perceptions of social workers regarding the prevention and early intervention services offered to children, who are not only in need of care and protection but also at imminent risk of being removed from their families.

The workplace challenges such as high caseloads, time constraints, high staff turnover, and the lack of support and working conditions restrict the implementation of family preservation services. Notably, insufficient training on family preservation contributed to self-doubt and lack of clarity about the best approach of implementing family preservation services among social workers.

Managing organizational difficulties and improving training on family preservation was strongly recommended by the participants. The supervision of social workers must be strengthened to enhance the effective implementation of family preservation. Sufficient resources such as financial resources, human resources, and other related resources should be available to social workers to improve the provision of family preservation services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATIONS

I would like to dedicate this study to the Almighty God, thank you for the guidance, strengths, power of the mind, protection, skills, and for giving me a healthy life. This research was profoundly dedicated to my beloved parents, Fr Godfrey, Bishop Michael Paschal who had been my source of inspiration to continue studying and provided unwavering support they gave when I needed it. Your life was short; I will make sure your memory lives on as long as I shall live. I love you all and miss you all beyond words. May Almighty God grant you eternal life and find peace and happiness in Heaven. Amen. I would like to dedicate this work to my brothers, sisters, my children, relatives, mentors, friends, colleagues, and classmates who shared their knowledge and experiences of research to me and support to finish this study. To Dr. Mthembu and Mr. Mbongeni Sipho Sithole who encouraged me when I thought of giving up and continually provided their moral, spiritual, and emotional support. Finally, I dedicate it people of South Africa, most HWSETA for financial supporting this study. All of these, I offer to you.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my work which has been done after registration for the degree of MSW as appropriate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other University for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures per the University's Committee on the Use of Human & Animal Subjects in Teaching and Research (HASC). I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, obtained the relevant ethical and/or safety approval (where applicable), and acknowledged my obligations and the rights of the participants.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NFD	Non-Financial Data
DSD	Department of Social Development
KZN	KwaZulu- Natal
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
DM	District Municipality
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
CYCC	Child and Youth Care Centre
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
CPO	Child Protection Organisation
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professions
CHH	Child headed household
IFS	Intensive Family Support Service
FPP	Family Preservation Programme
FPS	Family Preservation Services
IFPS	Intensive Family Preservation Services
FRS	Family Reunification Services
CYCW	Child and Youth Care Workers

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The South African Government prioritizes family preservation as a service to be rendered to children of South Africa who are at imminent risk of removal by ensuring that children remain protected within families. The White Paper for Social Welfare Services (1997) stresses that the services on child and family welfare services should mainly focus on supporting and maintaining the strengthening of family functioning for those families who are experiencing vulnerability by enhancing their social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of the whole family members (Strydom, 2012). Notably, Van Huyssteen (2015) defines family preservation services as services that are aimed at families that seriously have children who have been abused and neglected due to various circumstances. Thus, family preservation services intend to minimize any child neglect and abuse that may affect children directly or indirectly. Those children that are found to require care and protection are assisted and supported by social workers before being referred to statutory services for removing children to places of care.

Furthermore, family preservation is, therefore, considered an essential service towards avoiding the removal of children from their families. The South African Children's Act no 38 of 2005 mandates social workers employed by welfare organizations to focus their services on family preservation to strengthen families affected by substance abuse, conflict, and other social problems which have the potential of weakening the healthy functioning of families and its ability to provide appropriate care to children.

Additionally, family preservation services are intended at strengthening or empowering families and thereby prevent the removal of children to alternative care after being identified as at imminent risk. In this chapter, therefore, a general overview of the study is discussed, comprising of the background to the study, rationale for the study, problem statement, methodology, data analysis, and the theoretical framework that formed the basis of this study and its relevance. The last section of this chapter outlines the structure of the entire dissertation of this study.

The literature review chapter discussed below serves an informative role in the understanding of the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection

at the Amajuba district municipality. The Children's Act no 38 of 2005 outlines critical information about family preservation services which is of value in responding to the need and protection of children. Henceforth, section 2 of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 indicates that the primary objective of the Act is that family preservation should be promoted to strengthen and empower families. Therefore, section 143 to 149 of the Act provides information on the programs of prevention and early intervention services which assist in rendering family preservation to the entire family. These sections, 143 – 149, further provide information on the programs that deal with prevention and early intervention services that have to be rendered as family preservation services to try by all means to avoid separating children from their significant others.

South African White Paper on Family Policy (2012) concurs with the above statement by identifying three key strategic priorities that guide and look at the critical aspect to be considered in the care and protection of children, namely that the healthy family should be promoted, that strengthening of the family is vital and lastly, that family preservation services must be offered to all family members where the issues of risks have been identified or reported. These strategies are meant to ensure that families are supported, empowered, and strengthened at all costs. Thus, family preservation services are the backbone of child and family protection services, and that they are key in (building capacity) strengthening families and communities in supporting one another. These services focus on vulnerable children or at imminent risk of removal and in need of crisis intervention. Keeping children safe within families is the priority of family preservation services and it is the cornerstone of children who require care and protection. Furthermore, family preservation is often associated with positive outcomes for children and their families, such as resilience, improved coping skills or mechanism, better adaptation to situations, and the ability to deal with adversity (Rahilly & Hendry, 2014).

The centrality of the family and its role in the care, development, and protection of children is recognized in many international, regional, and national instruments, policy documents, and strategies for care and protection. For instance, the Preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (1990) states that the whole family, as the fundamental group of society, and the natural environment for the growth and well–being of all its members. Particularly children should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community where families reside. The African

Charter on Human and People's Rights argues that the family is the basic unit of society where primary care and protection begins and therefore, it urges and desires that all States need to take care of family health and morale so that families can be able to care and protect their children to the best of their ability. This study, therefore, focuses more specifically on what the African Charter stresses, namely that the States should encourage parents to honor their duty of care and protection towards their children by parenting them appropriately.

The Children's Act, no.38 of 2005, as amended, contains many provisions that seek to posit the family as an important sphere in the lives of children, with its definition of who constitutes a family member. Notably, the definition is inclusive of members of the extended family (Children's Act, no 38 of 2005; Regulations, 2010) as well as provisions on prevention and early intervention services found in Chapter 8 of the same Act. In South Africa, when the organization that is dealing with the protection of children or an organ of State that is mandated to protect children, often receives a report on the allegation of child abuse or neglect from anybody in the community, may it be police or any interested person for the wellbeing of children. The information reported, triggers an investigation that should lead to a decision whether the child needs care and protection in terms of section 155 of the South African Children's Act no 38 of 2005.

Such an investigation could result in a child being found to require care and protection, in which case, the matter will be brought before the children's court for it to consider various options. Firstly, the court may order that, pending decision, the child must be placed in temporary safe care or remain in the care of a person with control over the child, instead of removing the child for a long period into alternative care. Secondly, the court may order that early intervention services be offered to the child and/ or to the child's family.

Section 148 of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 provides that information before making an order concerning the temporary or permanent removal of a child from that child's family environment, a children's court may order a range of prevention and early intervention programs. This section also allows the children's court to issue an order that the child's family and the child participate in a prescribed family preservation program or services. Where such an order has been issued, the court prescribes time to allow those services to take effect and expect a social worker's report after not more than six (6) months before making any other decision about the care arrangements for that particular child. This is one way a court can also

play a role in supporting families and parents to take care of their children where circumstances permit and are seen to be in the best interest of children. Thirdly, the court may issue an order placing the child in the care of a Child and Youth Care Centre best suited to address the needs of that particular child. When a child is found to require protective services, social workers must quickly investigate the facts and develop an understanding of what has occurred, including why it has occurred and what will be required to restore the family's functioning and thus prevent the recurrence of abuse or neglect. If a family's functioning can be restored, the family can safely remain at the heart of the child's world and the family has a decisive role responsibility (Wagner,2010). This is in the spirit of preserving the family for the child's wellbeing. Section 187 of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005, states that when a child has been removed to alternative care, such as to a Child and Youth Care Centre, it is critical to commence with services aimed at reunifying the child with his or her family. Once removal has occurred, the family's relationship with the child can potentially breakdown even more unless concerted efforts are made to address and reverse what led to the removal in the first place. It becomes imperative that family reunification services are rendered to the child and his or her family.

Holborn & Eddy (2011) argue that children who are growing up in a situation where dysfunctional families themselves are experiencing the kind of vulnerability, they are more likely to have dysfunctional families themselves in the future because the study found that familial breakdown is circular and this cycle continues until it is broken. Moreover, having strong families provides for a strong community, the spirit of Ubuntu and social cohesion be promoted by providing family preservation which is designed to achieve that children remain with their families and grow among themselves. Makiwane & Berry (2013) indicate that Ubuntu from an African perspective is that which supports the notion that "I am because we are" and that embraces values of hospitality, care, protection, generosity, and compassion. Certain families may require additional supportive services so that they can solve problems in human relations such as conflict, communication, parenting, substance abuse, family violence as well as addressing problems arising from life changes and events (Patel, 2005).

The researcher in this study is working at St Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre, a residential care facility for children who need care and protection. These children have been removed from their parental care due to numerous reasons, including neglect, being orphaned, rejection, abandonment, sexual abuse, and physical abuse. The children are admitted to the Centre based on the order of the court in terms of section 158 of the Children's Act no.38 of

2005, as amended. After admission to the Centre, each child needs to have a care plan and an individual development plan (IDP) drawn up, based on the individual developmental assessment of the child's unique needs and circumstances. Such a care plan and individual development plan determine the type of care and services that would be rendered to each child during their stay at the Centre. The Care Plan and IDP also determine prospects for engaging with the child's family as well as prospects for the reunification of the child with his or her family.

Any recommendation for a child to be placed at the Centre is made by social workers outside of the Centre who are either employed by the Department of Social Development (DSD) or a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) accredited by the DSD as a Child Protection Organisation (CPO) in terms of section 107 of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005. The Centre, therefore, is not involved in any processes, investigations, and decisions before placement takes place. It is only once the child has been placed by the social worker from the above organization or DSD that the Centre can communicate with the social worker concerning the placement of the child.

Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) argue that social workers are not providing early intervention services before the removal of the child as required and stipulated in the Children's Act no 38 2005 and other related legislative frameworks. They just remove the child without considering what they need to do first when they face such circumstances on how they can implement family preservation. Moreover, Strydom (2012) reveals that most social workers are not sure about what to do and this leads to uncertainty and confusion among social workers regarding the content of family preservation services, its purpose, the nature of its delivery as well as the types of services that should be rendered to families and children before or when families need such services that would support them during the situation.

The increasing number of children removed from their families to the places of care prompted them to be responsive to the problematic nature of family preservation services. Combrinck (2015) argues that despite the contribution made by family preservation practitioners towards implementing it to strengthen families and prevent the removal of children to alternative care. It was revealed that social workers are still struggling to conceptualize what to do when they have to implement family preservation and therefore, they are not paying sufficient attention to these services that would support the family to care and protect children. Thus, Strydom (2013) in that situation, recommends that social work services must focus on family

preservation services by rendering preventative and early intervention services to child abuse and neglect thereby preventing the removal of the child to alternative care. Nhedzi (2014) makes an important recommendation also that studies on family preservation should be conducted in different geographical areas to determine the best practices in the provision of family preservation services. The replication of these services or programs in other areas may assist the researchers to measure the similarity of findings. In light of the above, the researcher decided to conduct a study that explored the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection in the Amajuba District Municipality in KwaZulu Natal.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Polit & Beck (2014), a problem statement articulates the problem and the argument that explains the need for a study. Usually, it is a phenomenon that the researcher is interested in, and which serves in gathering more information about what is happening in those areas of interest. This may be that it is unfamiliar or consequently that there are new development issues that need further exploration. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport (2011) argue that a research topic is guided by a set of borderline that markers a specific pathway that defines the territories that a researcher follows to accomplish the intended outcome. The problem and the challenges that many South African children face, is that children continue to be identified as in need of care and protection, which places them in a vulnerable situation that warrants immediate intervention (Proudlock, 2014; Nhedzi, 2014). Furthermore, the social workers are reported as mandated to provide preventative, early intervention services and family preservation services to families to keep the family intact and to minimize the institutionalization of children unnecessarily (Combrinck, 2015).

Nhedzi (2014) asserts that there seems to be inadequate or lack of sufficient services to preserve families, which often contributes to a substantial number of children having to be removed from their families to be placed in alternative care. According to Strydom (2010), children are removed from their parents because families have limited or no access to preventative services or lack of resources, and, by so doing, a paradigm shift to developmental preventative social services is viewed as not taking place as required by the pieces of legislation. Secondly, there is a perceived increasing trend in the placement of children in facilities. For most social work practitioners, this practice tends to become an end in itself instead of being a means to an end. As asserted also by Nhedzi & Makofane (2015), most children are merely dumped at Child and Youth Care Centres for the reason of protecting them from vulnerable circumstances and, most

often, they do not receive any relevant support from social workers who removed them from their families after placing them in alternative care. Considering Nhedzi & Makofane's (2015) argument, it appears as not uncommon for some of the children to find themselves having to be repatriated to care centers, due to inadequate reunification services by the social worker's concern. Thoburn, Robinson & Anderson (2012) corroborate this assertion by stating that most children who are returning to their parental care often continue to be re-abused, neglected, or receive inadequate parenting support from their parents. In light of these challenges, the researcher sought to understand how social workers implement family preservation services specifically with families where children have been identified as in need of care and protection.

1.2 LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at the Amajuba District Municipality focusing on registered social workers employed by the Department of Social Development and social workers in the employment of Non-Government organizations. The rationale for choosing Amajuba as the location of the study was that it is one of the districts characterized by the increasing number of children placed out of the family in 2017 (the number of children placed out currently based on the statistics from Amajuba District is 127) and also the increasing number of children returning to alternative care (the number currently is 48).

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Notably, a research question establishes the parameters of the project and suggests that the methods be used for data gathering and analysis. Research questions may be broadly stated or may be based on a theoretical framework if the researcher has identified a framework (Grove, Burns & Gray, 2013). Polit & Beck (2014) attest to the fact that research questions are the specific queries researchers want to answer in addressing the research problem. Research questions serve to guide the researcher in collecting the data for the study.

Based on the above definitions, the researcher sought to answer the following questions regarding the phenomenon in question:
   (a) How are the family preservation services understood by social workers?
   (b) What are the challenges experienced by social workers when implementing family preservation services?
   (c) What are the procedural gaps that hinder the success of family preservation services?
   (d) What are the strategies that can enhance the implementation of family preservation

services to children in need of care and protection?

(e) What recommendations do social workers have that could promote effective implementation of family preservation services?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1. Aim of the Study

This study aimed to explore the implementation gaps that deter the effective provision of family preservation services by social workers in the Amajuba District Municipality.

1.5.2. Objectives of the Study

According to De Vos et al., (2011) the objective is defined as the steps one has to take one by one at the grassroots level within a certain time-span to attain the outcome of the study. Notably, the objectives are more concrete, measurable, and more speedily attainable when conceptualized as a logical plan to achieve specific outcomes. The researcher formulated the objectives, which guided the study in developing a clear path and in-depth understanding of the gap in the provision of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. This entailed having a period and guide to follow towards achieving the intended outcome. The objectives of the study were as follows:

(a) To understand how social workers, understand family preservation services and their implementation.
(b) To identify existing procedural gaps within the implementation process of family preservation services.
(c) To explore factors that impede the effective implementation of family preservation.
(d) To identify strategies that can enhance the effective implementation of family preservation services by social workers.
(e) To come up with recommendations that can strengthen the implementation of family preservation services.

1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study used the ecological theory as it provides the appropriate theoretical lens of understanding the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. This approach purports that there are interdependence and interconnectedness

between families and their environment. Thus, according to Boston & Broad (2007), the relevance of ecological theory in working with the families and children derives from the fact that every event or phenomenon must be seen as part of a whole and that it can only be properly understood concerning every other part of the larger system. In that sense, there is a dynamic connection between the individual, the family, and the environment in which they live. The nature of human experience and interaction in the community is complex and it is, therefore, essential to adopt a holistic approach when working with children and families. Based on this information, it can be argued that the success of the implementation of family preservation services needs a theory that is holistic in working with children and families. Most specifically the social workers themselves are regarded to be the part of the system that can also be affected by that interconnectedness which adversely may affect the implementation of family preservation services. The ecological approach, therefore, was deemed suitable for this study because of its amenability to the understanding of the interconnectedness of families and their environment. Teater (2010) describes the ecological perspective as focusing on the person -in -environment configuration and the continual interaction and transaction between persons, families, groups or communities, and their environments.

Leon, Shawn, Lawrence, Molina & Toole (2008) are of the view that within the child protection space, ecological theory helps in the understanding of families that come for services and are actually in need of services that need to be understood to their environment. For example, the removal of a child without addressing the needs of the child's microsystem (family member) including concrete needs and mental health needs is no longer considered good child welfare practice. It is also important to understand that social work practice is affected by multiple systems including the clients themselves, organizations of social workers as well as the policies they use. Equally so, the implementation of family preservation services can be affected by multiple factors that might be beyond the social worker's control or management. Using the ecological theory lens, the data analysis of all the factors that influenced the implementation of the family preservation services analyzed the data collected from the participants after the researcher had completed the research process.

1.7. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY
1.7.1. Research Approach.
For purposes of this study, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach since the researcher wanted to explore and describe the challenges of the implementation of family preservation

services to children in need of care and protection. This approach allowed the researcher to interview social workers who have been working with children and families for more than three years in the employment of the Social Development Department and Non-government organization. Tappen (2011) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a research approach based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses of words, reports detailed views of participants who have had this study conducted in a natural setting.

1.7.2. Research Design

This study used the exploratory and descriptive research designs to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. Polit & Beck (2012) define a research design, as "the researcher's overall for answering the research question or testing the research hypothesis". Research design can be thought of as the logic or master plan of research that throws light on how the study is to be conducted. Therefore, this research design was adopted as a suitable design due to a dearth of basic information on the implementation of family preservation services in South Africa despite these being statutory obligations and requirements in certain cases in line with Sections 150 - 154 of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005. According to De Vos et al., (2011), exploratory research is intended to obtain a clear understanding of the situation where a phenomenon, community, or individual when there are little knowledge and the information about the study being investigated. In this study, the perceptions, experiences of social workers regarding the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection were explored deeply to get more information on how they have been experiencing their service delivery in working with families and children in Amajuba District Municipality specifically.

The researcher also chose the descriptive design because there was a need to describe and document family preservation practices by social workers at Amajuba District. Notably, the descriptive design was conducted to observe, describe, and documenting the aspect as it naturally happens in the situation (Polit & Beck, 2012). The researcher followed the descriptive design so that deeper meaning of experiences and interpretation were shared about the implementation of family preservation services and their understanding of the phenomenon.

1.7.3. Sampling Strategies

1.7.3.1. Population

The population of the study comprised social workers who are in employment and who were registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions. Burns & Grove, (2011) define a population as a particular group of people whom the researcher has chosen to include in the study as the focus of the study, who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon and have a certain level of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

1.7.3.2. Sample and sampling techniques.

Streubert & Carpenter, (2011) argue that the researcher selects participants for a study based on their specific knowledge of the topic being investigated. In this study, the participants were carefully selected based on their experience and knowledge of working with children and families within the Amajuba District Municipality so that they could be able to inform the study conducted. The researcher purposively selected registered social workers who have been in the social service practice for a minimum of three years and who have worked with children and families. Creswell, (2007) describes purposive sampling as the selection of the participants and sites for a study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem. The social workers should have been working with the family before removal or who have removed the child from parents. The sample size of this study was ten (10) social workers purposively sampled from the Amajuba District offices.

The researcher asked for permission by writing a letter to the District manager of the Amajuba District of Social Development and another letter to the Non-Governmental Organizations within the Amajuba District Municipality. After the permission was granted to the researcher, the researcher met the potential participants requesting them to participate in the study. In the meeting scheduled with the social workers, the aims of the study were shared and discussed in detail and consent forms were discussed with the participating social workers who willingly accepted the call to participate to make an informed decision.

Those who agreed to participate in the study were then asked to sign the consent form. The researcher ensured that the issues of confidentiality and anonymity were clarified clearly so that the decision made was well informed that only what was in the consent forms that would apply in the research. During the first meeting with the participants who voluntarily agreed, the

researcher asked each participant for permission to use a tape recorder to record each interview. The preparations of the research, contact with the social workers who were the prospective participants of the research took place in their offices after securing an appointment with them and their supervisors. The researcher ensured that no research interview appointment with the participants was made that would not affect or disrupt service delivery as the researcher and participants ensured that the meetings/interviews were held after working hours and on weekends.

1.7.3.3. Criteria for Inclusion in the Study

a) Social workers in the employment of the Department of Social Development and Non-Government Organisation.
b) Social workers with a minimum of three years in practice as a social worker.
c) Working or must have worked with children and families and have removed children and placed them in alternative care.
d) Social workers who have been implementing or have implemented family preservation services.

1.7.4   Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative data collection can be defined as an interviewing session or gathering information in a form of asking questions which are mostly open-ended questions and those information notes are taken or being recorded for a purpose of analyzing, focus-group interviews, open-ended narrative, notes and recording for a specific purpose (Jamshed, 2014; Dilshad & Latif, 2013). De Vos et al (2011) indicate that during the qualitative data collection there are field guides and participants' observation who are the common fashion of qualitative data. Notably, Guest, Namey & Mitchell (2013) argue that interviewing is the most commonly accepted and used method of collecting data in qualitative research and it can be depicted as an activity where trained interviewer participate in a conversation for the intention of exploring the selected phenomenon with a suitable and knowledgeable participant.

Based on the above definitions, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to interview social workers facilitated by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide to gain a detailed picture of the participants' belief, challenges, and experiences on the studied phenomenon, which aimed at understanding the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. Although the interviewer prepares a list of

predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering the participants the chance to explore the issues they feel are important. The researcher used diverse communication skills such as listening, probing, and paraphrasing skills to improve and probe the flow of the conversation and to elicit information from the participants' perspectives. All the interviews were audio-recorded for transcribing them later and analysis of the data.

1.7.5. Methods of Data Analysis

De Vos et al., (2011) asserts that qualitative analysis is the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations for discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. Therefore, De Vos et al., (2011) further argue that qualitative data analysis is the process of inductive reasoning, thinking through things, and theorizing. Qualitative data analysis is, first and foremost a process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing which certainly is far removed from the structure, mechanical and technical procedures to make inferences from empirical data of social life. The six steps for data analysis identified by Braun & Clarke (2006) were followed in data analysis so that the analysis could yield information based on the participants' responses. The following steps were used in analyzing the data after it had been collected:

    (a) Familiarising myself with the data.
    (b) Generating initial codes.
    (c) Searching for themes.
    (d) Reviewing themes and generating a map for analysis.
    (e) Defining, naming the themes, and identifying subthemes.
    (f) Writing the data analysis and linking the data to other research findings.

1.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.8.1. Ethics

According to De Vos et al., (2011), ethics implies preferences that influence behavior in human relations, conforming to a code of principles, the rules of conduct, the responsibility of the researcher, and the standards of conduct of a given profession. The authors further define ethics as a set of moral principles suggested by an individual or group and subsequently and widely accepted as such, it offers rules and behavioral expectations on the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and the participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers,

assistants, and students. In this regard, the ethics were based on the research that the participants' rights and of the research process were adhered to for a smooth investigation. The following ethical issues were addressed during the study for the participants to freely share the information on what they understand and know about the implementation of family preservation services.

1.8.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality can be viewed as a continuation of privacy, which refers to agreements between persons that limit others' access to private information, would be protected, and kept in a safe place (De Vos et al., 2011). Confidentiality means that the protection of the participants' information by ensuring anonymity and privacy (Brink, 2009). According to Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, (2006), the following information assists the researcher to maintain confidentiality:

a) Maintaining confidentiality of data/records: ensuring the separation of data from identifiable individuals and storing the code linking data to individuals securely.

b) Ensuring those who have access to the data maintain confidentiality, for example, the research team, the person who transcribes the data.

c) Not discussing the issues arising from an individual interview with others in ways that might identify individual personal information.

d) Not disclosing what an individual has said in an interview that may lead to identifying the person who participated in the research.

e) Anonymizing individuals and/or places in the dissemination of the study to protect their identity.

1.8.3. Informed Consent

Nijhawan, Janodia, Muddukrishna, Bhat, Bairy, Udupa & Musmade (2013) define informed consent as the step and the process that is undertaken before conducting research. The purpose of that is to give a clear indication of what would happen during the process of research so that participant willingly makes an informed decision. This is the stage where participants are prepared and engaged thoroughly so that they understand what would be required of them should they agreed to be part of data collecting.

About this point, the participants were well informed about the process of the study so that whatever decision they made had to be informed. The information regarding the study was provided and the participants were allowed to voluntarily participate in the study. The consent form regarding their participation was developed, explained, and discussed before the potential participants decided in participating in the study. Those who agreed to participate in the study then signed the form after comprehending all the information contained in the consent form regarding their participation. Those participants who were not prepared to sign or participate in the study were allowed to do so because they were not forced to sign since it was voluntary to participate in the study and those that participated did so willingly.

1.8.4. Management of the Information

Management of information means that the information given to the researcher is properly or safely kept and used where necessary. In managing the information, the researcher ensured that tapes, notes, and transcripts of recordings are kept secure at all times. This means that there is a cabinet that the researcher uses to store information. The cabinet stores the information on the participants and the important tools for the qualitative researcher where only the researcher and supervisor have access to the information. The names of the participants that were participating in the study are hidden and only known to the researcher and the supervisor and they are not written anywhere for the protection of their rights and privacy. The researcher has ensured that whoever has access to information like supervisors, typists, or independent coders; the names are not disclosed to them or transcripts. If there is a need that their identity to be disclosed to the third party, then the researcher will have to be granted permission before the information is given out.

1.9. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

The trustworthiness of the study was achieved through focusing on the components of trustworthiness which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The aim was to ensure that the study is worthy to be read and considered by other readers. Trustworthiness or rigor of the study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Brandon & Connolly, 2016). Thus, the

researcher ensured that all the procedures that were essential for the study were followed and considered to enable readers to relate to the soundness of the study in its entirety.

1.9.1. The credibility of the Study

Thomas & Magilvy (2011) describe a qualitative study credible when it presents an accurate description or interpretation of human experience, which people who also share the same experience would immediately recognize. The credibility of the study was done by member checking from the participants themselves so that the participants recognize that the data collected and the interpretation of the findings represent their experiences of implementing family preservation services to children in need of care and protection.

1.9.2. Transferability of the Study

Transferability is the ability to transfer research findings or methods from one group to another (Mash, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher ensured that the report has all the detailed descriptions of the research methodology so that all the experiences and information regarding the study are available for audit purposes. Moreover, to ensure transferability in this study, in-depth descriptions of the sample being studied and the demographic characteristics of the participants have been presented. The geographical boundary of the study was described fully.

1.9.3. Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, analyses, and critique the research process (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams & Blackman, 2016). However, Korstjens & Moser (2018) assert that dependability refers to the stability of the findings that involve the participant's evaluation of the findings, interpretations, and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from the participants of the study. Given the fact that the study was on the qualitative approach, the researcher ensured that all the research findings were consistent with the purpose of the study by giving a detailed description of the purpose of the study. The qualitative research approach as it is appropriate for this study was used to describe the process of data analysis and thus ensure that the findings of the data were reliable.

