



Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the South African Police Service

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Key terms: Investigating officers, roles and responsibilities, forensic social work, South African Police Services (SAPS)

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my mother Elizabeth Tukunu Molete, who raised me and always had faith in me that I can achieve great things in life. Another dedication goes to my husband Molefi Isaac Ndwani who supported me, encouraged me and showed me love every step of the way.

I am very thankful to both these people and feel very blessed to have them in my life.

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- All the Glory and Honour goes to my Heavenly Father Jehovah, for giving me the grace, wisdom, strength and courage to complete this study.
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CERTIFICATION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

**CERTIFICATE FOR
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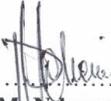
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DECLARATION

I, Dorah Motlagomang Ndweni hereby state that this dissertation entitled:

Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the South African Police Services

is my own work.


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D.M. Ndweni

Date: 2019-11-25

PREFACE

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master in Social Work in Forensic Practice. The Social Work Forensic Practice curriculum consists of a total of 188 credits. Of these credits, the research dissertation accounts for 60 of these credits.

This dissertation is presented in article format in line with the general academic rules of the North-West University (NWU, 2019). The first section of the dissertation provides a literature review, problem statement and outline of the research method. The second section provides the manuscript prepared according to the guidelines of the journal that the manuscript will be submitted to. The third and final section includes the conclusions of the study.

The manuscript will be submitted to Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk for possible publication. See the next page for author guidelines of Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk.

INSTRUCTION TO THE AUTHORS

SOCIAL WORK/MAATSKAPLIKE WERK

The guidelines for the submission of an article to this journal include the following:

Manuscripts may be written in English or Afrikaans while ensuring that the use of capital letters and punctuation marks are done so accurately; all articles should include an abstract in English and it should not exceed 100 words. All contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee and will be kept strictly confidential.

Manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style or presentation does not conform to the journal practice. Articles of fewer than 2000 words or more than 10 000 words are normally not considered for publication; manuscripts should be typed in 12 pt Times Roman double-spaced on A4 paper size as well as making use of the Harvard system for referencing. Short references in the text: When word-for-word quotations, facts, or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text, e.g. “...” (Berger, 1967:12). In addition, more details about sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption “References” and the sources must be arranged in alphabetical order according to the surnames of the authors.

(Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk, 2014:1).

SUMMARY

Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the SAPS (South African Police Services)

This article presents the results of empirical data obtained from an explorative qualitative study regarding the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work services in the South African Police Service. The aim of the study was to gain an understanding about the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. Data was collected from the investigating officers at the FCS units in the five clusters of SAPS in the Northern Cape Province using semi-structured interviews. The participants in the study were FCS investigating officers who are responsible for the management of FCS related cases, working directly with forensic social workers within the FCS Units. When reviewing literature on the role of forensic social workers from the past ten years, the researcher discovered that there have not been many empirical studies done on the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the South African Police Services. One similar study was conducted at the Eastern Cape regarding the Managers perspectives on the integration of forensic social work in the South African Police Service. The aim was to obtain an understanding about the perspectives of SAPS management with regards to integration of forensic social workers. In response to this, a qualitative study based in the Northern Cape Province was conducted. In terms of section 54 of the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007, all South Africans have a statutory obligation to report their suspicion of child sexual abuse to SAPS. According to the South African Police Service (SAPS, 2017), the Northern Cape was one of only two provinces who recorded an increase in sexual offences. This emphasised the researcher's need to establish the perspectives of investigating officers with regard to the role and responsibilities of the forensic social workers, as the researcher is of the opinion that the answer can lead to more effective utilisation of forensic social workers. The findings of the study revealed that forensic social workers roles and responsibilities within SAPS entails conducting scientific assessments with children on child sexual abuse cases and assisting in statement takings, which according to the investigating officers make a valuable contribution in the investigation of child sexual abuse cases. The study also revealed that currently there is a shortage of forensic social workers in SAPS.

KEY WORDS: Investigating officers, Roles and Responsibilities, Forensic Social Work, South African Police Services (SAPS)

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SECTION A

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1. Contextualization and Problem Statement

In terms of the Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 Article 28(2), the best interest of the child is of paramount importance in every matter concerning a child (South African Constitution, 1996:15). The alarming rate of child sexual abuse and rape cases in South Africa has led to an almost up-rise and an outcry for improved, more effective and efficient intervention by both government and the community at large (Jonkers, 2012:1). In terms of section 54 of the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act, Act 32 of 2007, all South Africans have a statutory obligation to report their suspicion of child sexual abuse to the South African Police Service (SAPS). Therefore, the SAPS have prioritised the effective service delivery to victims of child sexual offences by the utilization of experts such as forensic social workers in the field of child sexual abuse. A forensic social worker is a social worker with scientific and specialised knowledge, skills, training and education and experience in forensic social work, who provides the court with written or oral impartial and factual expert testimony (Registration of a Specialisation in Forensic Social Work Regulation, 2017:2).