1.9.4. Confirmability

Conformability relates to the accuracy or genuine reflections of the participant's perspectives without the researcher's views interfering with findings (Hays, Wood, Dahl & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). This was achieved by being neutral regarding the perceptions of the participants. Therefore, the researcher made notes on which to reflect on the position and the feelings as a researcher and maintain that position through the process of data collection. This helped the researcher to identify any misconceptions that might arise from time to time.

1.10. POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study creates an awareness of how family preservation services are delivered to families, especially in rural areas, and further highlights the challenges associated with the implementation of family preservation services. The findings and recommendations may influence good social work practice in the field of family preservation and child protection services. The study provided a critical overview of the existing state of social services in family and child care services and protection services suggesting solutions or recommending solutions that can be used to improve social services in the Amajuba District and other Districts.

1.11. POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One major limitation of this study relates mainly to the methodological paradigm, which is qualitative, and, therefore, not representative of the general population. However, generalizability was not the goal of the study since this study sought to give an in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon. The study could be criticized for its lack of diverse participants' profiles since only social workers were sampled for this study. The challenges associated with the implementation of family preservation services are largely multifaceted and can be related to other factors. To counteract this limitation, in the methodology section, it was made explicit that these were the views of only social workers and the analysis was confined to that perspective and the rationale for selecting social workers only has been explicitly stated.

1.14. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.14.1. Child

South Africa's Child Care and Protection Policy Draft (2017) defines that a child is a human being who is under or below the age of 18 years, while the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 concur with that description.

1.14.2. Family

The South African White Paper on Families (2012) defines a family as a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence.

1.14.3. Care

South Africa's Child Care and Protection Policy Draft (2017) defines care as including a range of services and support that children require to ensure their well-being and development to their full potential or optimal.

1.14.4. Children and Families Services

South Africa's Child Care and Protection Policy Draft (2017) defines that children's family services are a variety of services intended to advance or encourage the optimal development of young people by ensuring protection, accomplishing permanency, and strengthening all family members to successfully care and protect their children.

1.14.5. Child Protection

South Africa's Child Care and Protection Policy Draft (2017) indicates that the protection of children is the structure and measures that are used to prevent and respond to a situation that places risk to young people.

1.14.6. A Child in Need of Care and Protection

South Africa's Child Care and Protection Policy Draft (2017) describes that a child in need of care and protection is a child who is deprived of care and has experienced a range of risky circumstances, such deprivation, and who requires protection from violence, abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation in his or her family and the criminal justice system or community. The Children's Act no 38 of 2005 concur that a child in need of care and protection is the child who has experienced victimization exploitation, abuse, neglected abandoned, or orphaned.

1.14.7. Family Preservation Services

The South African White Paper on Families (2012) defines family preservation as services that build family resilience to strengthen and empower families to protect and care for their children effectively to prevent removal. Strydom (2012) describe family preservation services as

focusing on preventive services while rendering therapeutic services that assist the families to talk about issues s that families are strengthened to remain together in their care with children.

1.14.8. Family Reunification Services

Family reunification refers to the services that are provided or rendered to children's parents or families for purposes of returning children who have been placed in out-of-home care to their families of origin (Sauls & Esau, 2015). Therefore, the authors add that Family reunification is the most primary permanency goal for the majority of children who have been removed from their families to return to their parents by following the appropriate reunification or reintegration processes.

1.15 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The following section presents the chapter outline of the research report. The research report comprises five chapters:

Chapter 1: General Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 reflects the general background of the study, rationale for the study, goals, and objectives, the research methodology, ethical considerations, clarification of concepts, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, a critical review of the existing literature that pertains to family preservation services, applicable legislation and policies, history, and key theoretical concepts on family preservation are discussed.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 3 covers a description of how the qualitative research methodology was employed during the execution of this research project with the application of the qualitative approach, methods of data collection, research design, data analysis, and verification.

Chapter 4: Findings of the Study

Chapter 4 highlights the research findings from the respondents, complemented by a literature control to compare and contrast the research findings with relevant literature in the field.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Chapter 5 presents a summary; conclusions and recommendations arrived at as a result of the employed methodology and the research findings that emerged from the process of data analysis.

1.16. CONCLUSION

Since family preservation services to children in need of care and protection have been important and a requirement in South Africa for social service practitioners, this study explored the gaps in implementation that deter the effective provision of family preservation services in the Amajuba District Municipality by qualified social workers. South African government policy documents on service delivery such as the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), Children's Act no 38 of 2005, White Paper on Families (2012), and related legislative frameworks mandate social workers to implement family preservation to children and their families who require these services.

CHAPTER TWO

FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN NEED OF CARE AND PROTECTION

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the conceptual understanding of the family preservation approach and how social workers implement family preservation services in support of families and children who are experiencing a range of psychosocial problems. For purposes of clarity and precision, this chapter, therefore, is divided into two sections in rendering an explication of the family preservation program and its implementation in South Africa. Section one focuses on the conception of family preservation as well as the historical background of the family preservation program. Additionally, the legislative frameworks, policies, and theories that underpin family preservation are also critically discussed, for its role in implementing family preservation. Furthermore, the association between family preservation and the developmental approach that guides the implementation of family preservation in South Africa is discussed to establish or substantiate on the guidance and the procedure of implementing family preservation services.

Section two focuses on the review of literature about the changing nature of family structures in South Africa as well as the vulnerability of children in families. In the discussion, the challenges that impact on the ability of families to parent children appropriately are discussed. The role of the social worker, the relevance of family preservation programs, and challenges experienced by a social worker in rendering family preservation programs are also presented to critically understand those challenges that manifest in the process of implementation family preservation program. Then, the chapter concludes with a discussion of how to improve the implementation of family preservation in South Africa to contribute to its effectiveness.

SECTION A
2.2. CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

In an attempt to describe the family preservation approach, recourse must, in principle be had to the views of scholars on the subject of a family preservation program. Notably, there is a consensus among scholars that family preservation is about the care and the protection of children who are at risk of imminent removal. Some scholars stress the importance of

prevention and early intervention services while some refer to the reduction of the removal of children from their families. However, family preservation is also described as concrete services, which are provided to families as protecting children from experiencing harm or danger and it emphasized that family is the best or ideal place for a child to grow (Stewart, 2013). Hence, Berry (2007) argues that family preservation is rendered as soft and concrete services to assist in enabling parents or families to keep children in their own family as far as possible should the protection of the child can be guaranteed.

The services offered as that which include a variety of activities in support and strengthening capacity of each parent and that describes family preservation programs as soft, hard/concrete, and enabling services, which empower parents to keep children within their families. The soft services in family preservation include such activities as psycho-education, family counseling, and individual counseling. Concrete services consist of a range of services such as, financial assistance, home repairs, transportation, and recreational activities that families generally cannot afford to keep their children at home. Enabling services provided on behalf of families include advocacy with social services, legal and educational systems, as well as assistance in negotiating access to community support services. The intervention might be different depending on the country that is providing those services.

McCroskey (2001) argues that in some other places, family preservation is regarded as fundamental services while others regard it as marginal. This argument highlights that other service providers see family preservation as a complete program that can assist families in dealing with issues that manifest and other professionals see it as not that important for the child to remain within the family. This understanding leads to some of the children being place out of their families or removed from their families while others are being kept within families and providing necessary services. The common understanding of the family preservation approach is that it is used to prevent placement out of a child to institutional care; prevent the need for child protection, and in others, to reunify families whose children have been removed. In some places, family preservation is solely used as a function of the public child welfare agency while in others it is used by other systems for other target populations, for example, juvenile justice, mental, and health services.

Such differences in service design, implementation, and utilization have led to different perceptions about the meaning of the term family preservation and different judgments about

its worth. Both Lucero & Bussey (2012) and Venables (2016) agree that in describing family preservation services; they indicate that it is a collaborative model that is not isolated from other programs that support families and children who have been identified as vulnerable. They describe family preservation as collaborative models that incorporate other services to support families and children that can be referred to them to other service providers for further assistance and support. The section below presents the description of family preservation services as a support service to families with the intent to care and protect children who are at imminent risk.

2.2.1. Global perspectives and conceptual approach to family preservation services

Hooper-Briar, Broussard, Ronneau & Sallee (1995) describe that family preservation services as known is commonly designed to help families in vulnerable conditions, including adoptive and extended families at risk or in a crisis. Consequently, services aimed at preventing the removal of children from families to places of care and providing services to those children who have already been removed to such alternative care, are provided with services that aid them to be reunified or reintegrated with families. Fernandez & Sook-Lee (2013) assert that family preservation services are intended to prevent alternative placement, reunify families, place children in other permanent living arrangements such as adoption or legal guardianship; provide follow-up-care to reunified families, provide respite care for parents and other caregivers for improving parenting skills.

Similarly, Reed & Kirk (1998) describe a family preservation program as a range of services that focus on providing preventative services to families in their own homes, which is a living environment, to preserve and support at-risk families. Notably, they are designed to enhance child and family functioning to prevent the unnecessary removal of maltreated children from their families. The principles that follow explain clearly how family preservation services workers can be mindful of when to implement a family preservation program.

(a) Family members including children should be taken seriously and ensure that they are all protected from all forms that endanger and expose them to any form of harm.

(b) Services provided to the families and children should only focus on the needs of the family that address their immediate needs of the whole family.

(c) Services should be rendered where families are; in their own space that is not intimidated and must be respected their culture- culturally competent – psychologically accessible to children and their families.

(d) The services should be provided in a strength base perspective acknowledging that the good that the families and children have achieved or accomplished the desired goal.

(e) Services should be consistent with uninterrupted existence or succession of services.

(f) Designing the programs should consider the needs of the individual member and children regardless of the situation of where they come from.

Tausendfreund, Knot-Dickscheit, Schulze, Knorth & Grietens (2016) state that family preservation services are generally provided by social workers who are legislatively required to provide the services to vulnerable families, multiple-problem families with complex issues such as family violence, substance abuse, and mental health illness as an appropriate service required to those types of families. Family preservation services are appropriate to families experiencing vulnerability and multiple-problem families with complex issues that consisting of many different and connected problems that cause vulnerability. Huntington (2014) observed that social workers who are key professionals in the implementation of family preservation were unclear about implementation standards particularly about when they can remove a child and what the state should do with a family after the removal has taken place.

Altstein & McRoy (2000) previously raise a concern that professionals who provide family preservation services to children and families do not understand family preservation clearly. Therefore, family preservation services have lost their meaning to people who are supposed to provide these services to children and their families. Consequently, there is an incorrect assumption that all services that are helpful to families and children should be regarded as family preservation services whereas that is not true in terms of the conceptualization of family preservation.

Furthermore, this lack of understanding could hinder the proper implementation of family preservation services as prescribed by the legislative framework and policies that emphasize the care, protection, building capacity, and strengthening of families to restore family functioning (Lee, Ebesutani, Kolivoski, Becker, Lindsey, Brandt & Barth, 2014; Berger, 2015). Reed & Kirk (1998) argue that family preservation cannot be provided without having developed guidelines in serving maltreated children and their families. Therefore, both

established broad guidelines that legislatively set forth several mandates that have to be followed in providing services to maltreated children and families. Those mandates are:

(a) Reasonable efforts have to be made by child welfare agencies to prevent the removal of children from their families, as a family is the best place to raise a child.

(b) When it is necessary to remove children, the law requires placement in the least restrictive setting or environment and work towards reunification and reintegration.

(c) That in attempting to reunify children with their families or finding permanent, alternative families there are necessary steps in establishing permanency plans for children.

The implementation of family preservation services is guided by the primary goal developed in the initial stage to address the imminent risks that affect children. The goal is to by providing services that improve and strengthen the family functioning, by building the capacity of parenting the children appropriately (McCroskey, 1996; McCroskey, 2001; Maccio, Skiba, Doueck, Randolph, Weston & Anderson, 2003; Tilbury, 2013; D'Aunno, Boel-Studtand Landsman, 2014; Shrader-McMillan & Barlow, 2017). This is in line with what is emphasized by Forrester, Holland & Williams (2014) and Parton (2014) that family preservation programs seek to address the challenges social issues that place children at imminent risk of being removed from the home and the severity of the problems that affect children and families who need extra support to deal with current issues.

Children are regarded as in imminent risk when they are abused, neglected, or subjected to any form of maltreatment because of poverty, unemployment, and other risk factors that place children in unsafe situations (Hearn, 2010; Fernandez, 2014; Denby & Curtis, 2015). Therefore, the literature indicates that in a situation like that, the service providers should render family support services for protecting children, and keep the families together as far as possible (Fernandez, 2014; Devine, 2015; Frejo & Lopez; Jaffe, 2018). Maccio et al., (2003) assert that there are numerous definitions of family preservation services and there is little evidence that family preservation services are consistently implemented across programs as required by the relevant policies and legislative framework that guides how services can be provided to those children in need of care and protection.

Family preservation services have characteristics that distinguish the program from other family services that support families and children. Firstly, they focus on establishing a service continuum with the capacity for individualized case planning. Secondly, they aim to promote competence in children and families by teaching practical life skills and providing environmental supports. Thirdly, they focus on providing services that are supportive in strengthening families. Fourthly, they focus on collaborating with families and other agencies that provide similar services, such as housing and relevant stakeholders to best serve at-risk children and their families.

Lastly, they look at intensive and rapid service provision, for a brief duration of time, to all family members of the household to restore family stability and ongoing assessment of the safety and wellbeing of the children with consideration of placement when the situation necessitates that (Hanssen & Epstein, 2006). The focus of implementing assessment in family preservation is family-centred and it is critical to be considered; in that, the entire family is targeted for assessments and interventions. According to Hanssen & Epstein (2006), the intensive family preservation philosophy provides services to children in a holistic manner that acknowledges the whole family in service delivery and considers the general health, mental health, and wellbeing of all individuals in the household**.**

According to Brissett-Chapman (2018) and Popple (2018), they assert that the key social problems that place children at imminent risk of removal are child abuse, neglect and structural problems that threaten the stability of the family; which adversely affects the entire family, including children who are always vulnerable due to lack of support provided to families and children. If a child has been identified as in imminent risk, the child and the family are referred to a protective system service for providing family preservation services to prevent removal of a child from the family. Hearn (2010) emphases that family reservation embraces a philosophy that their natural families' best meet most children's needs when they are appropriately supported and strengthened with relevant services that support them. Therefore, by helping them to be more effective in parenting their children, government programs would assist to strengthen and support the wellbeing of children and families.

In countries such as Spain, a range of family preservation activities is provided to prevent the removal of children, such as counselling, therapeutic, psycho-educational programs, and other relevant services. These are provided by social workers with sufficient support to enable

parents to fulfil their important child-rearing responsibilities that increase care and protection. The services address family situations in the case of parents and children facing adverse circumstances (Freijo & Lopez, 2018). However, in England, para-professionals, a workforce who are not trained as social workers, but have a related background, extensive knowledge, and experience of family preservation services, form part of implementing family preservation services as a less intensive but home-based service to whole families.

This is of a longer-term duration compared to social workers who provide it as a short-term service (Brandon & Connolly, 2006). The para-professionals implement family preservation as a long-term service compared to social workers who provide it as intensive short-term services. Early intervention, which takes place before problems become entrenched, is the best way to help families with difficulties and prevent child maltreatment. However, once the families have multiple and complex needs, they may benefit more from intensive 24/7 family preservation services, which must be provided by highly qualified and experienced social workers. The services have to be of very short duration (months) and be delivered to a very small number of families in their own homes (Knot-Dickscheit, Thoburn & Knorth, 2015).

Lee & Ayon (2007) stress that family preservation aims to preserve and empower families, protect children, and support the healthy functioning of all family members to keep the families together. Kauffman (2007); Mizrah (2008); Sandoval (2010); Kirst-Ashman & Hull (2016); Smith and Bromfield (2017) emphasize that if family preservation services properly implemented, it decreases and reduces the risks of continued child maltreatment by restoring adequate family functioning and family environment. Therefore, they eliminate the need for removing the child from the family. Family preservation cannot be implemented successfully without considering an ongoing assessment as part of getting more information about the family situation; this includes an ongoing assessment that facilitates the linking of families with necessary resources and the support (Hanssen & Epstein, 2006). Lee & Ayon (2007) further posit that a variety of services such as parent skills programs, drug abuse counseling, transportation, housing assistance can be provided through the program of family preservation.

Family preservation is characterized as a crisis-oriented intervention provided to families for four to six weeks, with multiple visits per week by a caseworker who is available 24 hours a day. A family preservation worker should maintain contact with the family at least once or twice a week, visit, or go to the family to monitor and support the family depending on the

severity of the problem. Therefore, family preservation can be described as a service that is based on a crisis intervention model, providing relatively brief services or intervention (6 weeks' services) but very intensive input (workers have one primary case at any given time and are available at all times (Forrester et al., 2014). The communication style used combines a couple of motivational interviewing and solution-focused approaches with family-orientated activities designed to build on strengths and values held by parents.

Cheung et al., (1997) state that family preservation services should be implemented by practitioners who are well trained and have the necessary knowledge in family preservation for maintaining consistent values toward preserving the integrity of the entire family. However, the scholars of family preservation programs reiterate that the effective implementation of family preservation services is based on a family-based orientation, which has three key determinants on knowledge, skills, and values, which shape family preservation practice. Therefore, family preservation programs have been regarded as a preferred option to serve families with children who are at imminent risk of out of home placement. Cheung et al., (1997) further, share the following values of family preservation that serve as guiding principles in implementing it in practice to children and families, these include:

(a) The belief (no matters the age group of - age group does not matter when implementing family preservation) that regardless of the age a person has the best place to live is within the family when enhancement takes place by relying on that parents can do what they can raise their children as they are an important resource.

(b) Important resources to be used in the helping process are the cultural, religious background values, family member's ethnicity, and the community's ties as their support in raising the child. There is a saying that "it takes the whole village to raise a child" which means social workers should consider the strengths families have during the helping process, such as family ethnic, cultural, religious background values, and community ties as they constantly support families when raising a child. The definition of family can differ differently depending on their background, and therefore, each family should be supported as a unique system that has a unique problem that needs to be dealt with differently from other families.

(c) Families are different from different challenges experienced, that uniqueness in families should conscientious a practitioner to render services as a unique system.

(d) Services at all levels should be developed to strengthen support and empower families who need such services. Family preservation services should be designed to strengthen supporting and empowering families to care for and protect their children. intended and directed at strengthening, supporting, and empowering families who are experiencing vulnerability

(f) The families are considered important and partners in the helping process, Families are regarded as important when services are rendered because they are the key recipient.

(g) Families should be the ones regarded as in charge of their lives and be allowed to lead the process and be mindful of respecting their pace. The workers should be aware to render services that would empower families to continue on their own.

(h) When working with families, workers should take cognizance of the whole family and should be respected of their dignity rights to privacy of all members regardless of the problems they have

(i) Families have the potential to change and most troubled families want to do so.

(j) All families can change regardless of the problems they have, by doing so, the worker restores hope to them.

Cheung et al., (1997) further indicate the knowledge that it is required by social workers to effectively implement family preservation. Family preservation services may take many forms and approaches that assist to keep families together through preventative and collaborative efforts, which include:

(a) That resource should be accessible to the family and that family be offered educational services

(b) Families must be provided with family-centred counselling and that parenting skills be taught to the parents to build the capacity of parents.

(c) The family crisis should be attended immediately and intensively. If the family is experiencing a crisis, the family preservation worker should respond to the crisis immediately and provide intensive services when required.

The above services are based on at least seven theoretical approaches that guide the appropriate intervention. According to Maccio et al., (2003) and Cheung et al., (1997), social workers should apply the following skills to successfully implement family preservation in referred cases. These include:

(a) That the worker implementing family preservation should make use of available resources in the family network. Social workers should be able to tap into the resource available at their disposal.

(b) The social worker should connect and link up families with relevant resources.

(c) Concrete and clinical services must be coordinated by helping professionals to aid families who are experiencing a crisis.

(d) Whatever the issues or problems experienced by the family, should be assessed and identify the solutions that are based on the strengths of the family.

(e) The social workers should be able to provide individual members of the family and the family, as a whole, with holistic support to address permanency goals.

(f) The necessary skills to family members should always be taught such as parenting skills, problem-solving, communication, and behaviour management.

Family preservation programs offer services that treat the entire family respectfully and needing services that empower them before considering other options such as out of home placement. The services that are provided to children and families to ensure that the risk factors that were identified collectively during the process of assessment are minimized. If children are already being removed, families and children are prepared for the smooth reunification or reintegration with their biological families or any other families willing to keep children within their care (Altstein & McRoy, 2000; Kauffman, 2007; McDougall & Cotgrove, 2014; Brissett-Chapman, 2018). Consequently, Popple (2018) stresses that before a decision is made about the implementation of family preservation and when to provide family preservation services. The assessment team should begin the process of further investigation to ascertain and establish if the family and the child are appropriate for being included as a candidate for family preservation services.

Hence, Denby & Curtis (2015) indicate that the children that are referred to family preservation programs are the children and families who are thoroughly assessed and found suitable that are appropriate for family preservation services. Therefore, these assessments and investigations are not only focusing on individual persons referred to the protective system, but the whole family is included in the process of risk assessment to establish and understand the whole situation of the family including the strengths and assets the family has (Lightburn & Sessions, 2006; Shwartz & AuClaire, 2016).

When the case is referred for assessment, it should not only focus on the person within the family but the whole family is considering the provision of family preservation. The assessment should be holistic and focus on other people that contribute to the family as a whole. As part of the child and family assessment, the interaction within the family, interdependence, the family environment. The assessment also considers the relationship the family has in the wider society, the contact with the children have, with their school, the change that has taken place, and the relationships with peers, are analysed to have a broader understanding of the effect (Teater, 2014; Parrish, 2014). Ambrosino, Heffernan, Shettlesworth & Ambrosino, (2015) assert that family preservation services focus on empowering, strengthening, and building the capacity of a family to continue caring and protecting their children by stabilizing the family system – to get their needs met and develop their new skills in problem-solving and communication.

For a family to be considered as an appropriate case for family preservation services there should be signs identified that the child is at risk of placement out of the family and that the social worker is convinced that the child can remain protected at home if intensive family preservation services are provided (Popple, 2018). Altstein & McRoy (2000) argue that the value of individualized assessment ensures that the delivery of services has a sufficient system to support the family to maximize the potential of keeping families and children together safely. Family preservation services are therefore characterized as intensive services, short-term, time-limited period focusing specifically on families who are experiencing problems and family preservation services are delivered at home or in their life space (Denby & Curtis, 2015; Knot-Dickscheit et al., 2016).

Therefore, the social worker who renders family preservation is required to carry small caseloads of less than six cases; this would enable the workers to provide effective and intensive services for at least 5 to 12 hours per week. This allows the workers to be reached 24 hours, have a flexible schedule, and be accessible to families whenever a need arises or most of the time when needed to provide services or respond immediately within the short space of time (Knot-Dickscheit et al., 2016; Schwartz & AuClaire, 2016). McDougall & Cotgrove (2014) and Lieberman (2013) identify ten common features of family preservation services:

(a) That a reported case be attended within 24 hours

(b) That a person implementing family preservation be available at all times if they are needed to assist and support families and children.

(c) The number of cases is a manageable number ranging from 2 to 4 families including children.

(d) Intensive interventions services of 8 to 10 hours per week or when the family needs support

(e) Family preservation services are provided in the family's space and the community.

(f) Family preservation services are rendered as a short-term intervention for a period of 4 to 8 weeks depending on the severity of the challenge and that can be followed by support services.

(g) Services that have a great effort delivered by the same people.

(h) Appreciation of the connection between families and communities – the importance of the relationship between families and community members.

(i) Focusing on achieving the set goals when rendering services with minimal set objectives

(j) Building the capacity that empowers and strengthens families to restore family functioning and parent their children appropriately.

Denby & Curtis (2015) and Schwartz & AuClaire (2016) further assert that family preservation services focus on the whole family and provided where the family is and the services are mostly provided as home-based services. This includes therapeutic interventions and concrete services to support families who are at risk of losing their children to alternative care placement. Kirst-Ashman & Hull (2016) emphasize that six goals are embedded in family preservation services, which also describe the purpose of implementing family preservation programs, namely:

(a) To ensure that children are safe and protected in all forms of harm.

(b) To provide for continued support and capacitation of family bonds.

(c) The family preservation services are intended to reduce and minimize the crisis that may further place risk to children.

(d) Family preservation services build and increase the competencies of the family that may restore family functioning and family structure.

(e) Families are encouraged, supported to identify, and utilized the many resources that would enable them to protect and care for their children.

Rodrigo (2016) emphasizes that rendering family preservation assists to enhance the parenting skills to parents, which, in turn, strengthens and empowers them to provide appropriate parent care and protect their children. The provision of family preservation services to parents of children focus on child protection and promotes the wellbeing of children through supporting families (Fernandez, 2014). Knot et al., (2015) also concurred with (Tracy, 2017) and identified 10 elements that are common in family preservation services; and are enumerated as follows:

(a) Only families who have been identified as at risk of imminent placement are accepted.

(b) Services are crisis-oriented. Families are seen as soon as possible after the referral is made.

(c) Staff is accessible, maintaining flexible hours, 7 days a week.

(d) Intake and assessment processes ensure that no child is left in danger.

(e) The focus is on the family as a unit, rather than on parents or children as problematic individuals. However, individual concerns should still be addressed.

(f) Workers see families in the families' homes, making frequent visits convenient to each family's schedule. Many services are also provided in school and neighbourhood settings.

(g) The service approach combines teaching skills to family members, helping the family obtain necessary resources and services, and counselling-based on an understanding of how each family functions as a unit.

(h) Services are generally based on identified family needs rather than strict eligibility categories.

(i) The worker carries a small caseload at any given time. A limited number of programs make use of teams. Homebuilders work individually with the team back up but have caseloads of only two families at a time.

(j) Programs limit the length of involvement with the family to a short period, typically between 1 to 5 months.

2.2.2. The implementation of family preservation services in South Africa

The family preservation approach is the primary model utilized by social workers to render social work services for both the child and the family in the event of child abuse being reported to child welfare services (Strydom, 2012). Thus, family preservation is the planning process that addresses the imminent risk of children, parents by empowering and render necessary

support services to restore family functioning to protect and care for their children (Strydom, 2010, and Strydom et al, 2017). The South African child protection services follow the family preservation approach, where attempts are made to keep the child safely in the home by addressing the causes of the maltreatment while working with the family as active participants (Swart, 2017; Strydom, 2012; Malatjie, 2017; Tully, 2016). These services are rendered within a continuum of care, which consists of prevention services, early intervention services, and statutory services when necessary (Swart, 2017).

Family preservation services as prevention services aim at broader population groups to prevent child maltreatment by raising general awareness of the issue and the community resources available to address it (Makoae, 2012; Swart, 2017). Early intervention services include developmental and therapeutic interventions aimed at specific families who are at risk of statutory intervention because maltreatment has already occurred (Van Huyssteen & Strydom, 2016). Statutory intervention (when a child is placed in foster care, for instance) occurs only once the other two service levels have proved unsuccessful in ensuring the child's safety (Swart, 2017).