SAPS is a law enforcement agent or state development charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in South Africa, which derives its powers from section 199 of the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 as well as the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995. According to the latter, SAPS is regulated by Section 205 (3) of the Constitution of South Africa to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property and to uphold and enforce the law.

SAPS is an organisation divided into national, provincial and area components with many units and stations operating within these divisions. According to Dette, (2008:5), a police member is an official appointed under section 33(1) of the South African Police Service Act, (Act 68 of 1995). A police member can be considered as a front-line employee who performs and is exposed to hands-on police work (functional and operational duties). Managers or commanders at the SAPS are members responsible for making strategic decisions regarding policies and national instructions and also ensure compliance thereof (Department of Police, 2011:25). According to the SAPS National Instruction (2019:2), the Family Violence, Child Protection

and Sexual Offences (FCS) unit refers to the provincial and cluster FCS Units within SAPS who are responsible for the investigation of sexual crimes, family violence and child protection cases. Thus employees of the FCS units are members of the South African Police Service who successfully completed the general course for Detectives and the relevant FCS-related courses which qualifies and enables competency to deal with child sexual abuse cases. Employees of the FCS units are referred to as investigating officers (National Instruction, 2019:4). According to the SAPS National Instruction (1998:1), an investigating officer of FCS means a member of SAPS that is designated to investigate sexual offence cases. The focus of their investigation is to provide a sensitive, effective service to the victims of these crimes and to conduct quality investigations.

In a study conducted by Ntlatleng, (2012: v), it was indicated that due to the sensitive nature of child sexual abuse cases, finalising such cases successfully becomes a major problem. The author states that trained professionals are needed in order to deal with the issues of sexual abuse and that proper investigations need to be conducted. The fact that investigating officers attended a detective learning course and an FCS course does not guarantee that they will be able to handle child sexual abuse cases in an adequate manner (Ntlatleng, 2012:27). Jonkers, (2012:8) concurs that the investigation of child sexual abuse cases is a challenging terrain that calls for specialised training, commitment as well as expertise and, therefore, the forensic social workers play an important role as they have to assist the investigating officer in this regard.

To assist SAPS with this challenging responsibility of investigating cases of child sexual abuse, forensic social work services was established in SAPS on 6 May 1997 and became operational in November 1997 (Stutterheim & Weyers, 1999:16). Scheepers, (2008:4) states that there were 22 police social workers, between March and September 1997 who underwent special training in forensic investigations to assist in assessing allegations of sexual offences against children. In 2013 the number increased to 75 social workers. Currently there are 106 forensic social workers throughout the country placed at various FCS units to improve the quality of the FCS components services and expedite the FCS component's investigations with regard to sexual abuse cases involving children (Forensic Social Work Standard Operating Procedure Manual, 2016:3). The first national commander of forensic social work was only appointed during 2012 (SAPS National Office Human Resource Circular 5/3/1, (2012)). The driving force behind the introduction of forensic social workers in the South African Police Services was the increase in cases of child sexual abuse and a shortfall of skilled social workers to address the need for

successful prosecution in the courts of law (Iffley, 2012:19). When considering this information, one can conclude that forensic social work is still a developing field in the SAPS.

The Government Gazette (2017:3) states the functions of forensic social workers as the following:

- Conducting forensic social work investigations of all cases that require forensic assessment using scientifically validated protocols and techniques in relation to forensic social work
- Applying relevant legislation and techniques to interpret data used in the compilation of the forensic social work report
- Compiling and submitting forensic social work technique based forensic social work reports to primary clients
- Providing expert advice on relevant matters
- Engaging in research and developing the field of forensic social work.

Stutterheim and Weyers, (1999:13) stated the functions of forensic social workers in SAPS as the following:

- The scientific investigation and assessment of a person or persons who are involved in a criminal case, as well as the presentation of these assessments to the courts of law
- To provide expert testimony in courts of law with regard to factors that would place the case concerned in perspective, but that are not based on an investigation of the person involved
- To investigate civil cases and administrative enquiries about child abuse cases and present the findings to the courts of law
- To make recommendations to courts of law regarding appropriate sentences or court orders.