Prevention of a child's removal from their families is central in South African child protection policies because services are directed towards early intervention and prevention services (Strydom et al., 2017; Hope & van Wyk, 2018). During the intervention, social services are delivered to increase the family's coping skills by, *inter alia*, strengthening family bonds as well as facilitating the family utilization of formal and informal resources (Strydom, 2012 and Strydom, 2015). Rendering these, services allows the families to realize the strengths and inherent capacity that they have to continue to support, care and protect their children within the family setting (Dhludhlu & Lombard, 2017; Combrinck, 2015; Van Huyssteen & Strydom, 2016).

Focusing on family preservation services can potentially reduce the number of children entering deeper into a statutory system while allowing families to realize the inherent capacity they have in protecting, caring, and supporting their children (Strydom, 2010). Rendering intensive family preservation services assist families to collaborate with other people in addressing danger that threatens the removal of a child from the family. Mosoma & Spies (2016) clarify that intensive family preservation services are intended to assist families in danger, in an unsafe situation, or who are at risk of being separated from their children due to

threatening circumstances or have been separated from their families and placed outside their family home. Strydom (2012) stresses the importance of rendering preventative services to families before the onset of a crisis to limit the entrance of families into the welfare system and to reduce the need for statutory services.

Strydom (2012) defines family preservation services as a preventative and therapeutic intervention rendered by social workers to preserve the family and prevent the removal of children to alternative care. These services focus on strengthening the family's capacity and providing them with access to formal and informal resources, whilst Van Huyssteen & Strydom (2016) describe family preservation services as early intervention child protection services aimed at preventing the abuse, neglect, and abandonment of children. The focus of the program is on identifying family strengths to strengthen families and to keep them together as far as possible (Mosoma, 2014). Therefore, Strydom (2010) argues that family preservation services are rendered to families for the intention of increasing and building the capacity of parents to care and protect their children or families so that children benefit the desired development. Strydom et al., (2017) strongly emphasize that the family preservation approach is closely aligned with the developmental approach hence the focus is on prevention and early intervention services that support children and families. The social developmental approach to the welfare of citizens' embraces services that are intended to be supportive and empowering families to use community services towards meeting their socio-economic needs (Sesane & Geyer, 2017; Ntjana, 2014 & Strydom et al., 2017).

Nhedzi & Makofane, (2015) assert that by adopting the developmental approach to social welfare, the South African government sought to enhance the well-being of the poor and empower the disempowered families by increasing their participation in activities that promote economic justice. According to Combrinck (2015), the developmental approach to social welfare services is adopted in the delivery of social work service in South Africa for the guidance of supporting prevention and early intervention services that allows the implementation of family preservation. Its emphasis is on strengthening the family, building the capacity of the family as well as strengthening community and family-based services.

Family preservation services in South Africa are further supported by the Constitution, for example, section 28 of the Constitution states that every child has a right to family care or parental care or appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment. This

indicates that the Constitution regards families as an important institution for childcare and protection. Therefore, measures should be taken to ensure that children in need of care are protected within their environment. The South African Constitution is the supreme law of the land that recognizes the existence of everybody (including his or her rights) and it is the law by which all South African policies are tested.

2.2.3. The historical background of family preservation

The development of family preservation services arose in the 1870s because of the need to develop institutions for the prevention of cruelty to children, to help establish the concepts of state intervention in family life and minimally acceptable standards of parenting. In 1899, other child protection interventions included the introduction of the juvenile court. This helped to separate children and adult offenders as well as introducing the Child Guidance Clinic Movement, which treated children within the context of their natural environment - meaning their families (Greene, 2003; Yarrow, 2009). Reed & Kirk (1998) indicate that the intensive Family preservation program model (IFPS) can be traced to programs developed in the mid-1950s and IFPS practice methods and philosophies that are date back to the early 1900s.

Then, in the early 1950s, a basic approach in family preservation services was launched in the United States of America. Hearn (2010) states that family preservation began in response to the actions of the charitable organizations of the 19th century that removed children from their families and placed them in institutions and with farm families in the Midwest to rescue them "from abuse, neglect, and all too often, poverty". The philosophy of family preservation has its roots in the first White House Conference on Children in 1909 when it was declared that children should not be deprived of family life for reasons of poverty alone.

This decree suggests that families should be assisted by the child welfare system to alleviate the challenges they face that might affect their ability to care for their children adequately. Therefore, family preservation services gained prominence in the United States of America between the 1950s and 1970s as an approach to help families who were at imminent risk (Schwartz & AuClaire, 2016). Martin, Volkmar & Lewis (2007) indicate that the first home-based family preservation services were provided in the early 1900s to the families of children who were at risk of losing their children due to poverty and neglect. In Tacoma, Washington, the similar needs were identified for children who were placed out of their families. The concern was because there were cases of child abuse, neglect of children, delinquency,

emotional problems, and developmental disabilities. They had to deal with all these issues with their families before the program began (Denby & Curtis, 2015).

2.2.4. The development of family preservation in South Africa

Before 1994, the concept of family preservation was not known or implemented in South Africa, children were not cared and protected adequately during the apartheid era, and that prompted to a change in legislation and policies that did not protect children sufficiently (Singh & Singh, 2014; Wilson, 1998 and Gray & Lombard, 2008). Allsopp & Thumbadoo (2002) indicate that when South African Government was elected, it was faced with the formidable task of finding ways to nurture, develop and protect children whose growth environments had been distorted by political, social, and economic policies of apartheid and colonization. In 1995, the democratic government established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on 'Young People at Risk' to particularly address the plight of young people at risk and to address the transformation of the South African Child and Youth Care System in South Africa (Courtney & Iwaniec, 2009; Skelton, 2008).

This resulted in Interim Policy Recommendations being published in 1996 by the team that was set up by the South African Government. These addressed such aspects as prevention, early intervention, statutory services, and continuity of care services for most of the children who were placed out in awaiting trial (Singh & Singh, 2014). In 1996, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk proposed a four-tier system for the transformation of the child and youth care system in South Africa which guided the change on how to correct the injustices to young people. It was suggested that the first two levels of the new system must be on prevention of harm to children and early intervention where harm occurs. Prevention and early intervention as the first two components in the four-tier system were officially put forward in the IMC's practice guide entitled Minimum Standards (Schmidt, 2006 &Moodley, 2006).

As part of the transformation of the child and youth care system, Draft Minimum Standards for the South African Child and Youth Care System were published in 1998 with particular emphasis on residential childcare. Therefore, the family preservation program is based on a collaborative model that incorporates all government departments and other stakeholders who can assist in family strengthening and a family support service for the protection and development of children and young people up to the age of 18. It also aimed to prevent the

removal of young people from their families. Mthembu & Luthuli-Chuluvane (2001) indicate that the Inanda family preservation project was initiated to prevent placing children out of their family setting and is based on a training program for intensive family support developed by the University of Mexico. The South African National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers, as the ideal program to support children and families who were at imminent risk, identified this training program. The project adapted it to the South African reality by adding three components to the original. Child and Youth Care Workers together with social workers were trained on an indigenous family preservation program after the training manual was developed and adopted as a South African model. The program has four components to each; of which a social worker is joined with Child and Youth Care Workers as part of the implementation of the family preservation services and these components are as follows:

(a) Intensive family support,
(b) Youth mentorship,
(c) Family reunification, and
(d) Community conferencing.

The study conducted by Wilson (1998) in South Africa, Durban indicated that the local social workers and Commissioners of Child Welfare had observed the need for family preservation due to a high incidence of children who were removed and placed in different institutional facilities in the Province of KwaZulu and other Provinces in the country. The research found that children were spending more years in state facilities without a visible attempt of services provided to them by appropriate professionals and few were re-integrated back into their families due to insufficient interventions that are provided by the professionals. Family preservation services are reported to have started as a Pilot Project in Inanda, Durban in 1997. It started (began) as a community-based prevention program to avoid children being removed from their families. The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on children (Sloth-Nielsen & Du Toit, 2008) set this or led Committee on ensuring the care and protection of children. The development of the White Paper for Social Welfare in 1997 was the beginning of family preservation services in South Africa. This beginning led to the development of other legislation and policies such as Children's Act No.38 of 2005, the White Paper on Social Welfare 1997, and the White Paper on Family Policy (2012) for ensuring that families are being preserved including the protection of children in need of care.

The Integrated Service Delivery Model (2006) stresses that there must be services that focus on prevention, and early intervention services that are aimed at providing services that require the statutory removal of children from their families if the protection of the child cannot be guaranteed. If the situation is like that it, places the child at risk, the child can be removed to the places of care (Strydom et al., 2017). Therefore, the South African government realized that there is a need to render services to families who are struggling to meet the needs of their children and their situation that required immediate intervention and support. As a result, social workers are mandated to implement family preservation services to empower and restore family functioning. This would enable families to carry out their parental responsibilities of parenting their children and ensure that their children are safe in that life space (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015). This project has been replicated in other parts of South Africa as well and a means of ensuring that children and their families are receiving appropriate services to protect them from maltreatment.

2.3. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF FAMILY PRESERVATION

Family preservation programs are based on seven theoretical approaches which Cheung et al., (1997) identified (identify) as important knowledge when implementing family preservation services. The scholars indicate the following theoretical approaches to ensure the understanding of family preservation. Firstly, crisis intervention as the most important perspective of helping the family in crisis and the need for support. Another theoretical perspective in family preservation, which forms part of service delivery, is family systems theory that helps to identify the dynamic relationships within the family and adjustment processes that help to maintain family functions and family structure. Notably, the practitioners are family members themselves who are prone to the challenges that are experienced by their families and the families receiving services from them. The third theoretical perspective is the social learning theory that underpins that parenting skills can be learned, and anger management can be self-directed with appropriate assistance and guidance. Therefore, each person is constantly learning new behavior that can impact either positively or negatively in how they present themselves to others.

These theoretical perspectives help social workers to have clarity when they teach parenting skills and this is empowering to parents who need such intervention. The fourth theoretical perspective is the ecological perspectives that help to analyse human behaviours of an individual, social functioning, and their relationships in a multi-faceted environment. This

theory assists social workers to reflect on their lives situation and environment of where they are coming from, which may have a great impact in implementing family preservation. The fifth theory is a developmental life-cycle perspective that helps to understand the developmental cycle of individuals and how each cycle influences a person's behaviour. A sixth theoretical perspective is a strengths-focused approach that stresses people's innate drive to achieve and focuses on utilizing families' strengths in resolving problems. This also helps to believe to a person that there are some of the things that are good about the person which allows social workers to have more time in working with a person. This theory encourages that change is possible and that determination is the key to delivering the service. The seventh one is a permanency planning model that promotes a child's growth, connection with the family, and facilitating decision-making and goal-setting behaviours that allow stability.

Family preservation services (IFPS) are generally based on an ecological model of human functioning and interaction whether a client or a practitioner. While these seven theoretical approaches are relevant to family preservation services, this research study focuses on the ecological approach as the point of departure in understanding how social workers implement family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. The ecological approach is also known as a theory that focuses on the person-in-environment exchange that recognizes that many individuals and systems contribute to the challenges faced by all people (Leon et al., 2008). The practitioners themselves are people from a similar situation and the workplace can allow them to implement family preservation positively or negatively due to interaction taking place in the workplace. The ecological model provides a comprehensive way of understanding and helping families as it recognizes the interdependence, the interconnectedness between people and their environment (Whittaker et al., (2017).

If you are a human being, you are prone to all interaction and interdependence and that contributes to service delivery. Whittaker et al., (2017) argue that family preservation can be drawn on four major theories that form part of the practice, which are crisis intervention, family systems theory, social learning, and ecological theory. All these theories articulate the ideal service delivery systems and treatment. Leonard (2011) asserts that the ecological approach assists to better understand the importance of partnerships, which may have evolved that can contribute to the challenges that may lead to successes or failures of the program. Derksen (2010) emphasizes that the ecological approach has the potential to influence new directions and development in the child and youth care. This could also continue to influence practice particularly in the areas of policy, and community-based work, which needs to be enhanced.

Musgrave & Woodward (2016) assert that the ecological approach enhances and strengthens the service delivery of family preservation services, as it is a collaborative model that cannot be implemented in isolation without the interaction of other service providers, who also have a contribution to make in the success of family preservation services.

Applying an ecological approach to child welfare provides for an understanding that it is comprised of different levels of systems with interactions between the systems which are interconnected to one another and therefore, the failure and successes of the program implementation is based on how are they relating to one another, and the support that they receive while providing the service (Julien-Chinn, 2017). Bone (2015) shares the original orientation of the ecological approach as researchers with various disciplines analyse people's relationships. In context, they have used a holistic framework, which is placed within the field of early childhood development. Therefore, Ahmed et al., (2017) reiterate that the person-in-environment is perceived as central and is based on the belief that an individual can only be understood in the context of the environment wherein particularly referring to the social workers implementing family preservation services.

Social workers who implement family preservation services depend on the Department of Social Development for resources to enable social workers to render the services effectively. Therefore, the availability of organizational resources has a direct impact on the workers' ability to apply, provide, implement, and render family preservation services successfully. Alvi, Usman & Amjad (2018) indicate that a developmental psychologist Urine Bronfenbrenner introduced the ecological approach in 1979 and it has made a significant contribution in explaining an individual's development within the systems of relationships that construct their environment. Rosa and Tudge (2013) assert that Bronfenbrenner described the human development approach that is influenced by the various factors that interact within the environment. Urine Bronfenbrenner identified four ecological systems that explain the human development, which is; the micro-system, the mesosystem, the exo-system, and the macro-system.

Rosa &Tudge (2013) gives the following description of the four ecological systems. The first is a micro-system which refers to the most proximal setting with a particular physical characteristic, in which a person is situated. This would include home, child care, a playground, and a place of work; and in which a developing person can interact face-to-face with others.

The second, a mesosystem, refers to the relationships among two or more micro-systems in which the developing person actively participates. The third system, the exo-system, is described as an ecological setting in which the developing person of interest is not situated and thus does not participate actively within it but experiences its influence and at times can also influence it whether formally or informally. Rosa & Tudge (2013) define the fourth system, a macro-system, as the institutional systems of a culture or subculture such as economic, social, education, legal, and political systems. Hope & Van Wyk (2018), and Strydom (2012) assert that the implementation of family preservation services is guided by the policy and legislation located within the exo-system.

2.4. THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES THAT UNDEPIN FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

Different pieces of legislation guide the implementation of family preservation services in South Africa. In this discussion, a critical review of these legislations is presented and specific sections of the Acts, which are aligned with family preservation, are identified. The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, and the White Paper on Families (2012) serve to guide the implementation of family preservation services on families.

2.4.1. White Paper on Social Welfare (1997)

According to the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997), one of the goals of the child and family welfare services in social work is to maintain and strengthen the functioning of high-risk families to enhance their physical, social and emotional development. Furthermore, Section 2 of the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) mandates social workers to intervene where child abuse and neglect have occurred and that interventions must be focused mainly on family preservation through rendering preventative and early intervention services (Strydom, 2013). This means that social workers must report bi-annually the possibility of offering reunification services unless it can be proven that it is excluded in the Constitution in section 187 of the Children's Act (Boning & Ferreira, 2013).

Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) assert that the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) was developed because some of the families are struggling to meet the needs of their children and that their situation requires immediate intervention. By adopting a developmental approach to social welfare, the government seeks to enhance the wellbeing of the poor and disempowered

families by intensifying or maximizing their participation in activities that promote economic justice. The White Paper for Welfare (1997) was developed as a policy guideline not only to promote healthy families but also to strengthen them and thus render family preservation services. In this policy, social welfare is defined as an integrated and comprehensive system of social services, which facilitates programs and social security with the view of promoting social development, social justice, and social functioning of the members of society.

2.4.2. Children's Act No. 38 of 2005

According to Sibanda & Lombard (2015), the developmental approach to social welfare principles provides for the Children's Act 38 of 2005 to include participation, universal access, social integration, self-reliance, empowerment, appropriateness, and accessibility. These principles guide the implementation of services not only to children but also to their entire families. Van Huyssteen (2015) argues that family preservation services to both children and families should be delivered as part of a comprehensive package of services to families at risk. The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 was developed to improve the services rendered to children who need care and protection and as such, it is aligned with other legislative frameworks such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and many other related legislations to ensure that the protection of children is successfully achieved.

Furthermore, the Act is a comprehensive piece of legislation that seeks to afford children the necessary care, protection, and assistance so that they can develop to their full potential. The Act provides that children must be protected from all forms of maltreatment, harm, abuse, and neglect. The Act also provides guidelines on how to work with children so that they can receive the necessary services. Section two of the Children's Act No. 30 of 2005 emphasizes that family preservation must be promoted through the strengthening of families and that the child is protected from all forms of maltreatment and neglect, abuse, and degradation.

Section 157 of the same Act makes provisions for the court to order social workers to submit a report which includes details of family preservation services that have been considered or attempted. Sections 143 -149 indicates the importance of early intervention and prevention services when implementing family preservation services in working with the vulnerable group of people, specifically children and families as the most affected by the circumstances. The Act provides that it is the responsibility of the social worker to render services that focus on

early intervention and prevention so that the removal of children from their parental care is minimized and care and protection are improved. According to the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, the best place for any child is in the family environment where the best care and protection should be guaranteed. Therefore, family preservation services focus on helping, supporting, and capacitating families to play an important role in raising their children in a safe and protected environment.

2.4.3. The White Paper on Families (2012)

Patel, Hochfed & Englert (2018) state that the development of White Paper on Families Policy (2012) seeks to strengthen and empower families using an accepted, coherent and well-coordinated framework, which assists in building the strong families. Therefore, its focus is on restoring family functioning that would enable families to continue providing child-rearing. This legislation focuses on family preservation services to restore family functioning and enable needy families to carry out their child-rearing roles and responsibilities. In reviewing these legislative frameworks, it becomes clear that one would have to understand them to implement family preservation successfully.

Van Huyssteen (2015) argues that preserving families need to focus on protecting and servicing the entire family rather than on the individual. Placing children out of the home should be the last thing to do and must be considered last so that children are raised by their parents or families. She further reiterates that if children have already been removed from their families, social workers should work towards reunifying them or reintegrate those children with a family. If, however, it is determined that to require care and protection the necessary social service delivery guidelines are provided by the Children's Act.

The White Paper on Families (2012) adopted several approaches ranging from the rights-based approach, the strengths perspective, the life cycle systems approach, and the social development approach that assist and guide the social worker who is working with families to successfully implement services to vulnerable individuals. The White Paper on Families also developed the three strategic priorities which are the promotion of healthy family life, family strengthening, and family preservation and these priorities are useful in understanding the implementation and provision of family preservation services to children and families. Ultimately, Pillay (2016) suggests that all the interventions including family preservation

should be directed at increasing the benefits of reducing the harm to children who are at imminent risk.

The family policy lists all the important aspects which need to be addressed to strengthen and support family functioning and preserve families in a rights-based and strengths-based context and the Policy further indicates that the enhancement of family functioning is a responsibility (Roman et al., 2016). The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) enjoins that one of the goals of the child and family welfare services in social work is to maintain and strengthen the functioning of high-risk families to enhance their physical, social and emotional development (Strydom, 2010). The policy identified the purpose of child and family welfare services as ensuring the preservation of families so that a suitable environment can be provided for the physical, social and emotional development of all the members of the family (Strydom et al., 2017). Therefore, the White Paper on Families emphasizes the empowerment and strengthening of families. The Integrated Services Delivery Model (2006) directs that service delivery to children and family must entail prevention services on the first tier, then early intervention services on the second tier, with the third tier focuses on statutory services, which require the removal of children from their parents.

2.4.4. The role of social workers in implementing family preservation services

Social workers are key role players in the implementation of family preservation services due to the knowledge acquired during their training. Potgieter & Hoosain (2018) are of the view that social workers are required to investigate the reasons that place the child at imminent risk of removal. In doing so, social workers together with family members should prevent the removal of children from their families where possible by strengthening and supporting families to care for their children. Strydom (2012) and Combrinck (2015) assert that social workers implement family preservation services to strengthen families and thus prevent the removal of children by rendering appropriate services.

The designated social worker has key responsibilities in the implementation of family preservation, such as supporting the parents and improving communication within the family as well as with the child's parents and the social worker. This entails keeping parents informed about the decisions regarding their children in care and involve parents in therapeutic interventions and being available to parents during family reunification and family preservation services (Potgieter & Hoosain, 2018). Strydom (2012) emphasizes that linking parents with

community resources plays an important role in restoring hope and realizing that they have the inherent capacity to change the situation. Therefore, the safety of children is always paramount and should not be taken lightly in the implementation of family preservation services. Therefore, the implementation of family preservation has to ensure that children remain within their families so that they can be better protected and well care for by their parents (Maccio et al., 2003).

Amukwelele (2017) argues that the services provided by social workers should aim not only at preserving a child's family structure but also at developing appropriate parenting programs that capacitate parents and caregivers to safeguard the wellbeing and the best interests of their children. Strydom (2010) argues that these services are rendered to improve the coping skills of the family by, amongst other things, strengthening family ties, as well as by improving the family's utilization of formal and informal resources. Van Huyssteen & Strydom (2016) argue that social workers should play an important role in resolving the conflict within the family so that the crisis is stabilized and the situation contained to become normal for the best interest of the child. Consequently, if the situation or the issue becomes unresolved, then, the social worker assigned to that case can involve other family members to support the initiative.

The case manager can refer the case for further assessment and creatively link them to other available services providers who can assist and support the child and parent (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2016). Ambrosino et al., (2015) argue that when the case has been reported to the relevant protective system, then the process of investigation and assessment begins to establish the information about the allegation of child maltreatment. The study conducted by Combrinck (2015) reveals that some parents are not clear about the role of social workers in providing family preservation services. Because of that, parents have lost trust and thus expressed fear that social workers are removing children with little care being given to family issues. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) stress that services provided by social workers on the prevention level require that the focus of service be on the strengthening and improving the capacity of parents to handle the challenges within the families.

2.4.5. Challenges experienced in rendering family preservation programs

Some social workers experience numerous challenges when they render family preservation services to parents and their children. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) conducted a study in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan and found that parents are reluctant to engage in family preservation

services which has a great impact on the service. Thus, the unwillingness of parents to care for their children was observed as a challenge coupled with non-adherence to intervention plans, which were recognized as obstacles as they constituted the protection of the perpetrators of child abuse by family members embedded in traditional practices with lack of resources and low salaries as incidental factors. All these challenges are reported as the contributory factors, which stall the rendering of successful implementation of family preservation. These challenges are not only affecting the families and children but they also harm social workers themselves as they adversely affect their morale and well-being.

The studies by Strydom et al., (2017) and Strydom (2012) respectively share some of the findings regarding the challenges faced by social workers such as high statutory high caseloads and this becomes detrimental in rendering family preservation services as family preservation demands availability and accessibility to children and families. Critical issues such as burnout, pressure due to turnover, stress, and shortage of staff continue to affect the implementation process of family preservation services (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015; Strydom, 2010). One of the studies conducted reveal that social workers are not provided with sufficient resources which would improve and strengthen service delivery and it indicates that there is evidenced that there is the lack of training, insufficient knowledge that negatively hinders the practice guidelines and the protection of such factors render the fulfilment of the attendant duties and obligations as social welfare necessities suffer an undesirable compromise (Hope & van Wyk, 2018; Strydom, 2012).

Combrinck (2015) and Potgieter & Hoosain (2018) assert that the shortage of social workers and resources contributes greatly to the unavailability and inaccessibility of social workers to families and these affect services to children and families. Arguably, the unavailability and not accessibility of the social workers hinder the focus on strengthening families and lead them to further vulnerability, expose children to more unprotected circumstances. Marais & van der Merwe (2015) state that insufficient resources contribute negatively to the provision of necessary services to children and families experiencing multi problems and that delay the immediate support that they need. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) mention the inadequate organizational resources as a challenge for social workers to implement family preservation effectively for example vehicles that are not always available as they have to share them.

Combrinck (2015) argues that even though family preservation services are required for implementation, the focus is still on statutory services due to not having sufficient time and high workloads to follow the proper process and guidelines relating to the preservation of the family. Relating to statutory services can be defined as legal intervention where an individual has become involved in some form of the court case and will be in the statutory process until the court proceedings have been finalized (Lombard & Kleijn, 2006).

2.4.6. Strengths and limitations of a family preservation approach

The strengths of the family preservation approach are that it focuses on protecting children who are at imminent risk of being removed from their families by rendering the necessary preventative services and early intervention services (Strydom, 2012; Al et al., 2012; Hall, 2013; Combrinck, 2015). This is achieved by providing families in-home services with small caseloads size for one worker providing for a 24 hours' crisis response, intensive service delivery, and short duration which allows a social worker to spend enough time with the entire family (D'Aunno et al., 2014; Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015; Combrinck, 2015; Ambrosino et al., 2015). Thus, family preservation services emphasize the importance of the entire family when rendering the services, it follows the planned changed process by involving all the members of the family in the assessment and investigation process. What must be noted, however, is the fact that it does not focus on an individual member of a family when intervening or evaluating the program (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2014).

These services, as enumerated above, are provided to the entire family as opposed to benefitting only the individual member of a family who has been reported to be at risk. The social worker conducts an assessment and investigation, which involves the whole family to establish or to develop a full understanding of what the core issue is that places the child at risk (Cheung et al., 1997; Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015; Hawkins, 2017; Tracy, 2017). Lietz & Geiger (2017) argue that family preservation integrates a set of principles that guide assessment and intervention services when working with families that have been identified as capable of child maltreatment. When the social worker conducts in-home prevention services, early intervention services, performing case management, providing ongoing services to families, family preservation practice offers direction on how to form a professional relationship with a family to collaborate in a change process to ensure the safety of the child permanency and wellbeing of the entire family. Family preservation positively correlates with the increase in placement prevention rates in less time (Kauffman, 2005). Forrester et al., (2014) aver that

intensive family preservation services reduce the number of children entering the care system and this produces the cost savings. The concern is serious as it seeks to protect the child against parental misuse of drugs or alcohol.

Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) and Venables (2016) argue that family preservation services are offered as a collaborative model that involves all the support of other professionals with their relevant skills and expertise to assist families that have been identified as needing support. Notably, the community stakeholders are not isolated in this model as they are the most important supporters of the program in their areas. McCroskey (2001) emphasizes that family preservation is a holistic approach that involves the family in the treatment plan, given the fact that it is a strengths-based intervention that improves the functioning of the family by strengthening its parenting capacity. It also enhances child wellbeing by preventing the placement of children out of their home and reuniting those who have been removed.

However, family preservation services and its implementation are not immune to challenges. In the South African context, family preservation services are still provided by social workers only who have high caseloads. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) attest to the fact that social workers have insufficient contact with families due to high caseloads and this exposes vulnerable family members to further harm and this also reduces support that the family receives from the service provider. Family preservation services can be regarded as programs that provide services to families for preventing the removal of children. Notably, there are limitations to the program that have been reported by other authors. Al et al., (2012) argues that family preservation programs have some limitations relating to the functioning of the family and cannot be demonstrated that it can be improved in the short-term as other families may need longer support. Furthermore, the out-of-home placement cannot be prevented for all the families referred to as an intensive family preservation program.

Additionally; Hilbert et al., (2000) assert that the lack of support received by the social workers and the theoretical ambiguity of family preservation becomes a limitation in the provision of services. Huntington (2014) argues that it is not possible to change all things around in a short period as services are provided for the short-term. Similarly, Kauffman, (2005) is of the view that the short-term crisis intervention model does not offer a sufficient amount of time needed to address the complex needs of the children and their families. Mosoma (2014) is also of the view that the limitation on family preservation is based on the unclear definition of the concept

of family preservation services, which potentially have a negative impact and create confusion among the implementers of the program. The shortage of social workers in rendering family preservation services has been identified as an added effect on the services and is regarded as a negative impact that hinders the prevention and early intervention services when providing family preservation (Strydom, 2010).

Arguably, the insufficiency of resources, such as vehicles that are not always available to do a home visit and monitor the improvement of the family's situation, has been identified by various studies as a challenge in ensuring that children are protected. Even when the cases of family preservation are reported, the shortage of staff hinders the enactment of responsive action, and children are continually maltreated due to the scarcity of resources, as a result of which these cases are not able to be investigated immediately and timeously (Ambrosino et al., 2015).

SECTION TWO

2.4.7. The changing nature of families in South Africa and risks for children

The common view is that the family's ability to care for and protect its vulnerable members, namely children, the elderly, and the ill, and to provide for the healthy development of children is challenged by these structural changes (Makiwane et al., 2017). The challenge is often the fact that single-parent families are more at-risk than their two-parent counterparts because of the unavailability of resources - which ultimately affects children. Other studies, however, find no significant differences for the goal pursuits of the youth that have been raised in single- or two-parent families (Carroll et al., 2001). In a country such as South Africa, where many people live in low socio-economic environments, young people are more inclined to pursue extrinsic goals and aspirations that ultimately have implications at different levels of society (Davids & Roman, 2013).

The family is one of the institutions, which have experienced various or numerous changes and challenges across the world which is in line with the ecological theory. An important environment has a tremendous influence on the child's well-being and development. In South Africa, the family structure has suffered damaging domination over an extended period (Makiwane et al., 2016). Considering that family preservation services target families, in this section, the nature and structure of families in South Africa that are often targeted as recipients

of services and the psycho-social and economic challenges often experienced by families is discussed for the benefit of clear understanding. This is followed by a discussion of the challenges that are often experienced by families and the risks these challenges pose for children. The last section discusses the relevance of family preservation incapacitating families to support their children.

In South Africa, there are innumerable factors that contribute to a reduction in fertility rates, change in nuptial patterns, urban migration, high unemployment, HIV and AIDS, and the growing acceptability of alternative forms of domestic partnerships. These have changed not only the extended family but also the nuclear form of the family (Makiwane et al., 2017). The circumstances that lead young people to grow up without parental supervision and the attendant social isolation that children endure is responsible for the loss of self-esteem and the resultant adoption of risky behaviour (Makiwane et al., 2017). The gamut of changes in politics and the socio-economic environment (including urbanization, industrialization, and modernization) in South Africa has led to changes in the structure, roles, and responsibilities of the family (Makiwane et al., 2017). Rabe & Naidoo (2015) and Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba (2016) argue that the legacy of disrupted family life in the country during the colonial and apartheid eras continues to fracture family life thus causing long-term negative effects on the responsibilities of caregivers to provide care for children

Roman et al., (2016) describe families as "societal groups that are related by blood (kinship)". These include adoption, foster care, or the ties of marriage including civil marriages, customary marriages, religious marriages, and domestic partnerships, and go beyond a particular physical residence. Poggenpoel et al., (2017) assert that the issue of family structures is not a South African issue as it has affected global family life and this has undergone many changes over the last few decades, whose influence is derived from various social and economic factors. Even though the structure, functioning, and process of families have changed over time, the family has nevertheless survived as the core unit of nurturing. South African families have been engaging in significant transformations in recent years, these have contributed to the changes in family structures. These changes in family structures have resulted in a mosaic type of family formation that has had an impact on family functions (Makiwane et al., 2017). Makiwane & Berry (2013) assert that these significant changes in South African families have been around for many years and have been brought about by globalization, modernization, migration, and

the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This situation has contributed to the transformation of family structure and family relations.

Davids et al., (2016) argue state that South African families have different types of family structures that adversely affect the functioning of the entire family. The changes that are brought by the family structures continue to fracture not only family life but also cause long-term effects on the responsibilities of caregivers that provide care for children (Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016). Makiwane et al., (2017) is of the view that these emerging and changes in the family structures produce family households that are not capable of supporting, caring, and protecting the family members under different circumstances, resulting in the poor wellbeing of the children. Thus, Davids et al., (2016) describe family structures as blended families, single-parent families, married or cohabiting parent families, extended families, and child-headed household families.

Makiwane et al., (2017) assert that there is an increase in the family formations, which are not necessarily associated with a nuclear family but are part of family structures, that have emerged and these family structures include single parent female-headed families, skipped-generational families, and child-headed families and growth in reconstituted families. Notably, single mothers and caregivers who are relatives and non-relatives, guardians, reconstituted families, same-sex partners, and polygamous relationships are part of the family mix in South Africa that contribute to the structures of family. Sewpaul & Pillay (2011) argue that there are many forms of family structures and these include skip-generation families, reconstituted families, childless families, non-marital cohabitation, child-headed families, and gay families. The reality that has been observed in families has been caused by the change in family structures. Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba (2016) argue that children raised in single-parent families have less parental observation and supervision than children who are reared by both parents' support families and the children in those single families are often considered at-risk. For example, when two-parent families have a higher socio-economic status they are seen as more 'attractive' as each member in the family brings his/her resources that are used together and, therefore, a more equitable division of labour exists within the household. This reality shows the risk and vulnerability that children and families experience due to family structures, which contribute to the functioning and the change in family roles.

Roman et al., (2016) also argue that the nuclear family does not accurately capture the typical South African family and this has been revealed in recent statistics to the effect that there is an increasing prevalence of South African children being raised by a mother in a single parent or lone-parent household, child-headed households, and children living in households with unemployed adults. The study conducted by Makiwane & Berry (2013) established that children who are raised by one-parent families are more likely to experience negative outcomes such as unacceptable behaviour compared to children raised by two-parent families. Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba (2016) give statistics of the family structures in South African which begins with the nuclear family (23%), one adult families (20%), three-generation families (16%), single parent (unmarried) families (11%), and single parent (absent spouse) families (4%). This shows a range of family structures and each family structure has its strengths and weaknesses. In the study conducted by Roman et al., (2016), 43.3% of the participants lived in a single-parent household with the father absent while 30.7% reported that even though fathers were present, they experience their absence. The current literature on family structure reveals that many households are headed by single parents where the father is absent. Madhavan et al., (2017) established that 82% of the children in South African live with their mothers while 55% live with their fathers. These statistics indicate the transformations in the families and family structures.

2.4.8. The relevance of family preservation services for families in South Africa

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and it is entitled to protection services by the members of society and the state (Law, 2013). Roman et al., (2016) classify families, as well as their functioning because there are stable families, unstable families that are most prone to be at risk and they are the ones that constantly need further support from social workers. Therefore, the family is the most important unit in the life of a child that should ensure that children's care and protection are always prioritized and not compromised. According to Domingos (2011), Maqoko (2006), and Richter (2004), assert that families experience a lot of challenges as a result of family structures that have broken down and that have contributed to children not being properly cared for and not well protected because the child plays a parental role to the other children and subsequently cared for their parents who are ill and that places children at imminent risk.

According to Law (2013), the Parliamentary liaison office considers families as the basic unit of society that performs essential duties in the caring and protection of children and this serves

as a resource for stability, continuity, and development. Families are experiencing multiple problems that have accumulated due to having no work, poor housing, having no qualifications, mental health problems, longstanding illness or disability, and low income (Knorth et al., 2015). If these problems persist in families, they contribute to an increased risk for neglect and abuse of children. Dale (2014) argues that poverty harms child-rearing because it results in children being ill-treated. Poverty increases because of employment, economic status, food security, and low income. Combrinck (2015) is of the view that the family is the primary context in which children develop and this is where they remain dependent on their families for most of their childhood years. It is, therefore, important to strengthen the family so that it can take care of and protect the children within its family. South African families are not different from other families across the globe in terms of the challenges, which consequently affect the family structures.

Most of the families in South Africa are experiencing a variety of problems that disintegrate family structures. Poverty, unemployment, crime, abuse, substance abuse, multiple death, and many other societal issues are some of the factors, which many families are exposed to. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) emphasize the fact that families in crisis struggle to function on their own due to challenging situations that endanger the well-being of the children. Due to a crisis, a family may be unable to meet the needs of its dependents thus making the children vulnerable to problems such as maltreatment and child abuse.

Combrinck (2015) describes families at risk as families that face threats from various negative forces in society and these families face the danger of disintegration. Families at risk tend to present with disunity, poor communication, interpersonal relationships, poor parenting skills, and parents with irresponsible behaviour that endangers their lives and those of the children. Combrinck (2015) emphasizes that these families at risk face the possibility of having their children being removed from their care based on the child being found in need of care and protection. Having children in need of care and protection has challenged the state and service providers to assess the services they provide and find ways on how best they can respond to the challenges facing our country.

Giese (2008) argues that the widespread poverty and unemployment impact in many ways on the family's capacity to care for the children because the historical inequalities in investments, education, health care, and basic infrastructure have contributed to poor quality services and

persistent backlogs in historically disadvantaged areas. Amoateng & Richter (2007) argue that the institution of the family is essentially multi-dimensional in that it affects, and is affected by the various social, economic, cultural, and political institutions, which together form the social structure of any society. Thus, changes in the structure and functions of the family are fundamentally occasioned by changes in other institutions in the family environment.

Roman et al., (2016) assert that South African families experience many unique circumstances that affect not only their family structure but also extend to the socioeconomic and relational dimensions of the families. Under-resourced environments may be less equipped to respond to the needs of families and the factors experienced by families may range from poverty, substance abuse, unemployment, crime, violence breakdown of communication, and other social issues that affect families and children. Many children in South Africa are experiencing child abuse, neglect and HIV/AIDS, abandonment, parents' incapacity to look after them, relationship problems in the family, and problems and difficulties of the child (Potgieter & Hoosain, 2018).

In South Africa, many children are reared in families comprising different and complex compositions due to factors such as poverty, divorce, violence, unemployment, death, and diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Poggenpoel et al, 2017). The study revealed that at least 55 percent of children have been physically abused by caregivers, teachers, or relatives. Notably, from 35 to 45 percent have witnessed domestic violence and corporal punishment remains widespread with nearly 58 percent of the parents guilty of using physical punishment and 39 percent using the belt or stick. This shows that children are still not protected either within their families or community or even at schools (Lake & Jamieson, 2016).

Most of the violence against children remains hidden and unreported as it mostly occurs in the home where children are relatively powerless and dependent on adult support. Corporal punishment and intimate partner violence are widely tolerated and in cases of sexual abuse, children are often groomed and or threatened by the perpetrator. The family may blame the child and side with the perpetrator. Unsurprisingly, children often choose to remain silent, as they fear intimidation and not being taken seriously (Lake & Jamieson, 2016). Jamieson et al., (2017) report that in South Africa, children experience a high level of abuse and neglect in their homes, schools, and communities, and only a small proportion of abuse is reported.

Furthermore, there is a lack of therapeutic support services and that has increased risk and trauma to children because children are exposed to ongoing risk. Most of the risks that children experience are mostly in their own homes and younger children especially are most likely to be abused by a relative or someone they know (80%). Furthermore, families frequently protect perpetrators, leaving children at risk of further abuse. Considering the range of economic, social, and psychological challenges facing most families and children in South Africa, family preservation services may be useful in strengthening the ability of families to cope with these diverse challenges and to minimize risks to children.

2.5. IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY PRESERVATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Family preservation services are necessary for families towards realizing the need to care and protect their children who are at imminent risk of removal. To improve family preservation provided to families, Mosoma & Spies (2016) argue that the consideration of reducing caseloads of social workers rendering family preservation would enable them to prioritize the services. It is further argued that continuous training on an annual basis would enhance the implementers of family preservation with new information. Strydom (2010) asserts that the developmental social work services focus on preventative family preservation services. Therefore, a smaller number of cases and more staff allocated to implement family preservation would enable workers to plan and execute the services effectively. Strydom et al., (2017) and Strydom (2012) concur that social workers and social work students should be trained on family preservation at the university level as well as for in-service training at the welfare organizational level to acquire knowledge and skills on implementing family preservation.

The availability of resources such as vehicles, financial support, human resources would improve the implementation of family preservation services (Strydom, 2010; Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015). Adding to that, Nhedzi & Makofane emphasize that working together as different professionals in the protection services can improve and yield best results in the implementation of family preservation that is so desperately needed to ensure the protection of children within families and in the community at large. It is thus contended that social workers should enhance collaboration with the police, health professionals, policymakers, teachers, and other related service providers to ensure that family preservation services are rendered effectively to children and families. However, Strydom (2012) asserts that para-professionals

(Child and Youth Care Workers) should be trained to provide family preservation as they can add value in supporting families and children by, for example, rendering home visit programs.

2.6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, national and international literature has been reviewed to shed light on family preservation as a unique intervention for children who are at imminent risk of removal. The definition of the family preservation program and how it is implemented in South Africa and other countries have been discussed and a clear description of the program has been rendered. To this end, various legislative frameworks that underpin family preservation were reviewed. The challenges that hinder the effective implementation of family preservation are construed to the role of the social worker. In this section, a review of literature relating to the family structure of the South African families which has changed immensely was discussed. Moreover, the relevance of family preservation in enhancing the ability of families to care for vulnerable children was discussed. (With the inclusion of improving the family preservation services in South Africa)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research process that was undertaken and the research methods that were utilized in this study on the implementation of family preservation services. The researcher adopted the qualitative approach as a suitable research method to conduct this study to obtain the much sought and needed information. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to explore how the participants experienced, understood, perceived, and conceptualized family preservations program from their subjective point of view. The aim of the study, therefore, was to explore the implementation gaps that deter the effective provision of family preservation services, specifically in the Amajuba District Municipality. The research questions as well as the objectives of the study guided in understanding the phenomenon that was being investigated. Therefore, this chapter describes the population, process of sampling, and the criteria for inclusion of participants in the study. The research instruments and methods of data collection that were used for this study are discussed. The chapter also describes the data analysis process using Braun & Clarke 's (2006) steps on thematic analysis. Thus, this chapter concludes with the description of not only how ethical issues were addressed during the study but also how the trustworthiness of the study was ensured.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the general strategy that outlines how the study is to be conducted and it helps to identify the methods to be followed in collecting information from the participants (Taylor, Bogdan & De Vault, 2016; Bhaskar & Manjuladevi, 2016; Long, 2014). Furthermore, Mafuwane (2011) and Togia & Malliari (2017) assert that research methodology provides a specific direction for procedures in research design and how the research inquiry should proceed from stage one right to the end of the research. The research methodology sets the directions of the study and the possible implications that might erupt during the study (Long, 2014; Ahmed, Opoku &Aziz, 2016). The data analysis process, which is part of the research methodology, involves identifying the common patterns within the data and assist in making interpretations of the meaning of the data possible (Kalini & Kobziev, 2016; Togia & Malliaria, 2017). Therefore, the research methodology is a template, which

guides the identification of the problem, which has to be investigated to realize the set of objectives of the research study (Kilani & Kobziev, 2016). In this study, a qualitative research method was used to answer the questions about the experiences, meanings, and perspectives most often from the standpoint of the participants who investigate beliefs, attitudes, and concepts of normative behaviour, semi-structured interviews to seek views and information that focus on the topic chosen which is an implementation of family preservation services (Hammarberg, Kirkman & de Lacey, 2016)

3.3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The Department of Social Development in KwaZulu-Natal and Newcastle Child Welfare granted permission to the researcher to conduct a study on the implementation of family preservation services to the social workers who are in their employment within Amajuba District Municipality. Then, the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee permitted on to proceed with research, on a chosen topic. The full approval on Ethical Clearance was granted to the researcher to proceed with the research process, Protocol Reference number HSS/1520/017M. The researcher began the process of recruiting the participants where he fully explained the procedures and the purpose of the study to all participants who agreed to participate in the research and the procedure that would be followed in conducting the research.

The participants were informed that their participation in the study is voluntary, meaning that they are not forced or obliged to participate. Should they want to leave at any time during an investigation, they could freely withdraw from the study at any time they want to do so. The participants who participated in the study were allowed to sign the informed consent forms after it was clearly explained to them that if they agree they would sign that form. The study proceeded with the participants who, willingly, signed the informed consent form.

3.4. RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study was guided by a wider research paradigm encompassing perception, beliefs, and awareness of different theories and practices used to carry out scientific research (Zukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitiene, 2018). The various paradigms are characterized by ontological, epistemological, and methodological differences in their approaches to conceptualizing and conducting research and in their contribution towards disciplinary knowledge construction

(Bunniss & Kelly, 2010). Kuvunja & Kuyini (2017) assert that a research paradigm is a set of shared beliefs that inform the meaning or interpretation of research data that can determine the research methods to be used and how the results of the study are to be analyzed. According to Khaldi (2017), a research paradigm determines the formulation of the problem, following the right sampling procedure, which is the research methodology that should be followed appropriately including the method of data collection and procedure that should be used for analyzing the data collected. This study focused on interpretivism since there is a connection between the interpretivists' paradigm and the qualitative methodological approach as a means of collecting data. Shah & Al-Bargi (2013) describe the interpretive methodology as an approach that seeks to understand the phenomena of the individuals' perspective and thus investigates interaction among the individuals.

Therefore, researchers who use the interpretive paradigm and qualitative methods often seek experiences, understandings, and perceptions of the individuals for their data to uncover reality rather than to rely on statistics (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). O'Neil & Koekermoer (2016) and Thanh & Thanh (2015) refer to the term research paradigm as it is used to denote a particular worldview that constitutes the study's values, beliefs, and methodological assumptions. while Kuvunja & Kuyini (2017) stress that paradigm constitutes meaning embedded in data and it is a system that guides the investigator. Makombe (2017) argues that qualitative research is both a set of methods for gathering data, analyzing data, and worldview or paradigm about the nature of knowledge and inquiry. The researcher adopted this research paradigm of qualitative and interpretivism for understanding the meaning of the experiences of social workers who are providing family preservation. Furthermore, Pulla & Carter (2018) add that using a qualitative and interpretivism approach involves an attempt to develop an in-depth subjective understanding of people's lives, while it requires the researcher to observe the phenomenon and the interpretations of the meanings and interactions.

3.5. RESEARCH APPROACH

Tappen (2011) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding the phenomenon, ideas, or situation based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem that exist. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of participants or informants and conducts the study in a natural setting. Most social workers are mandated to provide family preservation programs to all families and children at risk and in crisis, therefore a qualitative research approach was

adopted for this specific reason to understand the experience and meanings attached to the process of implementing family preservation services. Grossoehme (2014) and Hammarberg et al., (2016) state that qualitative research is the systemic collection of data, organization, and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or conversation.

This approach is used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves in their natural context (Grossoehme, 2014). Furthermore, the qualitative approach is an emergent, inductive, interpretive, and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations, and processes in their natural settings to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach their experiences of the world (Sofocleous, 2016 and Mohajan, 2018). Hence, the qualitative approach does not focus on a single method to understand the experiences of people but it draws on philosophical ideas in phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics, and other traditions to support the attention on quality rather than quantity (Yilmaz, 2013). Qualitative researchers understand that qualitative research is the systemic inquiry into social phenomena in a natural setting on how people are experiencing aspects of their lives, how individuals and or other groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships (Guest et al, 2013, Teherani et al, 2015 and Mohajan, 2018).

In adopting a qualitative research approach in collecting data from the participants, the researcher could use in-depth interviews which involve the posing of open-ended questions and follow-up probes designed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge about the phenomenon (Rosenthal (2016). Bengtsson (2016) emphasizes that qualitative research contributes to an understanding of the human condition in a different context and of a perceived situation, deals with some interpretation of the data.

The qualitative research approach is natural and complex and multiple methods are used focusing on collecting and interpreting data to conclude based on observation as the researcher observes, interviews, summarises, describes, analyses, and interprets phenomena in their real dimension or their real-world (Bisias & Pollalis, 2018). Khaldi (2017) defines the qualitative research approach as a means of exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures. Data typically collected in the participant's' setting, data analysis

inductively building from the particulars to the general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The qualitative research approach is considered the most appropriate approach when information is required directly from those experiencing the phenomenon under investigation and thus explore to seek more knowledge about the phenomenon (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Bradshaw, Atkinson & Doody, 2017).

3.6. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design can be described as an overall plan for a study in answering the research questions or testing the research hypothesis by providing the overall framework in the collection of data and this can also be thought of as the logic or master plan of research that throws light on how the research study is to be conducted for purposes of securing the required information (Mafuwane, 2011; Polit & Beck, 2012). Hence, Grant & Osanloo (2014) assert that research design is like a blueprint (plan) which provides direction on how the data would be collected from the participants. Makombe (2017) indicates that research design provides an instrument or a combination of instruments by which the research will be conducted. This study, therefore, adopted the explorative and descriptive research design for the dearth of basic information and understanding of the impact of how social workers implement family preservation services to children in need of care and protection, more specifically by social workers working in Amajuba District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

The other reason, the researcher followed a descriptive and explorative design was to understand how social workers implement family preservation services. This was appropriate for this study to allow the social workers to share the essential information regarding their experiences and perceptions including the challenges they encounter in practice. The description design of the study allowed the researchers to describe in detail the process of implementation and the specific services of family preservation programs. Polit & Beck (2012) indicate that description design is conducted in a situation where a researcher needs to observe, describe, and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs. Because of this, the researcher decided to follow this design to probe the deeper meaning of experiences and how the social workers interpret the situation as it has been unfolding.

The explorative design allowed exploring the gaps and what can be done to improve the implementation of family preservation services. According to De Vos et al (2011), exploratory research is conducted to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community, or individual

when little or no information is known in this area of the research study. In this research study the perceptions, experiences of social workers regarding the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection were explored to get more information about how have they been experiencing their service delivery in working with families and children in Amajuba District Municipality.

3.7. POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.7.1. Population

Alvi (2016) defines a population as a target group that refers to all the members who meet the particular criterion specified for a research investigation. The population is, therefore, defined as a group of people who share a common character, a condition, or a profession usually the social workers, for example as the study is focusing on them (Elfil & Negida, 2017). Then, the population for this study was social workers who were targeted to participate as they were the appropriate population to recruit from because they are responsible for the implementation of family preservation services.

3.7.2. Sample and sampling techniques.

Therefore, sampling is defined as the process of selecting or searching participants who can provide rich data of the phenomenon of interest for situations, the context in particular for the implementation of family preservation services (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon, (2015) concur that sampling is "the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population to determine parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Additionally, Creswell (2007) describes purposive sampling as the selection of the suitable participants and sites for a study because they could purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem, and Gentles et al., (2015) argue that the participants are carefully selected based on their knowledge and verbal eloquence to describe a group or culture to which they belong. Furthermore, the anticipated richness and relevance of the information to be obtained with the study's research questions and objectives, which makes purposive sampling appropriate for this study. In this study, then, purposive sampling was followed for the simple reason that it is a relevant method of sampling the participants where the researcher intentionally and deliberately selected suitable participants to include them in the study based on their ability, knowledge, and experiences that would provide necessary data (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015).

The reason again for choosing this sampling method was also based on seeking the relevant knowledge of the policies that guide the implementation of family preservation services because they have met the criteria of inclusion in the research study. Therefore, by their virtue of experiences in social work, the researcher was convinced that the relevant data on the implementation of family preservation services would inform the entire research study. Thus, Anderson (2010) emphasizes that the number of years must be considered in selecting participants for a reason that they will be able to give a better understanding of what is being investigated and that would add value to the study and get the new information on how family preservation services could be improved. Bengtsson (2016) emphasis that the sample size should be determined based on informational needs or required (data) so that the research questions can be answered honestly with sufficient information and confidence regarding the phenomenon.

To access the appropriate sample, the researcher requested permission by writing a letter to the District manager of the Amajuba District of Social Development and another letter to Non-Governmental Organisations within the Amajuba District Municipality. After the permission was granted to the researcher, the researcher contacted the potential participants and requested a meeting with them. In the meeting schedule with social workers, the aims of the study were shared and discussed in detail and consent forms were discussed with participating social workers to make an informed decision. During the selection process, the researcher worked in conjunction with the District Director, office managers, and supervisors from different local services offices to assist the researcher in choosing suitable or appropriate participants. Therefore, the researcher identified six local service offices from DSD and one from the Child Welfare office in Amajuba District Municipality (DM) and each office, either one or two social workers were recruited, depending on the availability of the social workers and willingness to participate in the study, as participation was voluntary. One social worker represented the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO).

Thus, Austin & Sutton (2014) note that the selection should not only consider the knowledge and experiences for the richness of the data but also to take into account that the participants would be able to express themselves openly and without constraint or fear. This would assist to interpret and explain why, what the participants have said, and that will benefit the research study. Omair (2014) confirms that participants should have a similar understanding and information that demonstrate the necessary knowledge of the phenomenon, which would

inform the results of the study. The author argues that if the participants are not suitably selected, it will adversely affect the outcome of the research study. Therefore, it is important to have participants with relevant understanding, which is solely base on responding to the research questions and objectives. Notably, Suresh, Thomas & Suresh (2011) emphasize that the participants chosen should assist the researcher to learn from their own experiences about the phenomenon under study. Therefore, the researcher particularly selected a suitable number of registered social workers who have been in social work service for a minimum of three years and who have worked with children and families. Then, after following the correct procedure and the process, ten (10) participants were included and eventually agreed or decided to participate in the research study.

3.8. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data collection in qualitative research is unstructured and flexible interviews while engaging the participants with in-depth open-ended questions (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Sergeant (2012) argues that interviews are the most commonly used method in qualitative research, which is based on individuals or groups. The researcher used semi-structured interviews for this research study to ensure that the participants can share their experiences and the researcher can probe for relevant information. Clifford et al., (2010) define a semi-structured interview as a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in the context of conversations manner offering the participants the chance to explore the issues they feel are important.

The communication skills such as active listening, probing, paraphrasing, and encouraging, assisted the researcher to ask participants the appropriate questions that allowed them to share more information about their experiences of implementing family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. Sutton & Austin (2015) suggest that during data collection, the researcher can take notes by hand, or video recording, or audiotape and must transcribe them, then the recording verbatim before data analysis. Before the audiotape recording was done, each participant was checked if she/he still grant permission to audio record the interview. Then the researcher continued with the audio recording of the interview to keep the capturing information as it would be easy to remember, transcribe, and from the recording, the transcripts were written for analyzing the data later. Zakaria, Must'amal, Amin & Saleh (2016) assert that most of the qualitative interviews or observation during the data

collection phase comprise audio recording, and data are usually transcribed into a written form for further analysis.