The Standard Operating Procedure Manual for SAPS forensic social work states that the role and responsibilities of SAPS forensic social workers includes being a forensic evaluator and an expert witness (Standard Operating Procedure Manual, 2016:8). The forensic evaluator conducts the scientific investigation and assessment of individual/s who are involved in a criminal case and present these assessments to a legal authority or to a court of law. As an expert

witness their function includes providing expert testimony to courts of law that is based on the investigation of persons involved, Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977). Similar to the role of the forensic evaluator the forensic social worker as an expert witness acts as an impartial scientist who provides an objective professional opinion based on the appropriate evaluation method (Standard Operating Procedure Manual, 2016:8-9). However, recently the scope of work of the SAPS forensic social worker was also expanded to include statement taking from children as well as preparing child witnesses for court. Most of the forensic social workers in SAPS underwent training to 1) become equipped with skills on how to obtain child statements, 2) to be able to prepare children for court proceedings (Department of Police, 2016:11).

However, the researcher is of the opinion that when a child's statement is taken by a forensic social worker who works for the SAPS, prior to the assessment of the child, that forensic social worker is no longer objective and neutral towards the case, as the forensic social worker now has knowledge of the nature and extent of the case. Having prior knowledge of the case is contradictive to that of the role of the forensic investigator as a neutral and objective fact finder (Carstens, 2006:192; Cordisco-Steele, 2012:100; Faller, 2007:5; Saywitz & Comparo, 2009:105). Besides possibly becoming biased, forensic social workers within the South African Police Service experience a number of other challenges which include minimal utilisation of forensic social work services, skills shortages and non-recognition of their speciality (Iffley, 2012:14). Osifo, (2012:9) argues that before there can be effective coordination of service delivery, a clear delineation and definition of the roles and responsibilities of forensic workers in the SAPS must be determined. The term "Role clarity" could be seen as the extent to which an individual receives and understands information required to do the job (Mukherjee & Malhotra, 2006:446). The role and responsibilities of forensic social workers need to be clearly defined within the FCS units in the SAPS in order to cultivate mutual understanding with whom as well as role enactment by FCS members in order to foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork, ultimately to promote more effective and efficient service delivery.

Jonkers, (2012:54) states that if role players, which in this case are the investigating officers of the FCS, are not entirely familiar with what forensic social work entails, could not only complicate matters for the forensic social worker but it could also mean that their services are not optimally and effectively utilised. According to Mukherjee and Malhorta, (2016:446), a lack of clarity on the role has a negative impact on job performance, and could potentially have negative effects on job satisfaction, organisational commitment and service quality. Findings

revealed clarity on the role that a person fills is critical for explanation of when employees' perspectives of service quality are sought. Findings made by Mukherjee and Malhorta, (2016:446) also indicated that matters such as feedback, participation and team support significantly influence clarity of the role the employer takes on, which in turn influences job satisfaction and organisational commitment. So one can conclude that the possibility exists in the SAPS environment that investigating officers can be negatively and wrongfully informed about the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers.

Jonkers, (2012:36) concluded in her study that investigating officers at FCS unit in the SAPS have a poor understanding of forensic social work. Little research has investigated what the perspectives of the officers at FCS's are on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. According to the researcher, a need exists for transformation within FCS units, transformation needs to be driven by FCS investigating officers. Transformation should include delineation and clarification of roles and responsibilities regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work services in SAPS. According to Leonard, (2005:31), organisational learning is the key, as a continuous nature of change exists. Gaotsiwe, (2001:33) states that transformation entails a process of learning and development. In an organisational context, behaviours allocated to specific roles are those that entail recurring patterns of actions that are considered important for effective functioning in that particular role and in that particular organisation. 'Roles' imply sets of interactive, interdependent, and interrelated responsibilities, rights, and opportunities for individual and collective agency (Turner, 2011:415).

A study in which the perspectives of the FCS investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS, will hopefully contribute towards obtaining clarity with regards to what is expected to be their role and their responsibilities. The study will also help SAPS forensic social workers in addressing the prevailing police culture characterised by paramilitary, bureaucracy, rigid systems and procedures, inflexible structures that contribute significantly to lack of coordination and slow response; resulting in inefficient service delivery (Gqada, 2004:12). These dominant feature causes resistance to any change initiative such as the perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers and are perceived with negativity. Hence forensic social work in the SAPS is a developing field of speciality, with its own principles, ethical codes and values, different to the SAPS culture and is not clearly understood.

Parker and Wickham, (2005:3) concur when they indicate that for an organisation to function optimally there needs to be consensus regarding the expectations of enacted roles and the manner in which these roles interact. According to Mofomme, (2001:1), managers give meaning to the organisation by creating rules and conditions necessary to create uniformity within the organisation. This study will hopefully lead to the empowerment of managers' as well as investigating officers' knowledge regarding the mandate of forensic social workers and how they can utilize their services to ensure increased convictions and justice on sexual abuse cases. The study may also create opportunities for the development of other forensic social work educational programmes for FCS units. According to Kleingeld, (2004:84), the successful empowerment of personnel will not only benefit the individuals involved. It will also enable them to deliver an even more professional service to all South Africans.