During the data collection process, the interviews were audio-recorded to capture all information that was shared by the participants. The researcher began interviews using open-ended questions prepared by the researcher and further probe the participants if there was a need to gather more information. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed after each session for data analysis at a later stage as it is an essential aspect of the in-depth qualitative research process and subsequently it is a means of improving the rigour of qualitative research (2017). The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to an hour depending on the information collected and that helped the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions and motivations of implementing family preservation services.

Therefore, a researcher needs to conduct a research study where people experience their lives and given the choice of the most appropriate natural setting in which they would feel comfortable and safe to share information (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa & Varpio, 2015). Then, the researcher gave them the option of choosing the best place where the interview could take place, thus, allowing participants to choose the places convenient, comfortable for them, and the times that suited them where we could meet for interviews.

Additionally, DeJonckheere & Vaughn (2019) indicate that semi-structured interviews assist the participants to open up meaningful information on how they understand the life experiences of implementing family preservation from their perspectives and what the phenomenon means to them. Arguably, Yamagata-Lynch, (2010) points out that those interviews are the tools (instruments) that help the researcher to identify how participants view and understand their own experiences, particularly during the data collection. However, Belotto (2018) mentions that this is the opportunity for the researcher to obtain relevant information and responses about the research questions and the study as a whole while using the follow-up questions where necessary. Because of that, Al Kilani & Kobziev (2016) indicate that semi-structured interviews allow a researcher to draw more significant and useful information, which detailed their knowledge of how the participants identify the existing procedural gaps within the implementation of family preservation services.

Consequently, the interviews are conducted in a way that participants are allowed to freely share their opinions and understanding so that the researcher has a better understanding of how the participants perceive the content of family preservation. The majority of the participants were so willing and I did not have any trouble in conducting the research, except that sometimes the appointments were not honored due to other unforeseen circumstances that were beyond the participants' control. Therefore, the researcher understood those challenges as he prepared himself beforehand that such challenges may happen during the data collection.

3.9. METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Wong (2008) defines data analysis in qualitative research as the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, observation notes, or other non-textual materials that the researcher accumulates to increase the understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher reduces a large amount of qualitative data collected from the participants into a smaller fragment breaking them down by searching the codes and categories that help to identify important which eventually draws meaning that make sense from that particular accumulated data. Additionally, Araki (2017) asserts that during this process of data analysis possible themes and subthemes are emerging and developing while the process assists in understanding the raw information by clustering, searching, and arranging the qualitative data for making a connection between the themes and subthemes and eventually yield the outcome of the study after all information is refined.

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Erlingsson & Brysiewcz (2017) concur that the researcher initially transforms a large amount of transcribed interview texts into a systematic summary of key results to form categories and themes that would bring meanings into a raw data. During the process of analyzing data, codes may appear repeatedly in emerging patterns, which may give rise to categories (Theron, 2015). By incorporating more cycles into the coding process, richer meaning, categories, themes, and concepts can be generated from the data. Castleberry & Nolen (2018) emphasize that once data has been reassembled through coding, the researcher is then able to extract excerpts from the data and view them about and in concert with each other. In so doing, it allows the researcher to begin focusing on interpreting what is going on within and across varied experiences, beliefs, and histories and thus begin to identify thematic patterns across the data. Themes capture the essence of the phenomenon under investigation concerning research questions and the purpose of the study. Thus, Belotto (2018) focuses on the interpretation of data about how those emerging themes address the research questions and consequently add value to the study. This

study used thematic analysis as advocated for by Braun & Clarke (2006). The following six phases provide the framework utilized in conducting this data analysis.

3.9.1. Phase one: Familiarizing myself with the data

This phase of data analysis focuses on reading and re-reading of the data, making notes of the important information about the data. The researcher transcribed all the participants' interviews that were recorded during the interview process and captured all information that was shared by the participants during this phase. Therefore, this process enabled the researcher to capture all important points that relate to the research questions and research objectives. The researcher did not only read and re-read the transcripts but also listened to the audio recorded data carefully. By so doing, he went back to the original data, with a view to sought further clarification when it was relevant.

3.9.2. Phase two: Generating initial codes

This phase focuses on reducing the data and the production of initial codes. Therefore, the researcher in this phase coded interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, collating data that is relevant to each code. During this phase, the researcher coded the data into meaningful and more manageable texts from the transcripts. This was the initial stage of analysis which was later to be used to develop the themes for data analysis. Some of the initial codes for this study were:

(a). Keep families together
(b). Prevention programs
(c). Early intervention programs
(d). Removal
(e). Children
(f). Reunification
(g). Protection
(h). Legislations and policies
(i). Support for families
(j). Poverty
(k). Unemployment

3.9.3. Phase three: Searching for themes.

This phase focuses on collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. This is mainly the stage where a repeated reading of the data which involves reading the whole data before coding. This leads to searching for meaning and ultimately to identify possible patterns. The researcher in this analysis phase sorted the codes to identify the themes that were manifested from the data. The researcher drafted all the codes and themes that were initial collated and meaningful to develop the themes that were going to be used in the final analysis based on the data. During this process of searching for themes, the researcher wrote down all different codes into themes to think about how codes and themes were related to each other for coming with main themes and sub-themes. It enables the researcher to begin having a sense of the importance of each theme in analyzing the data. Subsequently, helped the researcher to combine the themes that were giving similar findings.

3.9.4. Phase four: Reviewing themes and generating a map for analysis

This is the phase where checking is taking place if the themes work to the coded extracts and entire data sets that generate a thematic map of the analysis. Then, the phase focuses on refining the draft themes identified in phase three using a two-level analysis of the codes. The first level of this phase involved reading through codes for each theme and determined if a coherent pattern was developed. When the researcher realized that the coherent pattern was identified as essential and matching the themes relevant to the study, then the researcher proceeded to the second level of analysis, which was backward and forward. There were times when the codes did not match the theme that was emerging at the time of data analysis. Therefore, I had to find if the theme itself needed to be changed or the codes needed a re-arrangement. It was a tiring exercise to move to all themes and codes one by one and match them. To complete this process, I had to read it through again the entire data set to satisfy myself that the themes fit with the data. This was an opportunity for me to check if I have not missed any important and additional data that was needed to be coded accordingly.

3.9.5. Phase five: Defining and naming the themes and identifying subthemes:

This phase involves ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. The goal of this phase was to clearly define, what themes were and what they were not part of the themes. To meet this goal, the researcher focused on defining each theme, identifying the essence of the theme, and determining what aspect of the data and research questions the theme fits in.

3.9.6. Phase six: Writing the data analysis and linking the data to other research findings:

This is the final phase of the data analysis, which focuses on analysing the data and writing a narrative about the data that goes beyond describing the data. This process required an extensive literature review to compare and link the research findings to the available literature.

3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.10.1. Ethics

The researcher requested permission of conducting a research study from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal granted ethical clearance for the research study to commence. Vanclay, Baines & Taylor (2013) confirm that research institutions should institute guidelines for research to maintain a good professional practice that would mean complying with ethical research as generally understood. Ethical considerations are the basis of conducting, collecting data, and analyzing the set principles, norms, and standards that guide the research process. The researcher ensured that ethics remained important and a top priority throughout the research. According to De Vos et al (2011), ethics are the preferences that influence the behavior in human relations that obligate the researcher to conform to a code of principles, the rules of conduct, and the responsibility, the accountability of the researcher, and the standards of a given profession.

This study was guided by the understanding and knowledge that the participants have to be protected in all forms by following the professional code of conduct and adhering to the guidelines provided by the Ethical Clearance Committee. As a result of that, none of the participants complained about the unethical practices of the researcher. Ketefian (2015) states that ethical principles are developed to focus on guidelines that ensure that the research participants are protected from harm, whether physical, mental, or social nature. Then, De Vos et al (2011) defines ethics as a set of moral principles that offers rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards the participants and other people involved in the research process. Vanclay et al., (2013) indicate that ethics stipulates morally acceptable behavior by individuals within an organization or profession. The ethical issues, which are discussed below, were adhered to during the research study.

3.10.2. Confidentiality

The researcher has an ethical responsibility to protect the information given to him or her by the participants. Turcotte-Tremblay & Mc Sween-Cadieux (2018) emphasize that the ethical

duty of confidentiality is that the researcher is obligated to safeguard the entrusted information given to him or her by the participants. Confidentiality can be viewed as a continuation of privacy, which refers to agreements between persons that limit others' access to private information (De Vos et al, 2011). Confidentiality means the protection of the participant's information by ensuring anonymity and privacy (Brink, 2009). According to Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles (2006), they outlined the following to assist the researcher to maintain confidentiality:

(a) Maintaining confidentiality of data/records: ensuring the separation of data from identifiable individuals and storing the code linking data to individuals securely.
(b) Ensuring those who have access to the data maintain confidentiality (e.g., the research team, the person who transcribes the data).
(c) Not discussing the issues arising from an individual interview with others in ways that might identify an individual.
(d) Not disclosing what an individual has said in an interview.
(e) Anonymizing individuals and/or places in the dissemination of the study to protect their identity.

The researcher ensured that the interview transcript and other relevant information shared by the participants were locked in a cupboard where no other person had any access to that information. This was done to protect the participants and whoever is associated with them. The names of the participants were not mentioned to any or written anywhere. The researcher used the code to identify the participants. To ensure anonymity, the names of the participants were not used; instead, pseudonyms were created for each participant.

3.10.3. Informed Consent

The informed consent form was read to each participant before the interview commenced to ensure that each participant understands clearly the information contained in the informed consent form and what the participants should expect from the process of the research study. Sentelli, Kantor, Grilo, Speizer, Lindberg, Heitel & Ott, (2017) describe informed consent as a principle of respect for the person and is an essential practice in conducting research. The authors further emphasize that informed consent entails providing information, assessing comprehension of the information provided, and ensuring the consent is voluntary and not coerced by circumstances or by the researchers.

Manti & Licari (2018) remind the researcher that it is important to consider the language when developing informed consent. Both authors suggest that informed consent must be written in language easily understood by the participants. Manti & Licari (2018) recommend that the participants be given sufficient time to consider participation by going through the whole informed consent before making a decision. All participants were able to read and understand English, however, where they reported a lack of clarity of the informed consent, the researcher further clarified those areas and gave more explanation so that they could make well-informed decisions. The participants who met the criteria for inclusion in the research study were individually informed about the purpose of the study, its research questions, and the objectives of the research study.

After being informed, they agreed that they would be available to participate in the research. Then, the researcher carefully explained each line contained in the consent forms so that if the participants opt to withdraw from the initial agreement, they can do so freely. If there was uncertainty or clarity needed in their language, the researcher translated that information to them for their better understanding. Before the signing of the informed consent, prospective participants were given the forms to familiarize themselves with the research content and this process was not rushed. De Vos et al (2011) implies that informed consent should have all necessary information regarding participation in the investigation process.

3.10.4. Management of the information

Management of information means that the information given to the researcher is properly or safely kept and used where necessary. In managing the information, the researcher ensured that tapes, notes, and transcripts of recordings are kept secure at all times, this will mean that there was a cabinet that the researcher used to store information. The cabinet stored all the information about the participants and this is an important tool for the qualitative researcher where only the researcher and supervisor have access to the information. The names of the participants were anonymized by replacing them with ascending code numbers in the order of the initial interviews for protecting them from any other person to identify them that they were participating in the study. The pieces of information were hidden to other people and only known to the researcher and the supervisor and their identification that associates them with the study are not written anywhere for the protection of their rights and privacy. The researcher always ensured that people like the researcher's supervisor and transcriber who had access to the data were not informed about the names of the participants.

3.11. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA

Trustworthiness in the process of verifying the data is important in contributing to the truth value of the findings. Brandon & Connolly (2016) assert that trustworthiness or rigor of the refers to the degree of confidence that the data has, the interpretations and methods that have been utilized in ensuring that the study is of quality. Cypress (2017) describes trustworthiness as referring to quality, authenticity, and the truthfulness of findings of qualitative research that has always to be maintained to be trusted by the readers and have confidence in the results. The author, further indicates that the research process must be carried out correctly to have research that is trusted. The trustworthiness of the study was achieved through focussing and carefully considered the components of trustworthiness which ensured that the findings of the research study are the true reflection of what the participants shared. Here are the following elements of the trustworthiness of the qualitative study: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The aim was to ensure that a study is worthy to be read and considered by other readers.

3.11.1. Credibility

The researcher is presenting the credibility of the research study by discussing the phenomenon of what transpired in the data collection. Anney (2014) and Korstjens & Moser (2018) both assert that credibility is defined as the confidence that is placed in the truth of the research findings and what was said by the participants without adding any new information that is not known by the participants. Bengtsson (2016) emphasizes the credibility of the process of the study and how the data and analysis procedures are carried in ensuring that no relevant data is left out. The author mention that this can be achieved through involving participants and checking with them that it is the true reflection of what was collected during the data process. Therefore, prolonged engagement with the participants was held, where the relationship built on trust was established and a sensitive interviewing process was used.

Thomas & Magilvy (2011) describe a qualitative study as credible when it presents an accurate description or interpretation of human experience that people who also share the same experience would immediately recognize. The credibility of a study was done also done by member checking from the participants themselves during the interview process and after the interviews so that the participants recognize that the data collected and the interpretation of the

findings represent their experiences of implementing family preservation services to children in need of care and protection.

During the supervision sessions, the researcher and his supervisor constantly checked the themes and subthemes to verify if they were still relevant to the data that were emerged. Thereafter, there was an agreement that they were relevant to the data collected and that the findings are the true reflection of the perceptions and the experiences of the participants. Therefore, the findings of this research study are discussed and presented in the following chapters, which is chapter four, and five that confirm what transpired in the data collection and data analysis.

3.11.2. Transferability

Different authors describe transferability as the degree to which the results of qualitative research could be transferred to other contexts or settings with the other participants. The researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through thick descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Anney, 2014, Bengtsson, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Hammargerg et al., (2016) argue that transferability of the research findings is the criterion used for evaluating external validity and the study must be considered to meet the criteria of transferability whether its findings can fit into contexts outside the situation and then that the other researchers view the findings as meaningful and applicable in their own experiences. In line with the recommendations stated above, in the findings chapter, quotations from the interviews with different participants have been used. The use of these quotations, which represent the participant's narratives to a large degree, authenticate the researcher's conclusions. Moreover, to ensure transferability in this study, in-depth descriptions of the sample being studied, and the demographic characteristics of the participants are presented. The geographical boundary of the study is described fully. This is to ensure that the interpretation of the findings is within its relevant context.

3.11.3. Dependability

Bengtsson (2016) states that dependability in the qualitative study refers to the stability, that is, the extent to which the data change over time and the alterations made in the researcher's decisions during the analysing procedure. Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research

process (Moon et al., 2016). However, Korstjens & Moser (2017) assert that dependability refers to the stability of the findings that involve the participant's evaluation of the findings, interpretations, and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from the participants of the study. Given the fact that the study was on a qualitative approach, the researcher ensured that all the research findings were consistent with the purpose of the study by giving a detailed description of the research design and its implementation, including the analysis process to enable the possible repeat of the study and research dependability.

3.11.4. Confirmability

Bengtsson (2016) states that confirmability is largely an issue of presentation and it refers to the objectivity or neutrality of the data. Both Anney (2014) and Korstjens & Moser (2018) argue that confirmability is the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers. However, they added their point of argument that confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination but derived from the data itself. Moon et al (2016) indicated that to achieve confirmability, researchers must demonstrate that the results are linked to the conclusions in a way that can be followed and, as a process, replicated. Its relevance to an application similar to credibility. Conformability relates to the accuracy or genuine reflections of the participants' perspectives without the researcher's views interfering with findings (Hays et al., 2016).

The researcher made field notes to reflect on the position and the feelings as a researcher and as a social work manager to monitor my thoughts, experience, and personal convictions that could influence the study. This helped the researcher to identify any misconceptions that might arise. As a researcher, having a basic understanding of the family preservation program, I was mindful of my knowledge in the program.

3.14. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the methodology that was used to conduct this study. The focus was on the qualitative research approach since it was considered the relevant approach for interviewing the participants to share their lived experience of implementing family preservation services to children and their families who are at risk of removal. This approach enabled the researcher to gain more understanding of the challenges that social workers face in rendering these services.

During the data analysis, the researcher became aware of the need to strengthen the program. The chapter, therefore, began with the description of the methodology and the description of the research design used in the study. The issue of trustworthiness was considered essential in the research process as it is considered critical in the data collection procedure. The ethical considerations were presented in this study as the most critical issues in the research process. The following chapter, therefore, presents the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW/ INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the questions and objectives of the study on the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection within the context of KwaZulu-Natal. A qualitative approach was used to collect data from social workers who are mandated to implement family preservation services to families and children. In-depth interviews were conducted to ascertain the perceptions of social workers regarding the prevention and early intervention services offered to children who are not only in need of care and protection but also at imminent risk of being removed from their families. An interview guide was developed and used to direct the interviews. This chapter, therefore, analyses the findings whose discussion is presented in the form of themes and subthemes aligned to the research questions and objectives of the study.

The chapter begins by presenting detailed demographic profiles of the social workers who participated in the study. A summary of their ages, gender, qualifications, years of experience, and their roles in the provision of family preservation services is included in the profile. Most of the participants in this study were black South Africa from the Zulu speaking background and one participant was an Indian. The age group of the participants were ranging between 28 years and 55 years of age and has been in practice as social workers for more than 5 years. The mean age of all the participants together who participated in the study was 35.6 years. Eight of the participants were females and two were males and this is in line with the general profile of the social work profession which is dominated by females. All the participants that were interviewed indicated that they love to implement family preservation services and expressed the need to be given the opportunity to be trained so that they can be capacitated to provide family preservation effectively.

These profiles are useful because they give insights into the participants, experiences in family preservation services**.** I then proceeded to discuss the findings under four broad objectives determined by the following themes, namely: Professional knowledge and practice philosophy of family preservation knowledge and practice philosophy, Implementation of family preservation services, Organisational deficiencies in the implementation of family preservation

services, and Strategies to improve the implementation of family preservation as a social worker myself, a section on self-reflexivity is included in the chapter.

4.2. Participants profiles

A total number of ten (10) participants who are registered social workers with the council of social work profession were interviewed for data collection purposes. All the participants obtained a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work before commencing practice as social service professionals or practitioners. Out of the ten participants, the Non-Government Organisation employed one, and nine were in the employment of the Department of Social Development. The identities of the participants in this profile have been kept confidential for ethical considerations. They are all practicing social workers in the Amajuba District Municipality with family preservation experience of at least three years and above, in line with the inclusion criteria for the study. For this presentation, alphanumerical symbols representing race, gender, and sequence of the interview are used to identify each participant (see Table 4.1). For example, the two African male participants are referred to as AF1 and AM2.

Table 4.1: Summary of the participants' profiles

Participant	Age	Gender	Time in Social work Practice	Time in Family Preservation Practice	Responsibility
AF1	31	Female	9 years	9 years	Coordinator and acting Supervisor
IF	55	Female	32 years	5 years	Field Social Worker
AM1	35	Male	10 years	8 years	Field Social Worker
AF2	30	Female	8 years	8 years	Field Social Worker
AF3	30	Female	7 years	7 years	Field Social Worker
AF4	29	Female	7 years	7 years	Field Social Worker and Family Coordinator
AF5	28	Female	5 years	5 years	Field Social Worker
AF6	38	Female	9 years	9 years	Field Social Worker and Coordinator on Families

| AM2 | 40 | Male | 6 years | 6 years | Field Social Worker |
| AF7 | 40 | Female | 9 years | 9 years | Field Social Worker and Coordinator on Families |

African Female Participant 1

This is an African female social worker aged 31 years who joined the Department of Social Development in 2009. During this period of nine years in practice as a social worker, she has been relieving in different social development offices for a couple of months due to the need in those offices. Since then, she has been involved in different programs, for example, foster care, services to children and families, services to an older person, services to people living with disabilities, services to people infected and affected by HIV/ AIDS, social behaviour change and restorative services. She was allocated a municipal ward where she offered services to the programs mentioned above. She was offered a position of coordinating services to children and families where she compiled monthly reports for services in children and families. Currently, she is an acting supervisor with no ward allocated to her.

Indian Female Participant 2

The second participant is a female person 55 years of age. She has been in practice as a social worker for the past 32 years in different organizations. In her first position as a social worker, the then Indian Child Welfare Pietermaritzburg employed her for one year. Then, later the Newcastle Child Welfare employed her for eleven and a half years, and then she stayed at home looking after their children after getting married. She went back to Pietermaritzburg Child and Family Welfare Society and worked there for ten years. After Pietermaritzburg, she came back to Newcastle and she has been there for eleven and a half years since then. She is working in all the wards that are not serviced by the Department of Social Development focusing on the wards that are in Newcastle Town and two wards outside Newcastle. The services that she offers as a social worker are therapeutic, services to children and families, services to older persons, restorative services, social behaviour change, foster care, HIV/AIDS services, and services to people living with disabilities. She is practicing as a field social worker with eight years' experience in family preservation.

African Male Participant 3

This is a male social worker, aged 35 years. He joined the Department of Social Development in 2008. He is currently serving as a social worker responsible for foster care services, services to children and families, restorative services, social behaviour change services, services to older persons, services to people living with disabilities, and HIV/Aids services. He is allocated one ward where he offers all the required social work services for that ward. He has been in the employment of the Department of Social Development for almost ten years and he has been servicing families and children.

African Female Participant 4

Participant number four is a female social worker aged 30 years. She joined the Department of Social Development in 2011. Since then, she has been practicing as a social worker and was allocated a Municipal ward to render social work services. In that ward that is allocated to her, she offers the following services, for example, services to children and families, foster care services, services to older persons, services to people living with disabilities, restorative services, social behaviour change, and HIV/Aids services. She is currently responsible for all the services in that ward as she is the only field social worker in that ward.

African Female Participant 5

This is a female respondent aged 30 years. She was employed by the Department of Social Development in 2012. She has been in the employment of the Department of Social Development for seven years and has been responsible for the following services, for example, services to children and families, services to older persons, services to people living with disabilities, social behaviour change services, HIV/Aids services, restorative services, and foster care services. She has been a field social worker and was allocated one ward which is geographically wider and populated with a high rate of unemployment and prevalent sexual abuse.

African Female Participant 6

This is a female participant aged 28 years. She has been with the Department of Social Development since 2011. She is currently working as a field social worker responsible for all the services in that particular ward allocated to her. The services that she is responsible to render are services to children and families, services to older persons, services to people living

with disabilities, social behaviour change, HIV/Aids, foster care services, and restorative services. She has been rendering these services for almost eight years.

African Female Participant 7

This a female participant aged 29 years. She joined the Department of Social Development in 2013 and has been in practice since then. She is responsible for services to children and families, services to older persons, services to people living with disabilities, foster care services, HIV/AIDS services, and restorative services. She has been allocated one ward to service and her responsibilities include fieldwork or community work.

African Female Participant 8

This female participant aged 38 years has been employed by the Department of Social Development since 2010. She has been rendering social work services for the past nine years in one ward located in a rural area. The services that she renders are the services to children and families, foster care services, HIV/AIDS services, services to people with disabilities, services to older persons, social behaviour change, and restorative services. Besides the services that she has to offer in her ward, she is also coordinating the services to children and families. In coordinating these services, she is, therefore, responsible for the compilation of a monthly and quarterly report for non-financial data purposes submitted to the District.

African Male Participant 9

This is a male participant aged between 40 years. He joined the Department of Social Development in 2012. He is currently rendering all the services as he is allocated one ward. The services include services to children and families, foster services, HIV/Aids services, services to older persons, services to people living with disabilities, social behaviour change services, and restorative services. He has been in practice for six years as a field social worker.

African Female Participant 10

This is a female participant aged 40 years. She joined the Department of Social Development in 2009. She is currently serving as a field social worker and social worker coordinator responsible for compiling non-financial data report that should be submitted monthly and quarterly. She is allocated the caseload in her ward as a case manager for other programs and services including, for example, services to children and families, foster care services, services

older persons, services to people living with disabilities, restorative services, HIV/Aids services, and social behaviour change services.

4.3. Factors affecting the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection

The findings of this study can be grouped and summarized by four themes as outlined below. These themes can also be read from different perspectives or sub-themes (see Table 4.2) which mark the factors that affect the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. The four main themes that emerged from the findings are family preservation knowledge and practice philosophy, implementation of family preservation services, organizational deficiencies in the implementation of family preservation services, and lastly, the strategies to improve the implementation of family preservation services.

Table 4.1: Summary of themes and subthemes concerning family preservation services to children in need of care and protection

Theme 1: Professional knowledge and practice philosophy of family preservation
Sub-themes
1.1. Social work legislative knowledge
1.2. The shared knowledge in professional spaces
1.3. Accumulated practice experience
Theme 2: Implementation of family preservation services
Sub-themes
2.1. The decision to remove children from households
2.2. The decision to keep children at home in the family
2.3. Rendering of family reunification services in households.
Theme 3: Organisational deficiencies in the implementation of family preservation services
Sub-themes
3.1. Supervision of service providers
3.2. Lack of training on family preservation
3.3. Heavy Administrative burden
3.4. Perceived lack of professional autonomy
Theme 4: Strategies to improve the implementation of family preservation.

Theme 1: Professional knowledge and practice philosophy of family preservation

Family preservation philosophy is based on the beliefs that family members need from their families to develop to their full potential (Mosoma & Spies, 2016). While family preservation is considered as a philosophy focusing on the beliefs that families are the experts of their own lives, the family preservation service is a partnership that involves the social worker (Coady & Lehmann, 2008). Thus, the social worker who provides family preservation services is required to possess certain values, a positive attitude, and an extensive range of skills, knowledge areas, and theoretical perspectives that require competence for practices focused on family preservation (Tracy et al, 2017).

Family preservation programs in some contexts are designed to support families of children who are at risk of abuse or neglect (Loening-Voysey, Doubt, King, Byrne & Cluver, 2018) and thus focus on preventing unnecessary removal of children from their families by empowering and strengthening parents to care and protect their children. These services are provided to vulnerable families to improve family functioning (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2016). This theme arose because of the participants' responses regarding the professional knowledge and practice philosophy of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. As described by Denby & Curtis (2015), it is both a philosophy and an approach, which guides practice to the permanency of planning for children who require care and protection.

As previously discussed in the literature review section (chapter 2), the practice of family preservation is guided and informed by different policies and legislation that encourage the inappropriateness of separating children from their families. The South African Government developed legislation and policies that mandate social workers to provide varied support services to families with children who need care and protection intending to keep children within their families. Social workers, because of their training on child protection and working with families, are well placed to support families who can benefit through family preservation services. It is to be noted, therefore, that upholding persons' uniqueness and dignity are important values in family preservation (Hooper-Blair et al., 1995)

Knowledge and information to care and protect children who are at imminent risk play an important role in delivering family preservation services and that services are no exception to that knowledge of implementing family preservation to children in need of care and protection (Mosoma & Spies, 2016). However, vagueness and confusion about the exact definition of

family preservation were evident among the participants. The confusion was also brought about by the uncertainty to articulate family preservation knowledge and practice philosophy and how this program differs from other family interventions programs that social workers provide to families and children as this participant articulated. The following narrative illustrates the uncertainty and vagueness in clearly articulating family preservation knowledge and practice philosophy and how this program differs from other family interventions programs that social workers render to families.

I will not say that I know and understand the family preservation program because I have never had an opportunity of being trained in family preservation and yet I am expected and required to render family preservation as a service to families and children. P6

I just grab things as I go and we are not doing justice to the families because we do not fully understand family preservation services. P8

I cannot guarantee that I understand it, but my little knowledge is that it is all about keeping families together which is important to me. P3

The above statement revealed that the philosophical understanding of what the family preservation program seeks to achieve was clear to the participants. However, there was poor guidance on how to offer these services to families and children. Therefore, the main question is how social workers provide family preservation services to fulfil the expected mandate of protecting children who need care and protection without adequate knowledge and competences.

Arguably, working with families requires in-depth knowledge of the functioning of the family and changing family dynamics and patterns especially in recent times considering the fluidity of the family definition. Moreover, families experience a spectrum of intersecting challenges such as poverty, deaths, mental health, substance abuse, poor access to resources, and unemployment. Thus, adequate time is needed to adequately conduct an assessment based on which can be made the necessary recommendations to ensure that the well-being of children is maintained. Some of the participants raised concerns about making decisions regarding children and families, which might not be in the best interest of the child when working with

families as a result of the inadequate knowledge and information to help them make definite recommendations:

> *...we lack knowledge of what we should do to preserve the child and the family. Lacking knowledge of family preservation in some of the cases has led me not to dig down properly on these issues of the family because I do not have sufficient knowledge in family preservation. P7*

> *There are many children that we remove from their families due to a lack of knowledge. If we come across cases of child abuse, we just remove the child. The first thing that comes into mind is that remove the child. P4*

> *Many children are indeed being removed from their families because as social workers, we do not have a vast knowledge of family preservation. Therefore, we find ourselves removing children without having done the proper assessment, without having done preventing programs, without having done early intervention. P9*

> *.. In some of the cases, I do not do proper assessment because of the lack of knowledge that I do not have in family preservation services. P5*

The above quotations reflect that one of the key gaps in implementing family preservation services is an inadequate family assessment which might lead to an insufficient understanding of the family needs on how best the social worker could support the family and the child. Kirst-Ashman & Hull (2016) emphasize the importance of focusing on the entire family interaction with each other and their environment that is no support to the family as this would provide the practitioner with the guidelines towards interventions.

Despite the limited understanding of family preservation reported by the participants, it was important to explore what the participants consider as their source of knowledge and guidance when implementing family preservation. Three related subthemes were evident in understanding the implementation of family preservation services and these subthemes explored that understanding which is: - Social work legislative knowledge shared knowledge in professional spaces and accumulated practice experience.

Sub-theme 1.1: Social work legislative knowledge

Knowledge of legislative frameworks and policies in social work services provides a legislative framework and broad approach to how social workers should appropriately intervene to help and support children who require care and protection. The importance of the legislative framework and policies is considered essential in guiding social workers towards achieving the mandate of the social work profession. Therefore, Social workers are required to acquire considerable knowledge of legislation to render appropriate social services to children and their families. Furthermore, the policies and the legislations regulate how social services can be implemented to children and families who require social service support.

This subtheme discusses social work legislative knowledge and how social workers apply and incorporate legislative knowledge when making decisions on intervention or implementing family preservation services. The findings indicate that most of the participants were aware of the most relevant legislation to family preservation despite the lack that their interpretation and application with the implementing family preservation was poor. The Children's Act no 38 of 2005 is the only piece of the legislative framework that most of the participants used frequently when providing the services to children and families. Furthermore, this participant revealed that she only relies on one piece of the legislative framework, which shows that social workers are not guided by the other pieces of policies and legislations which are relevant in directing them sufficiently (that can limit them to make a decisive decision whether to remove or keep a child with family). The quotations below represent what the participants shared.

> *.... I usually use Children's Act no 38 of 2005 and I am not sure about White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and White Paper on Families (2012) when understanding the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. P4*

The participant acknowledges the importance of the Children's Act in guiding the implementation of family preservation services in ensuring that the best interest of the children is paramount. However, this participant did not mention or either talk about the other legislative frameworks that are relevant to the care and protection of children.

> *I would refer to the Children Act no 38 of 2005 and we use it extensively. This Act governs our work, we use and it regulates all the activities of the children in need of*

care and protection. All our work is done in the best interest of children and we keep that all the time and refer to it when we place the child in the institution. So everything and every movement we consult that aspect of certain sections of the Act. It governs, regulates, and directs our work. P2

The above narrative clearly showed that the participants are aware of the other pieces of legislation that are essential to the implementation of family preservation services. Despite this knowledge of legislations, their responses revealed that the practice knowledge of legislative frameworks is essential for accountability purposes and for providing quality service delivery to children in need of care and protection. However, the lack of knowledge in legislations as indicated above by the participants might lead to hindrances of family preservation services if these legislations and policies are not consulted as and when family preservation services are to be implemented.

The Children's Act no 38 of 2005, White Paper on Families (2012) and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) are the main legislative provisions which most of the participants referred to when working with families in family preservation programs. These legislations are expected to provide steps and procedures to be followed when implementing family preservation services. However, the participants were concerned that there is little clarity on what those steps and procedures are:

These legislations (referring to Children's Act, White Paper for Social Welfare, and White Paper on families) assist and guide us to focus on the entire family because they have steps and procedures to be followed when we have to do our work in a right way. Without them, we cannot do the right things and we cannot finish the case without applying all the necessary steps and procedures required by the legislative frameworks. P3

Most of the participants mentioned that social services to children and families are guided by the policies and legislations that are relevant to the implementation of family preservation services. The indication by this particular participant revealed that the policies and legislations are important in ensuring that the care and safety of the children are safeguarded. This interpretation is expressed in the following narrative:

Legislations that we use in working with children and their families put the wellbeing of children first and therefore everything we do in implementing family preservation is guided by the policies and legislations. P6

While some of the participants were focusing only on the Children's Act as the most piece of legislation that informs the intervention to children and families, this particular participant went further and mentioned the other pieces of legislative frameworks that can be used to strengthen the implementation of family preservation services. This participant highlighted the following information regarding the knowledge of the legislation:

The Children's Act is among many legislative that guide and assists us in implementing family preservation services because there are sections in the Children's Act that relate to children in need of care and protection, for example, section 150 – 160. Also, other legislations guide and assist us in the implementation of family preservation like the Divorce Act. P7

The participant remarked that it is not only the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 that can be utilized when implementing family preservation as other legislative frameworks are relevant. The findings above revealed that the majority of the participants do not refer to other legislative frameworks when providing family preservation services to children and families. The participants indicated that they mostly focus on the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 and ignore other legislations because of a lack of sufficient knowledge in this regard. The study conducted by De Jager (2013) indicates that social workers are not adequately trained to apply different pieces of legislation and policies in their social work settings and that this contributes significantly to the challenges experienced by social workers in the field of child protection.

Arguably, the lack of sufficient knowledge by social workers raises concerns as, how they implement family preservation services if they are not guided by the required knowledge of the legislation and policies. Hope & van Wyk (2018) indicate that social service professionals are not guided by legislation and policies and that they receive little training on the legislation and policies for guidance on how to intervene in practice. It can thus be argued that the lack of legislative policies within the broader exosystem has resulted in a narrower focus and reliance on the individual's values and instinct.

Sub-theme 1.2: Shared knowledge in professional spaces

Hope & van Wyk (2018) recognize that the individual does not exist in isolation but forms part of a field made up of many different parts all of which influence and interact with one another. Social workers are part of these interactions in their workplace in which they share knowledge with other colleagues. Thus, family preservation services are a collaborative model that involves other professionals with different experiences and expertise which can benefit other professionals when shared in a professional environment. Therefore, it is necessary to share the knowledge with others with the view of strengthening the capacity of service providers. Working together in a multidisciplinary team increases the skills and knowledge that can improve the service and well-being of children in need of care and protection. Concerning shared knowledge, few of the participants indicated that family preservation services cannot be implemented by a single profession. Therefore, the other professionals have a role to play in strengthening and empowering families through the knowledge acquired by social workers. This is what the other participant reported.

> *Family preservation services involve a lot of different professionals that can assist and support when in implementing it. This program cannot be implemented by a person, one needs other professionals to learn from them for example department of health, department of education, department of justice, department of police, and other department related to the implementation of family preservation. P9*

Although the family preservation training was not attended by all social workers from the same offices, two of the participants who are coordinators of the family component in their local service offices indicated that when they come back from training or workshops, knowledge is shared with other colleagues to increase their knowledge of implementing family preservation. The following remarks were made during the data collection:

> *…. when I come back from the training of family preservation, I share the information with other social workers in my office. P8*

Some of the participants reported that they do not only rely on the knowledge shared in their workplace or offices but they do ask for information from other colleagues outside of their offices to improve the services of family preservation. The support from other social workers was evidence of another way of rendering family preservation services like social workers

required to implement without adequate training. The participants expressed the following statements:

> *......We do consult our supervisors, other social workers in the office, social workers, and child youth care workers in the child and youth care centres if we need information about family preservation more especially if we have case conferences. P6*

> *Sometimes it happens that as social workers we share information that we are not sure about it. We end up coming with wrong information whereas we thought that it was the right information and this leads us not to develop our profession. P7*

> *I asked my supervisor how I should implement family preservation services so she told me about the joint interviews and do the mediation with families, so that is how I know family preservation services. P4*

> *It is a different kind of activity to do because you do not know, you have to read for yourself and you get support through reading. P3*

> *Yes, but in terms of information within the office, I think it is lacking unless if we have another colleague who came and say guys I found this and this the children act says this, the other policy said this so this is correct even if when agreed then we will write a report. The people who take the reports won't say guys there is something wrong they are fine. P10*

It is worth mentioning that while most of the participants learned through discussions and sharing with colleagues, not all participants do so. Interestingly, the opportunity to learn from others always presents itself. The participant below slightly differs from the above participants. She mentioned that she only realized during the interview that she lacks knowledge in family preservation services as she thought that she knew family preservation services. The participant made the following remark:

> *.... I would say that these research questions make me more aware of how much knowledge I lack of family preservation services. I thought that I knew family*

preservation but during this interview, I am now realising that there is a gap in my knowledge and there is a lot that I need to do in learning family preservation. P5

The above remarks revealed that the participants have realized that they needed information on family preservation as they are mandated to implement it for the benefit of children and their families. In light of the lack of the necessary training, the participants had to learn and teach each other. Self-teaching on family preservation services on its own might not be sufficient to ensure that this program is implemented appropriately. However, reaching out to others through informal discussions and sharing is a reasonable option. Esau & Keet (2014) indicate that the participants in their study critically reflected on their social work practice and that it became evident that practice is educational and that through constant reflection and accumulated experience, a practitioner enhances his or her knowledge.

Sub-theme 1.3: Accumulated practice experience

The majority of the participants indicated that the knowledge of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection were acquired through practice experience. Payne (2016) indicates that practice experience is constructed during an interaction between clients and practitioners and practice is based on skills acquired through practice and is refined by repeated experience. The experiences derived from practice become an important source of knowledge for social workers and it guides their approach to family preservation services. Winter & Cree (2016) emphasize the lack that the power of knowledge and practice in social work encourages critical inquiry into knowledge as regards what the practitioners should do to enhance their knowledge.

Helyer (2015) asserts that accumulated practice experience enables social workers to improve on-going practice by using the information and knowledge they gain from the practice. The accumulated practice knowledge can be an important source of knowledge if there is a critical reflection on the lessons learned during practice. This particular participant stated that she identified gaps in how she implements family preservation by being reflective.

......there is a child case where even today I just feel that I did not do well; deep down in my heart, I feel that it was not enough. The case did not go well and I am not proud of what happened because the child was so brilliant in the class...the removal could have been prevented. P5

This particular participant revealed that she did not even know what family preservation is and through her professional practice experience and reflection, she learned to differentiate family preservation from other services.

……. I did not know that it was family preservation services. Now as I go along, I started to be confident because now I understand and I can differentiate that this is family preservation as I go along with the case. P10

The participant below who has filled knowledge gaps through the practice experience accumulated over time-shared a similar experience:

My understanding of family preservation is through teaching myself as I go along the way of practicing as a social worker. I have been in this office for more than four years but have not to be given an opportunity of attending a family preservation workshop. I am required to report and produce cases of family preservation. Learning while on practice and asking others have helped me to give them the cases but without the formal knowledge of training in family preservation. P4

The above statements revealed that it is not only in books or in informal training that a person can acquire knowledge but it can also be learned through practice experiences and reflective in practice. The study conducted by Ferguson (2018) focuses on exploring the possibilities and limits to reflective practice by drawing on research that observes encounters between social workers and children and families as the study was being conducted in real-time.

The study revealed that practitioners often do reflect in action by elevating their minds above the interactions they have so that they can think critically about and adjust what they are doing. When reflecting on their own practical experiences, they viewed their interventions as beneficial within the limitations of the context. The practitioners do recognize, however, that the interventions do not address larger structural challenges that service users face. The critical reflection thus provided the participants with necessary distance learning, as indicated by Esau & Keet (2014) in his study on self-reflexivity.

Theme 2: The implementation of family preservation services

Implementation refers to a specific set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program (Durlak, 2011). Meyers, Katz, Chien, Wandersman, Scaccia & Wright, (2012) assert that implementation influences desired outcomes, the intervention of effective implementation, and ideas on practices that shape the complex implementation process. The implementation of family preservation services requires that social workers familiarise themselves with the purpose of family preservation programs by understanding the factors that put children at risk of being abused or neglected to render the relevant and appropriate services to children in need of care and protection (Swart, 2017). The purpose of rendering family preservation services is to prevent the removal of children by ensuring that they are safe within their families. Whitaker, Rogers-Brown, Cowart-Osborne, Self-Brown & Lutzker, (2015) indicate that the implementation of family preservation services focuses on children who experience maltreatment in their families intending to prevent removal and future maltreatment.

What transpires from the above explication is that these services of family preservation are provided to strengthen and empower families to care and protect their children (Strydom, 2010; 2012). The social workers who provide family preservation services are required to focus on building the capacity for change within families, as well as promoting sustainable development in communities through family preservation services (Van Huyssteen & Strydom, 2016). Social workers implementing family preservation services should consider that these services are short-term, family-focused services designed to assist families in crisis by improving parenting and family functioning while keeping children safe (Strydom, 2012; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2016).

Michalopoulos, Ahn, Swan & O'Connor, (2012) indicate that the South African Children's Act no 38 of 2005 stresses the importance of strengthening families to prevent child removal from their biological homes and also reduce the duration of removal. However, the participants expressed the willingness to implement family preservation but due to lack of training and the other factors like heavy loads of cases, insufficient resources, and time spent on non- financial data are hindrances on implementing family preservation effectively as required by the South African Policy documents (Strydom, 2010; 2012). Furthermore, there is also the issue of not having enough time to do a comprehensive assessment with less information to make the right decision regarding the child and opt for statutory services by removing a child due to rushing non-financial data and targets that they have to reach monthly. However, most of the

participants indicated that they are not familiar with the White Paper on Social Welfare and the White Paper on Family Policy, which requires knowledge of implementing family preservation services.

Their focus in implementing family preservation is mostly on the Children's Act No 38 of 2005 and this is what Strydom (2010) confirms that family preservation is being delivered inversely on what is recommended by the South African Policy documents. The discussion below is based on the following subthemes: The decision to remove children from households, social workers' decision not to remove a child who needs care and protection, and rendering of reunification services in households.

Sub-theme 2.1: The decision to remove children from households
The decision to remove the children from parents is made if the life of the child is in danger or not safe to continue staying at home due to various risks that the child is experiencing. This sub-theme relates to the decision to remove children from their families and implement family preservation services that aim to keep the family together as stipulated by the objectives of family preservation services and section 2 of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005, which promotes the preservation, and strengthening of families.

 In South Africa, when an organ of state or a child protection organization receives a report concerning alleged child abuse and neglect, it triggers an investigation in terms of section 155 of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005. Such an investigation can result in a child being found to need care and protection. In such circumstances, the matter will be brought before the children's court for the court to consider various options. Firstly, the court may order that, pending decision, the child must be placed in temporary safe care or remain in the care of a person with control over the child, instead of removing the child for a long period into alternative care.

Secondly, the court may order that early intervention services be offered to the child and/ or to the child's family. However, Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) assert that the decision to remove a child from a family is the last resort after all other efforts have been exhausted to retain vulnerable children within their families if the conditions under which the children are harmful. Some of the decisions to remove children as the participant indicated that due to insufficient

knowledge and high caseloads can lead to statutory removal. Furthermore, the study conducted by Strydom (2010) in the Western Cape Metropolitan area revealed that statutory services are numerous and children are removed from their parents because families have too little access to preventative services or resources.

The responses of the participants revealed that the decision to remove the children from their parental care is based on the safety and protection of the children. Notably, the aim and approach of family preservation services would be to keep the family together by providing prevention and early intervention services as an intervention to prevent removal. In some other instances, it becomes difficult to avoid removal due to circumstances that are beyond social workers. The decision to effect the removal of the child is based on ensuring that the child is cared for and protected. The majority of the participants remarked that it becomes difficult to leave the child in an unsafe situation:

> *….The return of the perpetrator to the same house forces us as social workers to remove the child to the place of care and leave the perpetrator because the child is not safe if the perpetrator is in the house. P3*

> *The perpetrator was given bail and he came back home. The situation and the environment were not conducive for a child to live in there, and then I decided to remove the child because it was not safe. P8*

The above narratives reveal that some children grow up in families that do not ensure and take into consideration their safety and protection. These narratives revealed that there are cases where removal would be unavoidable because the safety of the child cannot be guaranteed and that decision is made based on ensuring the protection of the child. Makiwane et al., (2017) assert that many South African children grow up in unsafe and insecure families which subsequently place their lives at risk. This study, therefore, established that the perpetrators place more risk to the children who are vulnerable and that makes social workers consider the immediate removal of children from the situation that is not safe for them. Both of these narratives above revealed that the protection of the child comes first.

Whatever decision is made regarding the removal of the child, it is based on whether the child is safe or not. The above narratives revealed that if the life of the child is in danger, a decision

can be taken immediately to remove the child from the parental care to ensure that no further harm takes place or exposes the child to so many risks. Sometimes the decision to place a child in alternative care is informed by the situation and condition prevailing at the time because of the imminent risk the child is exposed to as the participant below indicated:

> *I removed the child because of the circumstances that the child went through because the child had no shelter so she did not have a place to sleep so I remove the child. P4*

> *...the child was staying with the grandmother and the grandmother was too old to look after the child and it was not that the grandmother was abusing the child. The grandmother was too old to look after the child. The reason for removing the child was that the child was not safe and the mother was not fit to look after the child because she was mentally challenged. P6*

The decision to remove the child is based on whether the child is at risk of removal. The participants expressed that there are circumstances that are unavoidable to prevent the removal of children. The protection of children comes first. Thus, the participants expressed that the child is removed if the safety of the child is not guaranteed.

Few of the participants raised the concern that many children are removed from households without thorough investigation and comprehensive assessment of their needs and the circumstances.

> *... Many children are being removed from their families due to a lack of assessment. You find that a child was not supposed to be removed and when you go deeper, you will find that this child was not supposed to be in the facility. If family preservation was rendered correctly or by the person who knows family preservation the child would have not been removed. P5*

> *There is no time to do things with the family, whatever we do is just getting off the work and continue with another one or just leave it like that. P10*

> *.... Most of the time we just remove a child or just decide on removing a child because we do not have time to do a proper assessment. P7*

What transpires from the above remarks that most of the children are removed without having thoroughly assessed their situation due to not having insufficient time to follow family preservation procedures and guidelines. The above quotation by the participant revealed that many children are removed from their families without following the appropriate procedures and guidelines. Some children are removed unnecessarily without properly investigating the family situation that can inform the different findings of the family circumstances. There are decisions made by the social workers to remove children without properly investigating and render the appropriate services due to so many programs that the social workers provide and the high caseloads which are heavy.

This confirms Nhedzi & Makofane's (2015)'s assertion that social workers have inadequate time to have contact with families due to high caseloads which expose vulnerable family members to further harm. Sometimes the harm that children experience in families does not allow the social worker to investigate further and provide preventative services for fear of exposing the child to further harm as the participant below remarked as follows:

> *There was one case that was reported by the community that there was a child who was physical abuse by a caregiver but wasn't a parent. When we got there, the child has badly beaten in such a way that the situation was worse. I did not even want to think twice that I will come back tomorrow to check how they were getting along or whether the problem was solved. In that case, you cannot wait for anything because I was gone be putting a child living under the grave. I just thought what if leave the child and something wrong happen to her. P1*

The following narrative revealed that as a result of pressure, at times social workers do not have time to follow proper assessment and clear procedures when removing a child from the household. It is clear that the social workers do not properly assess and investigate thoroughly and this results in placing the children in alternative care that does not offer or provide therapeutic services that benefit the child

> *Because of the pressure, we find ourselves having to remove a child to a place where there are no therapeutic programs to address an issue of that particular child. I can say that we are quick in removing children without having done a proper analysis of*

the family situation and without rendering prevention services to children and families that ensure that children are not removed. P9

However, this participant described the challenges he faces when he has to decide to remove a child to an alternative placement to ensure that the child is safe. As the participant above reports, the decision to remove children is at times made without a comprehensive investigation and developing a plan to provide prevention or early intervention services. The above remarks also have not revealed the services offered to the families before or after the decision to remove the child. Notably, Strydom (2010) argues that to avoid the removal of children social workers, when rendering family preservation services, should focus on preventative services after which early intervention services can follow before going to statutory services to implement a developmental social service policy.

Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) observe that the decision to remove a child is made without first rendering the early intervention services. The study, which Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) conducted in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan, found that children are merely dumped at the Child and Youth Care Centres due to lack of comprehensive assessment. Thus, it is very clear that some of the decisions are made without considering the other alternatives that can prevent the removal of children from their families by rendering appropriate services like family preservation.

Subtheme 2.2: Social Workers' decision not to remove a child who needs care and protection

Popple (2018) highlights how family preservation services are implemented to children and their families. These services focus on preventing the removal of children by providing intensive services in the child's home by social workers. For the family to be considered as an appropriate case for family preservation the child must be at risk of removal and the social worker must be convinced that the child can remain safely in his or her own home if intensive services are being implemented. The services range from four to six weeks in the most intensive services and three to six months in the less intensive work. Social workers should manage small caseloads and work with each family for many hours per week and if the improvement is observed, the agency can withdraw services from the family.

The majority of the participants confirmed that child removal should be the last resort and can be prevented by assessing the family situation and rendering the relevant services to the whole family aimed at keeping the family together. The participant remarked that thorough assessment of the family situation, other family members can be identified, tracked, and assessed for their availability and willingness to take a child into their family house and thus preventing the removal of a child for institutional care.

> *During the proper assessment and investigation, it came out that other family members were available to take children rather than removing them from the institution. It is being removed. The service that we also offer to parents is educating them about the rights of children as well as their rights and responsibilities. P9*

It is arguable, therefore, that the children, who are sufficiently assessed, are prevented from being removed from their families because of cooperation between social workers and parents. The participant expressed that proper assessment can assist in preventing the removal of children. Assessment using the ecological theory lens looks at the risk and the strength of the family. A parenting program is one of the key programs that build the capacity of the families to care and protect children. Parenting programs provide and strengthen the family's coping skills to address and manage unacceptable behaviour that can be displayed by children. Scott & Gardner (2015) describe parenting programs as specific interventions that are designed to improve the overall quality of parenting that a child receives and that programs aim to help the way parents relate to their children.

Similarly, Haslam, Cruwys, Haslam, Dingle & Chang, (2016) agree with Scott & Gardner (2015) that parenting programs are interventions that aim to improve child and family outcomes by equipping parents with effective parenting skills. They both confirm that parenting programs are designed to enhance competence and confidence in parents, thus allowing them to raise children in a loving, consistent, predictable, and non-harmful environment. Most of the participants mentioned that they provide parenting programs to individual parents because forming a group is sometimes impossible due to the work commitments of the parents. The positive impact of such interventions are observed by social workers and at times and the intervention reduces risks for child removal:

...we do provide prevention services by engaged families and render parenting skills to parents. We also do family therapy, joint interview sessions, and psychosocial support for the whole family. Some of the children are being removed from the home because the parents are lacking parenting skills so we use those services together because we believe that removal is the last option. We do everything to prevent the removal of the child from their parents. P6

This indication by the participants revealed that it is not only one intervention that should be used to support families that experience challenges. Providing various programs and interventions that are relevant to families can create new perceptions in families and thus help them decide to keep children with them.

Poverty and unemployment are serious risk factors for children as they expose children to neglect. At times, child poverty cannot be used as an indicator for child removal instead other supportive services can be rendered to the family to keep the children within the family environment as the following participant indicated:

I rendered the parenting skills to the mother of the child who was neglecting her children. The community reported the case that she was not taking care of the child. The challenge I encountered with the mother was that she was not at home most of the time but eventually I managed to trace her and was willing to work with me. We had a family meeting where we agreed that even if these children are poor they cannot be removed from the family but they can get other services just to improve the conditions of the family because they are vulnerable but we can give them food parcels. P10

Parenting programs, family counseling, support, and crisis intervention through poverty alleviation programs such as food parcel are the main interventions social workers provide to sustain coping and to improve positive outcomes for children. Parenting programs assist most of the parents who are battling to manage the behavior of children due to a lack of parenting skills. The participants indicated that some of the children are removed from their parents as a result of lack and the ability to parent children by their respective families and this failure on the part of the families, results in the children misbehaving.

Kirby (2015) asserts that parenting programs help parents to improve the behavioral outcomes of children by providing positive parenting knowledge and skills to the parents. Similarly, Ward & Wessels (2013) argue that in addition to parenting programs focusing on providing adequate nutrition, they are also critical factors that improve parents' knowledge of children's development, their stimulation for early (development) learning, their management of children's behavior and their relationships with their children. Thus, providing parenting skills programs to parents prevent the abuse and neglect of children in their households.

The participants of this study reported that sometimes parents are not available due to being at work or in the tavern which leads to a lack of supervision of children and this makes it difficult to render parenting programs to parents. Cluver, Meinck, Shenderovich, Ward, Romero, Redfern & Lechowicz, (2016) on reducing child abuse amongst adolescents reveal that high levels of poverty, intimate partner violence, HIV/AIDS, low levels of education and literacy impact negatively on parenting programs.

Sub-theme 2.3: Rendering of reunification services in households
Carnochan, Chris & Austen, (2013) define family reunification as the services that are provided by social workers to return children who have been placed in out of home care to their families of origin. Reunifying children with their families is not a once-off event or intervention but is a process that includes the reintegration of children into a family environment that might have changed significantly since the child left home (Nephawe, 2011, Font, Sattler & Gershoff, 2018 and Sauls & Esau, 2015). When a child is removed from his or her family by the social worker, it is critical for the social worker who is the case manager to have a plan of how the child will eventually be reunited with the family because children belong to their families (Wulczy, 2010).

Notably, family reunification services are provided specifically to children and families particularly parents who were separated from their children due to various reasons or problems that had place children in an unsafe situation or condition. The social workers are the key people in facilitating reunification services in partnering with families of children who were removed from them by ensuring that the smooth return of children to their biological parents or any significant others are provided (Pistor, 2019 and Parton, 2015). This is achieved by having different meetings where planning and preparation of the reintegration of the child are discussed and planned. These various meetings include family meetings with other family

members and case conferences with other stakeholders whose children were removed from them and those who can support the process of rendering reunification services.

As argued by Wulczyn (2010), the reunification process must have quality assessments that include the time frame of when reunification should occur, quality case plans, family engagement, service coordination, family compliance with case plans, family readiness, post-reunification services, and monitoring of the whole process. It is argued by (Balsells, Pastor, Molina, Fuentes-Pelaez, Vaquero & Mundet, (2014), that the family reunification process is typically lengthy and that this process begins the moment the child is separated from his, or her parents and placed in the residential care facility or child and youth care centers.

According to the participants, before the child reunification services, the child and family must be prepared for the return. Therefore, the child and family preparation is an important step of this process as asserted by this participant as follows:

> *The social worker cannot return the child to the family without working with the child and also prepare the family that the child will be coming back to the family. As a social worker, I work closely with the family so that they understand why the child was removed from them in the first place and why the child has to come back. The family has to understand that the child needs them and clearly explain to the family that the institution cannot be a family to a child. P9*

> *I think I said you need to work with families because now you remember that the child has been removed from the family, even if you are working with family you need to do a thorough assessment, identify the challenges, help them to identify their weaknesses, and strength so that they will be able to decide that this is how it should be in order the family is functioning well so they can able to accommodate the child that was removed. P6*

In light of the implementation of family preservation services, the involvement of the family is critical in ensuring support for the child and to facilitate collective responsibility. The child and family preparation involves assessing them for readiness to be reunited.

Willingness and readiness by the family to allow the child back into the family are key at this stage. In families where the immediate family cannot take the child back, a possibility to place the family with the extended family might be explored as this participant indicates as follows:

Children should have been reunified with their families but one has to follow the process by ensuring that the child will be safe when returning home. Some families have a different background, which takes a long process, some it takes time to absorb this issue of letting it go including the extended family members. In some families, you find that there is a lack of responsibilities. Some families are not willing to take the child back; therefore, as a social worker, I trace other family members who are willing to welcome the child back to the family. Rendering the service is not a once-off or a quick process, it takes time because the family must be ready for a child to come back. P1

Fernandez & Sook-Lee (2013) argue that child protection systems are concerned with the removal of children from their families in the interests of the safety and protection of the children. Therefore, the capacity of Child Welfare systems to return children safely to families of origin is of central importance. Notably, one of the key challenges in the child protection system is the lack of resources and human capacity to properly render these reunification services to ensure that children are not kept in institutional care for a long time when the possibility exists that they can be taken back into their families as soon as possible.

There are a lot of children who are kept in the facilities who should have been reunified with families because of the processes and lack of scarce resources; it becomes difficult to render reunification services and to take the child back immediately when you see that there is a need for a child to go back. P5

Although all the participants referred to family preservation as an important step in family preservation services, they also recognized that at times family reunification services are not implemented adequately as this participant asserts thus:

Most of my family reunification cases are not well planned due to the lack of knowledge and heavy workloads that I have. I have never had a time where the child had an opportunity of spending school holidays with family members or parents before the child returns to the family permanently. I just reunify the child without following the

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process of reunification. I am willing and looking forward that one day I will have an opportunity of preparing a return of a child to a family by rendering reunification services where I will have a family meeting and be part of deciding that the child is coming back home. P8

As stated above, at times children are reunified without following the key steps that are required to render the family reunification services successful. This includes implementing specific services to prepare the child and the family for reunification. However, the findings also indicate the importance of active involvement of the children and their parents in family reunification services:

As a social worker, I work with families of children who have been removed from their family environment. When working with families, I do a thorough assessment, identify the challenges, help them to identify their weaknesses and strengths so that the family can be able to decide to have a child back to their care. P6

Child Welfare Information Gateway (2016) avers that working collaboratively with parents embodies family-centered practice and can facilitate the child's return home more quickly as compared to when than if parents are not involved. Thus, engaging parents in the planning process can help ensure they receive the services and supports required for the child's safe return. Arguably, the participants understood their role and responsibilities about the execution of the reunification services and the relevance of these services in child protection.

However, there was tangible evidence that some of the children are reunified with families without following the proper family reunification services. This has the potential of contributing to a family reunification breakdown and can also pose a risk to the child protection endeavor. Similarly, Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) indicate that in the study that was based on the experiences of social workers in the provision of family preservation services in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan. The study found that the children who were reunified with their respective families, the situation had deteriorated to the point where children had to be channeled back to care centers due to lack of proper planning and preparation for rendering the reunification services. If the process of reunification is not followed properly, it may result in children being taken back to alternative care centers.

Theme 3: Organizational deficiencies in implementing family preservation services.

The majority of the participants revealed that the organizational deficiencies created a situation that limits the success of the implementation of family preservation for the children in need of care and protection. The challenges that they indicated as failing the implementation of family preservation services include the supervision of the service providers, lack of training on family preservation, heavy administration burden, and perceived lack of professional autonomy. These factors have contributed to the confusion and the effectiveness of the implementation of the family preservation process. This assertion is corroborated by Strydom et al., (2017) study in their argument that the lack of understanding in what one is expected to deliver in the family preservation services.

This results in the services to children in need of care and protection is severely compromised. In circumstances such as these, practitioners continue to render and implement services despite knowing that they do not understand because they are expected. Even though the participants indicated that there is a lack of training in family preservation and that there are also other factors that hinder the implementation of family preservation, they focused more on the services as demonstrated by their expression in this regard. The following subthemes discussed the findings, which relate to the difficulties in implementing family preservation services.

Sub-theme 3.1: Supervision of service providers

Family preservation is one of the key programs in the child protection system that seeks to provide services that ensure the care and protection of children. Supervision is a key component in ensuring that the quality of services is provided and also to facilitate the professional development of social workers. The insufficient and inadequate supervision of social workers involved in family preservation was a key concern for the participants as it hampered the services rendered to the children and their families. Some of the participants shared their experiences of supervision when they reach out for support and advice expressed as follows:

> *We do not have enough support that I expect from my supervisor more especially when there are challenges that I am experiencing. I tried to express how I feel about my cases and my supervisor did not support me. P1*

> *Some supervisors are also not trained in family preservation; therefore, one will not expect much information from them about family preservation services. P3*

When there are inconsistencies and lack of clear guidance relating to work, some of the participants remarked that they rely on multiple resources for guidance as this participant averred as follows:

> *We consult our supervisors when we have supervision and talk about difficult cases and see what happens. Secondly, we do consult supervisors in facilities where we place children that have been removed from their parents. They do help us a lot because they know everything as they are working with children and their families. P6*

> *Sometimes we encounter problems when rendering services when I go to the supervisor and ask what I should do now, then the supervisor tells me that I should consult other supervisors outside or other social workers to help me. P5*

A study by Alpaslan & Schenck (2012) revealed that the lack of supervision for social workers or support from their supervisors' hamper social work service delivery. Similarly, Makhubele (2015) argues that when professionals do not receive the necessary support in the form of supervision the clients suffer due to poor service delivery as a result of learning not taking place. Baranik, Roling & Eby (2010) argue that the employees with mentors report higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, compensation, and promotions in the workplace. These findings revealed the need to provide adequate systems to strengthen the learning and professional development of social workers.

Sub-theme 3.2: Lack of training on family preservation

Notably, Hope & van Wyk's (2018) study on intervention strategies used with social workers as participants in emergencies indicates that social workers have received little knowledge which may also harm implementing family preservation services. Lack of adequate training on family preservation was cited as a key challenge for the participants. As a result of that, the majority of the participants indicated that they rely on other alternative sources of information. It became apparent that the lack of training exposed different participants to different sources of knowledge.

Similarly, Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) argue that, as regards the experiences, that insufficient training in family preservation leads the social workers to misconceptions, misunderstanding,

and confusion regarding the social work services which include family preservation as outlined in the new South African legislation. The finding in Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) the study revealed that the lack of training in family preservation hindered the implementation of the services for the children in need of care and protection. Below is an illustrative narrative of the frustration as regards the implementation of family preservation:

It is difficult to implement something that you are not trained because we do things in a way that we think is right. Some of us working with families including the supervisors are not trained in family preservation and that is why we consult outside to get guidance. To be honest with you, I just feel lost and confused and feel that I do not know what to do because I know that family preservation is part of the service that I have to render to the community. I do not know whether I do the right thing. P6

The participants below expressed their frustrations deriving from lack of training in family preservation services and the long gap between the first and subsequent workshops on capacity building as provided for in specific legislative frameworks:

I have been in practice for more than four years without attending any workshops and training on family preservation that we have to produce what we are required by the Department of Social Development to children and families without any knowledge of doing that. We are lacking knowledge, in some cases, we are not doing proper services to children and families because the knowledge that we have in family preservation is inadequate. This scarcity of training and workshops for example Social Welfare Paper and White Paper on Families, I do not know what they entail and I think most of us working in the Department as social workers do share the same thing. P4

They haven't been taken to any workshop concerning family preservation, at least I was taken to one workshop and I can't remember whether it was in 2012 or 2013 but that workshop did not cover anything about family preservation. We are having new people who have been employed and they are expected to render family preservation service but they have been not taken to any workshop or anything, but they are expected to render it. P5

The implementation of family preservation is difficult because most of us as social workers are not well trained and well equipped in family preservation and only to find sometimes that we are quick to remove children without having done a proper analysis of the family situation and without rendering proper preventing services and programs that could ensure that children are not removed. P9

Notably, the above quotations attest to Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) assertion that social workers are confused about what family preservation services should entail and that consequently thereof, they are uncertain about the different types of services and cases, which are suitable or appropriate for family preservation services. The norms and standard policy on developmental social welfare services and the White Paper on Family Policy mandate all Social Service Professional to implement family preservation services to marginalized people of South Africa and that policy also indicates that family preservation should be rolled out to the nine provinces of South Africa (Department of Social Development, 2008).

The finding in Mosoma & Spies (2016) study revealed that there is poor coordination of on-going training and capacity building on family preservation services which areas the social workers are mandated to implement for the benefit of the children and their families. This in line with what the 2015/16 annual report articulates from the KwaZulu -Natal Department of Social Development in which it is remarked that there is a lack of capacity building on specialized knowledge to deliver services to families.

Sub-theme 3.3: Heavy Administration Burden
The participants were concerned about the increased administrative burden, which comes with their work. The majority of the participants remarked that whatever they do in family preservation appeared to fulfill the reporting requirements with the view of achieving quantitative numbers at the end of the month. The following participants gave the following information that describes what they are doing because they are sometimes told to leave what they have planned to do and write the reports.

Whatever I do, I do it because I am expected to report about family preservation. The problem here is that we are pushing figures upfront than to do the right things to families and children. We are doing things just for the sake of reporting at the end of the month. We are just pushing out figures but the actual work or actual justice in cases

is not done. It becomes worse if you are not trained on family preservation and then I am expected to implement it. There is no time to do things with the family, whatever you do in just rushing to get rid of that work and continue with another one or sometimes leave it like that. P3

Many services are needed to be rendered within the department. Most of those things that I am talking about are paperwork and reports that take most of our time in rendering services to families. So now you may find that you plan to visit the family and be told to leave that and do something else or a quarterly report are needed urgently. Therefore, you need to sit down and write that report and the time to go to the family is now taken away. There is no time to do things with the family, whatever you do in just rushing to get rid of that work and continue with another one or sometimes leave it like that. P7

"We are not doing justice because we are rushing the targets and the target of families of fourteen per month of which we are supposed to reach at the end of the month. P8"

"Demand like too much paperwork and statistics and workshops because you sometimes plan that you visit the family and something comes up and then you need to stop whatever your plan is and you need to do other things. P6"

The following participant expressed confusion about what is required about family preservation services and the process of supporting families and children. The participant revealed that the non-financial data are questionable whether those numbers are the true reflection of the services rendered successfully:

The department is pushing numbers too much and the numbers that you see sometimes, I wonder if they are the true reflection of this. They are not facts but I will not talk too much on… So we are expected to conduct family preservation within a month and we have to take into consideration that there is a lack of resources. The number of caseloads, duration of providing family preservation does not match the number of social workers that are available or that we have in our offices. The number that you see in NFD every month is not a true reflection of what is happening in terms of family preservation services rendered. P9

Similar sentiments were shared by the participant below that relate to the reporting of numbers not the actual process and activities of family preservation services rendered to children and their families:

> *Another thing is the issue of targets, not that I am against the target but I think they are too high because you cannot say that a social worker should have 30 cases per quarter. Even if you try to divide these cases, within three months still does not reach the families that I am working with because if you take the file of family preservation and follow that, there is no link that you see in the process notes. P1*

The above responses are an attestation to the fact that the participants are disturbed in rendering the service to children and their families due to administration responsibilities that are a monthly requirement. This is corroborated by the findings in Chavalala's (2016) study in its advocacy of the view that the Department of Social Development is more interested in the number of service users reached than the quality and the impact of the services rendered by the social workers. Similar findings are revealed by Dhludhlu & Lombard's (2017) study in its assertion that confirmed that the performances of social workers are judged by the number of beneficiaries per month rather than the impact of the services rendered. It is further averred that the quality of services is thus subordinate to quantity (Dhludhlu & Lombard, 2017).

In line with the above findings, Strydom et al., (2017) argue that the focus of service delivery is on reaching the targets and as such, it is not necessarily concerned with the best interests of the clients or families. It is thus, argued that the service plans following the policy of the government and the targets that should be reached could thus be the starting point for intervention. Notably, therefore, the few available social workers are overloaded with legislative responsibilities or mandate such as the investigation of many foster care cases and the compilation of reports which leads to an emphasis on paperwork and the meeting of court deadlines.

Sub-theme 3.4: Perceived Lack of Professional Autonomy

Funck (2012) describes professional autonomy as consisting of three aspects: Firstly, it is the ability to make and exercise decisions, secondly, it is the ability to determine and judge the quality of professional work, and thirdly, it is the ability to value one's work and determine an

appropriate level of remuneration. It is notable that even though social workers have undergone relevant training and acquired the requisite knowledge in social work, they reported feeling oppressed and being uncertain in making decisions about the work that they do. As argued by Ambrose-Miller & Ashcroft (2016), social workers become powerless in discharging their professional duties, as there is interference by senior management in the work that social workers do.

Dlamini & Sewpaul (2015) argue that there is new managerialism that controls professions although professionalism requires autonomy where professionals should use their acquired knowledge, expertise, skills, values, and experience without other individuals prescribing what they should do. Thus, it should be noted that this is a matter of concern as the profession's identity is being eroded by neoliberalism and managerialism which are primarily concerned with what the government benefits and the economic interest versus the best interests of the beneficiaries (Dlamini & Sewpaul, 2015).

These extracts reveal the most practitioners' over-reliance on social work supervisors in as far as decision-making is concerned. This is an indication that supervisors' advice and directives tend to supersede professional opinions and judgment. This preference for supervisors over professional knowledge and autonomy may be attributed to the pressure to seek supervisors' support. While this may be viewed as functional in supervision relationships, it may be detrimental towards the realization of practitioners' professional autonomy. The following statements revealed the pressure that is put upon practitioners which hampers the implementation of family preservation services:

> *I had a case of a child that was reported in the office as a neglect case, and then I discussed the case with my supervisor who told me during the discussion that I had to remove the child even when I told her that I had visited the family and the case needed an intervention within the family. The supervisor said that I should remove the child and then I could not resist the supervisor, the child was removed. P10*

> *As social workers, we are powerless because we have to do what they say. After all, if we are not doing as told we will find ourselves in a very difficult situation. You might even be disciplined or dismissed at times because that will be regarded as disobedience in the relation of duty. P9*

This participant revealed a similar situation that he can find himself in when he planned to visit a family and was told to do something else. This is how he reported:

> *So now you may find that you plan to visit the family and be told to leave that and do something else or a quarterly report are needed urgently. Therefore, you need to sit down and write that report and the time to go to the family is now taken away. There is no time to do things with the family, whatever you do in just rushing to get rid of that work and continue with another one or sometimes leave it like that. P3*

The quotations above reveal that social workers have limited authority to make decisions and freedom to act following their professional knowledge base. Notably, Dlamini & Sewpaul (2015) study in an eThekwini Metro with DSD social workers revealed that the participants remarked they felt oppressed by management who did not have ideas and opinions seriously and that they were silenced on account of the severity of management's oppressive stance. The quotation by Dlamini & Sewpaul (2015) is in line with what the participant is saying when asserting how powerlessness contributes to diminished capacities and lack of participation in decision-making and how the powerless are subject to humiliation and disrespect.

Theme 4: Strategies to improve the implementation of family preservation
The participants made specific recommendations that aim to improve the human and organizational capacity to implement family preservation services. Tracy (2017) indicates that social workers should be prepared to contribute to the strengthening of families and the prevention of unnecessary out of the home placement of children. Although family preservation services have been prioritized by the South African Government, the allocation of resources and training of personnel to deliver these services is far from being desirable. Arguably, lack of training in family preservation services creates ambiguity, confusion, and misconceptions in the delivery support to children in need of care and protection and their families. Therefore, there is a need to adopt strategies that can improve the implementation of family preservation services to prevent the possible removal of children from their families.

The key suggestions and strategies worth adopting range from training on family preservations, allocation of resources, improve social work staffing and making family preservation a

specialized activity. The need to train social workers on family preservation is recommended by Strydom (2012) who argues that social workers should receive in-service training specifically on the nature and extent of the different types of services that should be rendered to families (to provide effective services to children and families).

Similarly, the participants from this study strongly recommended that training sessions on family preservation and other related legislative frameworks are needed to strengthen the knowledge and skills on the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection. The following statements from the participants echo this point:

Training, training, and training on family preservation can help me and others in implementing family preservation services to families. Social workers should get training on family preservation so that they can understand what they have to render to families and children. If social workers are trained in family preservation, then they will be able to understand family issues and render them accordingly. P3

If we could get ongoing training on family preservation services and in-service training or a refresher course on family services at least once a year or once in a quarter. P2

Proper training on the provision of family preservation services is necessary and therefore the recommendation is that social workers should be trained on the legislative frameworks like White Paper for Social Welfare, White Paper on Families and the Children Act no 38 of 2005, and legislative frameworks that are intended to guide the implementation of family preservation services. P9

I would appreciate it if the workshops and training on family preservation be conducted in different local service offices so that it will be easy to access the training. P4

We need to consider training in the implementation of family preservation because, without family preservation knowledge and skills, we cannot implement it correctly. P7

If we can get capacity building on new development on programs that are related to children and families because we are expected to render services that are focusing on children and families. P1

The Department of Social Development should not target certain individuals or coordinators to attend family preservation training but all social workers should be allowed to be trained in family preservation because we are all mandated to implement family preservation service. P8

The narratives above reflect that continual training on family preservation services is necessary to strengthen the capacity of social workers which can yield positive outcomes to children who need care and protection. By affording the social workers training opportunities, they will be equipped with the necessary skills and families may receive comprehensive services that can strengthen them and can potentially reduce the number of children being removed from their families. Swart (2017) and Mosoma & Spies (2016) argue that training on family preservation services will strengthen social workers to effectively implementing family preservation by supporting parents to care for their children.

Notably, Mosoma & Spies (2016) argue that the Department of Social Development is mandated to roll out appropriate training and education to all the nine South African Provinces as social service professionals as mandated to implement family preservation services. This situation needs urgent attention on the part of the senior management of Child Welfare Organizations to consider the training of social workers as a need towards implementing family preservation successfully. If this situation is left unattended, it can hamper the effectiveness of family preservation and this might result in many children being removed from their families. Thus, it is against this backdrop, therefore, that Strydom (2012) is of the view that family preservation services are essential in preventing the removal of children from their families.

The well-trained and competent team of social workers can make a difference to support children and families who require family preservation services. The participants suggested that well-trained social workers with specialization in family preservation can strengthen the protection of children and their families. The views of the participants are illustrated as follows:

My recommendation is that family preservation must have people with specialization knowledge in rendering family preservation services. P5

My recommendation is that family preservation can be given to social workers who can specialize in it. P6

The above quotations reveal that intensive training and specialization in family preservation can prepare social workers to focus more on rendering services to children in need of care and protection. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) established that the lack of specialized services to families delay the support, which is to be rendered to the families and this is in line with what the participants expressed concerning the need to capacitate social workers to cover the entire or all the aspects incidental to the need of families and children.

Most of the participants (who are social workers) expressed the need for ongoing contact with the children and families who are in the program. To achieve this requires sufficient resources. The following statements highlight the importance of resources in support of families.

As social workers, we need to go back to the families and do a follow up this is essential to check if there is any new development on what was agreed. upon., but, due to scare resources it does not happen so often. We need to prioritize and be given vehicles to go to the families if necessary, more especially for us working in rural areas where there is no reliable transport. P8

The regular visit to the families will help us as social workers to have a clear understanding of what is happening in the family and how the family can be supported not to be office-bound because things are happening at the communities not at the offices. This will help in identifying the gaps, do assessments, and develop a plan. P3

More time and enough resources to work intensively with families and have constant follow. P1

We need more time and resources like cars to work with families and children to render family preservation adequately. P7

Host regular meetings and suggest that family preservation teamwork as a team to empower families to do things independently. P9

The above quotations are expressive of the view that if resources are adequately allocated to social workers, the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection will improve. Resources such as vehicles can enable social workers to visit families regularly. Strydom et al., (2017) argues that the lack or unavailability of resources restricts the responsiveness of social workers to emergencies. Then, sometimes in most circumstances, this leads to other social workers using vehicles without following the proper procedure of requesting vehicles to the management because they are rushing to meet targets as targets become a pressure on and they have to report to the management. Also, increasing the number of social workers in the implementation of family preservation could improve the delivery of the needed services. The following statements are the highlights of what the participants suggested.

> *The department must also add some personnel and train them in implementing family preservation because the program is needed. P3*

> *It will be better if there is enough staff and maybe that each person is placed to do a certain program and the one in family preservation. P8*

> *We need more staff we need more social workers we need more supervisors to successfully implement family preservation as well as training. P7*

> *Family preservation needs more time and it needs more people with passion and love of it. That maybe they can increase or add the number of human resources it can be manageable. P6*

> *Adequate resources for social workers will assist in implementing family preservation. P9*

The suggestion articulated by the participants in line with Strydom's (2010) argument that preventative family preservation services can only be improved if more staff members are made available to render services to children and families. The above findings reveal that adequate social workers should be employed to successfully implement family preservation services. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) conclude their study by arguing that the effectiveness and success

of family preservation cannot be offered without the required human resource to expedite the process.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The implementation of family preservation programs is one of the key responsibilities of the social work profession. This responsibility, however, is compromised by practical inconsistencies, capacity, human and organizational resources which are key challenges ultimately impacting the provision of services to families. In this study, therefore, the data was analyzed d and presented using the four themes that emerged during the analysis. Thus, the findings presented above are the reflections of the participants. The following chapter comprising the conclusion and recommendations focuses on the interpretations of these findings, the implications, and key recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In 1996, KwaZulu-Natal became the first province to pilot the implementation of the family preservation program in South Africa by the child and youth care workers after the study \outside of KwaZulu-Natal, mostly in the Western Cape. Studies conducted by Strydom (2010, 2012 and 2015) and Van Huyssteen (2015) are an attestation to this fact. These studies focus on different aspects of family preservation such as the perspectives of social workers who render family preservation services on family preservation while others focus on different types of services rendered to families at risk by trained social workers. Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) conducted a study in the Gauteng Province in Ekurhuleni Metro, which explored the challenges that social workers experienced in providing family preservation services to children who have been removed from their families exploring the experiences of social workers in the provision of family preservation services. None of the studies conducted in these areas have probed into the implementation and how social workers could be capacitated to implement family preservation effectively.

The study conducted by Mosoma (2014) probed into the training manual on family preservation by social workers and left the contribution made by child and youth care workers as the first team that implemented family preservation together with the support of social workers in the Inanda service office. Lack of specialized training on family preservation and insufficient time for intervening appropriately has been identified as the two themes that were addressed by the study on family preservation and insufficient interventions for children in need of care and protection are the two themes that were addressed by that study. This study, however, explored the implementation gaps that deter the effective provision of family preservation services by social workers who provide these services to communities in the Amajuba District Municipality. To achieve this aim, this qualitative study was undertaken using an in-depth interview with 10 social workers who render family preservation services in the Amajuba District.

5.2. The objectives presented below were formulated to achieve the aim of the study:
   a) To understand how social worker, understand the family preservation services and

its implementation.

b) To identify existing procedural gaps within the implementation process of family preservation services.

c) To explore factors that impede the effective implementation of family preservation.

d) To identify strategies that can enhance the capacity of social workers to provide effective family preservation.

5.3. THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING

This study used the ecosystem theory as a theoretical lens to understand the social workers' responses and their interactions with the clients by examining the environment where these social workers practice as well as the environmental context of their clients (Kelly & Gates, 2010; Pollock, 2013; Boetto, 2017). This theory addresses interactions of mutual influence among individuals that shape the environmental contexts in which the social workers provide services to clients. Therefore, both authors emphasize the conviction that human development and change cannot be separated from the context of the person's relationship with the environment (Marais & van der Merwe, 2016). Social workers who developed an understanding of clients in the context of their social environments and life histories can relate to their clients while recognizing their strengths and accomplishments in coping.

Interaction and sharing within the workplace were beneficial for social workers and it facilitated mutual learning through practice. Sharing difficulties and misunderstanding of family preservation taught them new skills of providing services to children and families. The contribution from social workers working in other organizations further improved their understanding of family preservation. Schmidt & Rautenbach (2016) emphasize the importance of environmental space as an opportunity that contributes to the accumulation of knowledge to reflect upon practice experiences in supportive learning that is provided by professional practitioners in their interactive space. This study established that most of the social workers utilize the opportunity to learn from other colleagues during working hours and even when they have case conferences as reflected in their transcript.

Thus, the study revealed that most of the social workers have not attended formal training on family preservation program, which would enable them to implement it according to the legislative framework, policies and having insufficient knowledge in this regard compromises their practice in strengthening the functioning of the family towards improving the wellbeing

of the children. Nevertheless, they are determined to implement the program even though there are challenges in conceptualizing the implementation of the family preservation process and guidelines. Through interaction with colleagues, the participants received information on how best they can implement family preservation programs effectively. This shows how important it is for social workers to have interactive sessions where they share information that would assist them to accumulate knowledge by supporting one another. The pressure from the neoliberal policy is likely to reduce the services provided by the social workers and, more often than not, they do have a feeling of despair and hopelessness deriving from the impact of their work (Strydom et al., 2017). This situation is best accounted for by insufficient time for planning.

The study found that numerous challenges affect social workers within the mesosystems, which directly contribute to the capacity of social workers to provide the best interests of the child in mind. The findings show that these challenges (problems within mesosystems) impede the social worker's capacity to work with the best interests of the child in mind considering the non-financial data and the targets that have to be reached monthly (Boning, 2013)**.** Other challenges such as the shortage of social workers and the resulting high caseloads and the time constraints, high staff turnover, and the lack of tools which, further impact on the social workers' capacity to provide effective child protection services (Amukwelele, 2017; Hope & van Wyk, 2018). Overall, the findings show that professionals are not guided by the legislative policies (exosystems) and as a result of this, their current intervention of implementation of family preservation services within the microsystem are guided by personal instinct and there is a high focus on administrative responsibilities rather than providing the essential needs to the children and the families (Nhedzi & Makofane, 2015; Hope & van Wyk, 2018). Thus, although family preservation program is needed to provide intensive services to the children, and their families, the focus is on reaching the targets number which is quantity rather on services delivery to strengthen the capacity of families to care and protect children who are at high risk by providing the necessary services to forestall the children's removal.

The findings also show that because of the challenges within the various systems, current interventions are for non-financial data and the target-based crisis-oriented and of a drop and naturally results in insufficient emotional care directed towards the child and family (Wulczyn, 2010). Notably, this chapter begins with a summary of the key findings with the study's key objectives. This is followed by a critical discussion of the key findings of the problem statement

and finally, the recommendations and future direction of research on family preservation are discussed.

5.4. MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

The key conclusions discussed below were drawn from the study's findings and these have informed the key recommendations of the study.

5.4.1. Social workers' understanding of family preservation services and their implementation.

The findings indicated that family preservation services were understood and conceptualized by the participants. Despite their understanding and conceptualization, the implementation process, program procedures, and how this program differs from other services that are provided by social workers in other areas was lacking. The study conducted by Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) and Strydom, (2012) reveal similar findings to this study that the guidelines on family preservation are not clear which confused them about what actually family preservation entails. Because of that, social workers were uncertain about the different types of services that are rendered and the cases that are suitable for family preservation services. The findings of this study, therefore, found that most of the participants are lacking relevant knowledge and understanding that would guide and enable them on implementing family preservation services according to what family preservation entails.

Of importance to note, therefore, is the fact that clear articulation of the family preservation program did not seem to be corresponding with sufficient knowledge of the implementation process of the program. Notably, Mosoma's (2014) study on the Manual development of family preservation established that social workers cannot define family preservation beyond constructing it as being concerned with the keeping of families together or preservation of families (see chapter 4). Hence, Nhedzi & Makofane (2015) found that the responses of the participants indicate that family preservation services are provided as a preventative, early intervention and statutory injunction, and lastly, as an after-care service focusing on supporting children and families. Strydom (2010) found that social workers do understand that the focus of family preservation should be on prevention services as outlined in the policy documents.

The study reveals that not much has changed regarding the implementation of family preservation because the strong emphasis in service delivery is still strongly on statutory

services rather than on prevention and early intervention services. The findings further indicate a stronger reliance on colleagues for guidance on how to practice family preservation in families. The understanding of family preservation is not isolated from the pieces of legislative frameworks and policies that mandate that the implementation of family preservation must support the rights and wellbeing of children by promoting family preservation (Nicklett & Perron, 2010; Nhedzi, 2014; Van Huyssteen & Strydom, 2016).

To effectively implement any program and to ensure that the intended outcomes of the program are achieved, key people involved in the implementation must have adequate knowledge of the implementation process as well as the outcomes of the program. According to Parton (2014), training social workers to conduct the program effectively is key for the success and effective implementation of the family preservation program. However, the findings of the study indicate that most of the participants do not attend the training in family preservation and as a consequence of that, these participants have limited knowledge of the implementation process.

The challenges in implementing family preservation services seem to be linked to a lack of familiarity with the relevant legislation, which regulates the implementation of family preservation services. The participants have limited knowledge of the legislation that governs the implementation of family preservation. Few of the participants indicated that they mostly rely on the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 to provide information on the implementation of family preservation. Arguably, this lack of knowledge hinders the family reunification process because some of the children are reunified without proper planning and preparation for their return to their rightful families. The reunification process requires social workers to follow certain guidelines, which include preparing the child and the family for the return of the child (section 187 of the Children Act no 38 of 2005). The findings indicate that the social workers reunify the child without proper preparation of both the child and the family.

Drawing from the ecosystemic perspective, the study advocates the view that the immediate context of social workers does not foster appropriate support and training for social workers. Furthermore, there is a vivid incoherence between the legislation and policy approach at the macro level and the microsystem where social workers operate. This demonstrates, arguably, a discrepancy within the current child protection system and the inability of various systems to reinforce or support one another. This discrepancy in the delivery of services compromises the delivery of child protection services.

5.4.2. The existing procedural gaps within the implementation process of family preservation services.

This objective was intended to identify the procedural gaps within the implementation process of family preservation services. The participants expressed a variety of procedural gaps that limit the success of family preservation services. The study established that the majority of the participants are relying mostly on the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 whereas there is a variety of legislative frameworks and policies that inform the implementation of family preservation services. The responses of the participants when asked about other legislations and policies, responded by remarking that they do not understand much about them, for example, the White Paper for Social Welfare Services (1997) and White Paper on Family Policy (2012) just to mention the few. Failure to understand social policy can have a serious negative impact that can hinder effective practice as social policy underpins the services that can address poverty (Green & Clarke, 2016).

Mosoma & Spies (2016) argue that the challenges that social workers experience relate to the interpretation of the legislation and policy regarding what they are required to do when implementing family preservation. The study found that most of the participants are not implementing family preservation according to the given guidelines. Similarly, Strydom (2010, 2012) corroborates the foregoing views to the effect that the social workers do not render family preservation according to the policy documents.

The majority of the participants revealed that they do not have time for supervision even if they have that opportunity of being supervised by their supervisor; they have limited time to cover all the items that are essential for support purposes. The study also found that supervisors themselves are not trained in family preservation programs, which makes it difficult for them to receive appropriate support regarding the implementation of the programs. The supervision framework developed by the Department of Social Development as a statutory requirement of social work practices in South Africa, such, as the Social Service Professions Act (1978), Code of Ethics (SACSSP, 2007), and the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2006) has been found in this study as lacking as this also impacts on the service delivery as expressed by the participants (cf. Chapter 4:70). The supervision framework emphasizes that the production and quality of services rendered to children and families are affected by a lack of supervision offered to social workers who are the key implementers of family preservation services. If this

lack continues, it becomes a procedural gap in the implementation of family preservation due to the insufficiency of support offered to the social workers.

Non-adherence to standard procedures of removing a child from a family is also a gap. The participants remarked that most of the children are removed without proper investigation and developmental assessment, which would inform the social workers about the current circumstances of the child. Lack of adequate time to conduct a comprehensive assessment and heavy caseloads carried by social workers were reported as the delivery setbacks of family preservation services. These heavy caseloads affect the formulation of appropriate interventions for families. At times, poor assessment of the entire family circumstances leads to the removal of children that can be possibly prevented if the proper assessment is conducted thoroughly and early intervention services implemented effectively.

The findings show that heavy reliance on non-financial data (NFD) is the standard reporting procedure and it was reported as one of the procedural gaps in the implementation of family preservation, which is based on reaching a certain number of people monthly. Non- financial data can be defined as statistics and evidence related to social work to the Department of Social Development. Hence, family preservation services focus on a small number of cases and are based on services rendered to children and families for preventing removal where risk can be minimized. Notably, the family preservation program requires that maximum support be provided to families and that the social workers provide intensive support services to a small number of cases identified as at imminent risk. The non-financial data focuses on reaching the monthly targets and this negatively affects the implementation of family preservation service. Stolowy & Paugam (2018) describe non-financial data as a statement or information to the extent necessary for an understanding of the performance impact of its activity that is based on quantity. Hence, Haller, Link & Grob (2017) assert that non-financial data is quantitative information measured in numbers of either an individual's or an entity's performance that is expressed in monetary units. The participants remarked that it is difficult to render family preservation services to families because even if they see that there is a need to spend more time with the family, they rush the process to try and reach a specific number of cases that are a target for that particular month. Strydom et al., (2017) argue that neoliberalism in South Africa has changed how families experiencing problems are approached as the focus of service delivery is on the reaching of targets and not necessarily on what is in the best interests of the family. The findings show that the implementation process of family preservation services

cannot be achieved through non-financial data as it focuses on the number of people rather than the quality of the services rendered.

5.4.3. Objective 3: Factors that impede the effective implementation of family preservation.

The use of the ecosystemic perspective in this study indicates a range of factors in the micro and macro systems respectively and these impede the implementation of family preservation. The absence of a practice model, inadequate training on family preservation, and lack of supervision are the key factors, which the participants cited in this research study (Chanyandura, 2016). The organizational factors include inadequate resources such as transportation to reach families in deeply rural areas and funding to initiate services were key concerns. Similar to various studies that have been conducted in South Africa, these studies found that the lack of resources has a great negative impact on the delivery of the services to the children and the families (Strydom, 2010; Van Huyssteen &Strydom, 2016; Van Huyssteen, 2015). Strydom (2010, 2012) attests to the fact that inadequate resources such as shortage of social workers as well as funds and the high number of cases because family preservation is rendered to the smaller number of caseload and lack of funding have seriously hampered the implementation of policy requirements regarding preventative service delivery. The findings reflect that even though social workers are mandated to implement family preservation services to families in crisis, there are specific organizational factors that limit the implementation process.

The shortage of social workers who can render family preservation and high social work caseloads were key factors that hindered the effective implementation of family preservation. Furthermore, regardless of the policy requirements that mandate social workers to render family preservation services to families and children, high workloads make it difficult to manage and effectively implement family preservation services. According to Strydom et al., (2017), the neoliberal system with its focus on global economic trends directing neoliberal policy harms service delivery. Furthermore, these authors argue that the neoliberal policies could have contributed to the increased caseloads of social workers and this harms child protection services.

Hall & Sambu (2018) reveal that in 2017, 70% of the children in South Africa lived in households where at least one adult was working. Notably, 39 % of the children lived in

households where no adults working. It is thus arguable that most of the challenges experienced by children and families emanate from this situation and conditions that directly affect them. The official national unemployment rates in South Africa have been rated to be 27.7% in the third quarter of 2017 which found three provinces scoring in high in the child poverty rates respectively. Those provinces are Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal with between 39% - 44%. Arguably, high levels of extreme poverty in families contribute to the difficulties social workers experience in the delivery of family preservation services. Some families are unable to access the services that could contribute to the strengthening of the families subjected to financial constraints.

Similar factors that hinder the implementation of family preservation have been previously reported in other studies. For example, the studies conducted by Strydom (2010, 2012), Nhedzi & Makofane (2015), Combrinck (2015), Van Huyssteen, and Strydom (2016) reveal that factors such as shortage of social workers, insufficient funds, insufficient resources such as vehicles to use in visiting and transporting children and families to venues of services, hamper the effective implementation of family preservation services.

5.4.4. Strategies that can enhance the implementation of family preservation services by social workers.

The participants identified three key strategies that can be used to enhance the capacity of social workers to successfully implement family preservation according to South African policy documents. These key strategies are discussed below:

5.4.4.1. Training on Family Preservation, Legislations and Policies

The study found that participants do have an understanding of family preservation services. However, the participants realized that it is inadequate to provide and implement family preservation effectively. It is against this backdrop, therefore that the participants expressed the need for training in family preservation programs to strengthen and improve the service delivery that can prevent the removal of children and subsequently improve the capacity of parents and social workers. Strydom (2012) indicates that the Department of social work encourages universities to consider developing a curriculum that provides for training social workers in family preservation services to ensure that the requirements in policy documents are met. Hooper-Briar et al (1995) assert that the university should develop a curriculum from

the core values and principles of family preservation thus allowing for diversity in approaches, which would be understood, for example, indigenizing family preservation programs.

Strydom (2015) emphasizes that the in-service training of social workers would enhance service rendering by including family preservation principles as well as their existing programs as a clear link between the aim of family preservation services and the needs of families. Hence, Strydom (2012) argue that social workers should receive a thorough in-service training that entails what family preservation is, the nature and the extent of the different types of services that should be rendered to families of high-risk children. Mosoma & Spies (2016) found that social workers need further training on family preservation programs to keep up with new developments since poor coordination of on-going training and capacity building on family preservation services to contribute immensely to poor implementation of the programs. The accumulation of knowledge contributes to deliver services significantly.

5.4.4.2. Follow-up and regular home visit

The participants realize that there is a need to follow up with the family and do regular visits to continuously assess family situations to establish whether there are any new developments or not. This could be done after a decision to remove a child or even when the decision has been taken not to remove a child (from the family or community where the child is familiar with). The follow-up services are recommended in terms of section (187) of the Children's Act no 38 of 2005 that the family be prepared for family reunification of the child who was removed. The conceptualization of family preservation as an intensive family preservation program was effective in preventing the removal of children with small caseloads given to one social worker in a short period spanning 4–6 weeks so that the social workers can follow up all cases (Al et al, 2012). Strydom (2012) is of the view that home visits comply with the approach of the developmental model in social work service delivery.

The participants revealed that there are challenges regarding the availability of resources, such as vehicles and other essential resources. Similarly, Strydom (2015) corroborates this view by asserting that service providers often do not have sufficient vehicles for home visits, which means that there would be no accessibility to reach families and children. The Child Safety Directorate (2016) avers that the frequency of home visits to the family is determined by the family's needs. For enhancing the implementation of family preservation, the participants

recommend that sufficient resources be available so that the implementation of family preservation would be effective as enjoined by the South African Constitution.

5.4.4.3. Specialization on Family Preservation program

The need to specialize in family preservation programs is a key recommendation. The participants indicated that the Department of Social Development has family preservation coordinators that coordinate family services in district offices and local service offices. However, the participants asserted that there is a need to create specialized family preservation teams or a wing within the DSD, which will provide intensive training and guidance on family preservation services. Therefore, the participants recommend that the DSD have specialists focusing also on supporting social workers in implementing the program and monitor the effectiveness of family preservation as an interventionist paradigm. The purpose of this is to strengthen and improve the implementation of family preservation services. Family preservation practitioners who are trained specialists in family interventions maintain a consistent value toward preserving the integrity of the family (Cheung et al., 1997).

To have social workers with intensive skills and knowledge on family preservation services should focus their attention on the implementation of family preservation services to track the impact, which it has on children and families, is a key need to empower them. Strydom (2010) argues that intensive family preservation services are mainly that the imminent removal of a child demands intensive services and will allow the social workers specializing on family preservation services to be flexible enough and be available as and when they are needed with a manageable caseload that is achievable on a short term basis.

Thus Strydom (2012) is of the ideal that social workers should focus on the development of skills in at-risk families and strengthening families, this would enable them to empower them to use of resources in the community on their own. Thus, Strydom (2012) is of the view that social workers focusing on this would enable the services to focus on the development of skills in at-risk families to empower them to make use of resources in the community on their own. Patel, Hochfeld & Englert (2018) assert that the family forum at the national level, provincial level, and district level should ensure that effective coordination provides support and training on family services.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The recommendations are provided with the view of having them adopted for use to improve the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection more specifically to families raising children. These recommendations are based on the findings of the study and they are as follows:

(a) Social workers must have relevant training on rendering family preservation services to children in need of care and protection to prevent the removal of children by strengthening the capacity of parents to care and protect their children.

(b) The supervision of social workers as a critical area that needs to be looked at to enhance the support provided to social workers who implement family preservation.

(c) Family preservation services must be prioritized as mandated by the South African Policy documents and this must ensure that all social workers are well versed with the relevant legislation that informs the implementation of family preservation.

(d) Sufficient resources should be made available to social workers implementing family preservation services so that they can effectively implement family preservation services.

(e) The focus of family preservation should be on the quality of the services provided to families and children rather than focusing on non-financial data targets (NFD).

(f) To effectively provide family preservation services, the number of staff and caseloads should be looked at as family preservation is working with small caseloads and some cases need intensive services.

(g) Procedural and clear guidelines for implementing family preservation services must be developed.

(h) Ongoing developmental assessment of children and families who have received services from social workers must be done.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In light of the above findings of the study from the qualitative data collected regarding the implementation of family preservation services:

(a) It is recommended that further research be conducted with families that have received family preservation services to ascertain how they have benefited from the

family preservation services focusing more on have they have been engaged and the role they played in decision making.

(b) Taking into consideration that not many studies have been conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted in other areas to corroborate this study's understanding of how social workers implement family preservation as mandated by the Department of Social Development.

5.7. CONCLUSION

Social workers in child welfare organizations are faced with numerous challenges when rendering services to vulnerable children. Notably, not all social service practitioners are sufficiently trained and competent in implementing family preservation services. Working with a high number of families and children when implementing family preservation, social workers are not able to provide appropriate support that strengthens the capacity of the families. The study, therefore, revealed that there are still more challenges in meeting the requirements set out in the South African policy documents towards rendering services to at-risk families with the view of preventing the removal of children. Thus, the contribution made by social workers in delivering the services under difficult situations and environments is recognized in this study.

This chapter, therefore, rendered an explication of the achievement of the last objective of the study by providing various conclusions and recommendations concerning the implementation of family preservation by social workers at the child and family welfare organizations. Arguably, the aim of the research study was also achieved since a better understanding of how social workers implement family preservation services to children in need of care and protection has been achieved.

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7. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Mazisi Kunene Road,
Glenwood
Durban
University of KZN
Durban
4041

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection within the Amajuba District Municipality, KwaZulu Natal.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza** and I am a master's student from the Social Work Department at the University of KwaZulu Natal. This study seeks to explore the implementation of family preservation services to families with children who need care and protection. The results of this study will become part of a research report. You are selected as a possible participant in this study because you are currently a social worker with at least three years' experience in the field of family preservation services.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 60 minutes.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate, or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		

I, (name of participant) …………………………………….…hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the information sheet and the nature of the research and that I consent to participate.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, should I desire.

-- Date

Signature of participant Worker

 Researcher's name   Date

I can be contacted at 0829560862 0r 0343667299, email Mbongiseni. Nzuza2@gmail.com

My supervisor can alternatively be reached at the following contact details

Email: mthembum4@ukzn.ac.za

Cell: 0828121761

Office: 031 260 2358
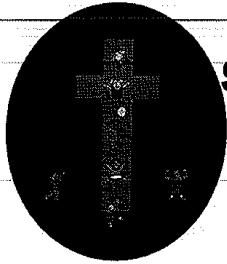
You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

St. Anthony's Child & Youth Care Centre

CHARITY NUMBER 004-202
VAT NO. 4520128176
PBO No. 930001078
TEL: 034:3667299   (U.K.01027 34 3667299)
FAX: 034-3667223
E-Mail: stanthonyshome@worldonline.co.za
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NEWCASTLE, KZN 2940
SOUTH AFRICA

BLAAUWBOSCH CATHOLIC MISSION, NEAR ST LEWIS HIGH SCHOOL, OSIZWENI, BLAAUWBOSCH 2952

07 April 2017

The Manager
Child Welfare South Africa Newcastle
57 Paterson Street
P.O. BOX 8
NEWCASTLE, 2940

Dear Ms. Farieda Mia

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT YOUR NEWCASTLE CHLD WELFARE ORGANISATION
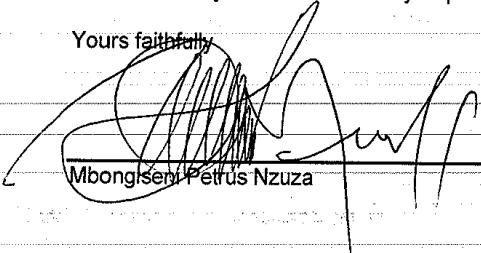
My name is Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza a Manager at St Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre and I am a part time Masters student at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I would like to request your permission to conduct a study within Amajuba District. The study is an academic requirement for the completion of my Master's degree in social work.

My study focuses on the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection at Amajuba District and it requires that I interview social workers who are involve in the provision of these services. The participants will be informed regarding the time and place of the interviews. I intend not to disrupt or interfere with the day-to-day activities of the organisation in the office. I therefore request to interview one or two social worker/s from your offices within Amajuba.

On completing my research, I intend to make my research findings available to the organisation so that it will contribute towards the development of more practical and effective strategies that can help social workers to improve service delivery.

Your favourably consideration of my request will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza

06 June 2017

The Manager
St.Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre
P.O.Box 1824
Newcastle
2940

Dear Mr Nzuza

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT YOUR ORGANISATION NEWCASTLE OFFICE

Our discussion yesterday (06/06/2017) regarding your request to interview social workers at our office for the purpose of conducting your study into the implementation of family preservation programmes has reference.

I want to confirm that it will be our pleasure to be a part of your study. The dates and time of the interviews will be arranged closer to the time.
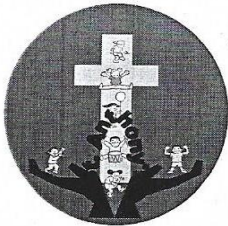
I wish you luck in your endeavour and assure of our assistance and cooperation whenever you need it.

Yours faithfully.

Farieda Mia
Manager

034 3126228(T) ● 034 3122105(F)
57 Paterson Street ● NEWCASTLE ● 2940
P.O. BOX 8 ● NEWCASTLE ● 2940
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164

St. Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre

CHARITY NUMBER 004-202 NPO

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E-MAIL: admin@stanthonyshome.org
BLAAUWBOSCH CATHOLIC MISSION, NEAR ST LEWIS HIGH SCHOOL, OSIZWENI, BLAAUWBOSCH 2952

07 April 2017

Head of Department
Department of Social Development
208 Hassen Haffejee,
Pietermaritzburg, 3200
Private Bag X9144,
Pietermaritzburg, 3200

Dear Ms Nokuthula Khanyile

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT DSD AMAJUBA DISTRICT OFFICES.

My name is Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza a Manager at St Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre and I am a part time Master's student at University of KwaZulu Natal. I would like to request your permission to conduct a study within Amajuba District. The study is an academic requirement for the completion of my Master's degree in social work.

My study focuses on the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection at Amajuba and it requires that I interview social workers who are involved in the provision of these services. The respondents will be informed regarding the time and place of the interviews. I intend not to disrupt or interfere with the day to day activities of the Department in their offices. I therefore request to interview eight social workers from the different offices within DSD Amajuba District.

On completing my research, I intend to make my research findings available to the Department of Social Development so that it will contribute towards the development of more practical and effective strategies that can help social workers to improve service delivery.

Your favourable consideration of my request will be appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza

Fax : (034)317 1228	Amajuba District
Telephone/ Ucingo /Telefoon : (034)317 2529	113 Panorama Lennoxton
Enquiries / Imibuzo / Navrae : Mr DBB Msimango	Private Bag X 6680
E-mail: msimangab@kznsocdev.gov.za	Newcastle
	2940

SUBMISSION

TO	:	THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT MS. NG KHANYILE
FROM	:	THE ACTING DIRECTOR: AMAJUBA DISTRICT MR. DBB MSIMANGO
DATE	:	02 MAY 2017
SUBJECT	:	REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES WITHIN AMAJUBA DISTRICT OFFICE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this submission is to request authority and approval from the
Head of Department: -

- for Centre Manager: St. Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre, Mr. Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza, to conduct research by interviewing eight (**08**) Social Workers from different offices of the Department of Social Development within Amajuba District.

BACKGROUND

Mr. M P Nzuza, Centre Manager for St. Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre is a part time student for the Master's Degree in Social Work at University of KwaZulu Natal.

Page **1** of **4**

Mr. Nzuza is requesting permission to conduct an academic study on the topic relating to **"The implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection at Amajuba District."**

MOTIVATION

The research survey on the implementation of family preservation services will assist the community as beneficiaries of the programme with impact assessment, identification of dips in the performance of the programme, and finally resulting to the development of strategies that may enhance and promote effective implementation of the services that will positively contribute to improved social functioning within each family setting. The findings on the study will be shared with the Department and the entire community including all of the interested groups.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications in respect of this submission.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the afore-mentioned case details; the following is submitted as recommendations for consideration:

- It is thus recommended that the Head of Department grants authority and approval for Mr MP Nzuza, Centre Manager: St. Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre to conduct an academic research study with a view to fulfil the prescribed requirements towards completing his Master's Degree in Social Work; which is deemed to ultimately be a survey that will improve service delivery.

DATE: _02/05/2017_

MR DBB MSIMANGO
ACTING DIRECTOR: AMAJUBA DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the afore-mentioned case details; the following is submitted as recommendations for consideration:

- It is thus recommended that the Head of Department grants authority and approval for Mr MP Nzuza, Centre Manager: St. Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre to conduct an academic research study with a view to fulfil the prescribed requirements towards completing his Master's Degree in Social Work; which is deemed to ultimately be a survey that will improve service delivery.
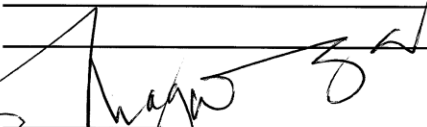
SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED

REMARKS   :

_____

_____

_____

MS PM MHLONGO   DATE: 2017/05/04

CHIEF DIRECTOR: MIDLANDS CLUSTER

SUPPORTED/NOT SUPPORTED

REMARKS   :

_____

_____

_____

MR W. MAGWAZA   DATE: 8.5.2017

ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

KZN: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Page **3** of **4**

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the afore-mentioned case details; the following is submitted as recommendations for consideration:

- It is thus recommended that the Head of Department grants authority and approval for Mr MP Nzuza, Centre Manager: St. Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre to conduct an academic research study with a view to fulfil the prescribed requirements towards completing his Master's Degree in Social Work; which is deemed to ultimately be a survey that will improve service delivery.
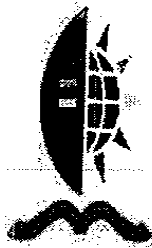
APPROVED/~~NOT APPROVED~~

REMARKS :

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MS NG KHANYILE   DATE: 2017/6/10
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
KZN: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

12 October 2017

Mr Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza 217050902
School of Applied Human Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Nzuza

Protocol reference number: HSS/1520/017M
Project title: The implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection within the Amajuba District Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 18 July 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Mn Mthembu
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn
cc. School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEWS GUIDE

Semi-structured interview

1. South African Government Policy Documents on Service Delivery such as White Paper for Social Welfare 1997, Children's Act no 38 of 2005, White Paper on Families 2012, and other related legislation on the implementation of family preservation services. How do these legislative frameworks guide your implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection?

2. Can you elaborate more in detail about your understanding of family preservation services to families and children?

3. What do you think is your role in the provision of family preservation services?

4. Do you have child protection cases where you felt you could have done more? if so, can you share your experiences

5. Do you think there are cases where children should have been taken back to their families and they have not? if they are, what hinders the reunification of the children with their families?

6. Describe the types of services that you render to prevent the removal of children from their families?

7. Tell me more about your preventative services in protecting children who can be at imminent risk of removal?

8. Explain in more detail about the delivery of early intervention services as a program of keeping children safe in their families?

9. Explain more the challenges that you experience as a so social worker when you are implementing family preservation services?

10. Can you tell me about the reunification services of children who have already been removed and placed in alternative care?

11. What do you think is missing in the provision of family preservation services?

12. What are your suggestions regarding the strategies that can enhance the implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection?

13. In your opinion what can be done to assist social workers to successfully implement family preservation services?

14. Can you suggest any recommendations that can assist in the promotion of effective implementation of family preservation services to children in need of care and protection?

15. Do you have any other recommendations, comments that can help or assist in implementing family preservation services?

16. What do you think is needed to protect children who require care and protection?

17. What are some of the things that you believe work in family preservation services?

18. Based on your experiences, do you think some too many children are removed from their families? if yes, why is that so?