Knowledge gained through this study will hopefully also contribute towards changing the perspectives and attitudes of FCS investigating officers with regard to forensic social work services within the SAPS. More knowledge may contribute towards optimal utilization of forensic social work services within the FCS units. The study may also encourage members to work together as a team to achieve common objectives of the organisation for efficient and effective service delivery. This idea is referred by Malone, (2005:13) as coordination which is the function of establishing such relationships among various parts of the organisation that they all pull together in the direction to achieve unity of action for the accomplishment of organisational objectives. In order to achieve this, the researcher used the paradigm of role theory as the data will be used to interpret the literature and to make recommendations. Role theory associated with every work environment is a set of activities or roles that are defined as potential behaviours to be performed in accordance with a specific job (Sheryl, *et al.*, 2004:41). It helps analyse client systems in dynamic interaction with their environments based, in part, on role expectations, social role functioning and associated personal and social responsibilities (Turner, 2011:414). As a theory of human behaviour, role theory points to assessment opportunities within the context of role related distress associated with complexities of role functioning as well as transitions in role expectations. With this research the client structure where transitions in role expectations will take place will be the management of FCS.

The researcher hopes that the outcome of the study will create platforms for new interventions by police managers in collaboration with forensic social workers to ensure that the child sexual abuse cases are dealt with adequately within the FCS units and that forensic social workers are utilised optimally. This information can then be presented to management on National level in order to address the problem of wrong perspectives with regard to the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. This discussion leaves the researcher with the following research question: “What are the perspectives of investigating officers in the Northern Cape on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work in the South African Police Service?”

2. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to develop an understanding on the perspectives of FCS investigating officers of the Northern Cape regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work services in the South African Police Services. This was important to establish in order to utilise forensic social workers optimally.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed the following research methodology during this study.

3.1 Research approach and design

Bryman, (2012:44), states that a research design relates to the criteria that are employed when evaluating social research. It is a framework for the generation of evidence that is suited both to a certain set of criteria and to the research question in which the investigator is interested. A research design is defined as the entire plan of a quantitative or qualitative research study from problem conceptualisation to the dissemination of findings. For the purpose of this study the researcher used a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach helped the researcher to understand several individuals’ shared experiences concerning the phenomenon which is the perspectives of FCS members regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. The phenomenon was driven amongst others by the notion that forensic social work services are not optimally utilised within FCS units due to what seems to be the lack of clarity with regard to their roles and responsibilities as found by Jonkers, (2012). The study was relevant in the current setting in order to develop in-depth understanding of the features of a phenomenon Creswell, (2007:60), in that Forensic Social Workers as well as investigating officers within the FCS are mandated by SAPS to work together to ensure effective service delivery of child sexual

abuse cases. The researcher explored the FCS setting within the context of the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work and part of the approach is to make recommendations to the management of SAPS with regard to the utilization of forensic social work services in SAPS.

The researcher explored the investigating officers' perspectives regarding the roles and responsibilities of the forensic social workers, and followed a descriptive design. Botma, *et al.* (2010:110) state that a descriptive design is used when little is known about a topic, which in this case is the the investigating officers' perspectives regarding the roles and responsibilities of the forensic social worker. This design can also be used to identify problems with the current practice or to justify the current practice which will be the practice regarding the roles and responsibilities of the forensic social workers in SAPS (Botma, *et al.*, 2010:110). According to Kumar, (2014:122), a research design is the road map one decides to follow during one's research journey so as to find answers to one's research questions as validly, objectively, accurately and economically as possible. The main focus in qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people (Kumar, 2014:133) - in this case the investigating officers' perspectives regarding the roles and responsibilities of the forensic social worker. In this study a qualitative research approach was used with semi-structured interviews in order to obtain the perspectives of the participants.

3.2 Population

Bless and Higgson-Smith, (2006:85) define a population as the set of elements that the researcher focuses upon and to which the obtained result should be generalised. According to Unrau, *et al.* (2007:213), a population refers to a total number of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling where the research problem is concerned.

Wakefield, (2014:6) states that there are 176 FCS units serving South Africa and that these units are divided into regions or clusters per geographical area within each province. On average, each FCS unit serves about seven SAPS police stations. The participants in the study comprised of the FCS investigating officers within the Northern Cape Province who are responsible for the management of FCS related cases, working directly with forensic social workers within the FCS, and who are all members of SAPS. SAPS in the Northern Cape has a total number of 5 clusters namely Francis Baard, John Taolo Gaetsewe, Pixley ka Seme, ZF Mgcawu and Namaqua. Each

cluster comprises a numbers of FCS units and in total there are sixteen (16) FCS units within the province. The participants were investigating officers directly working within the FCS units and handling cases related to child sexual abuse. The total number of FCS members in this province is 101.

3.3 Sampling method

Sampling involves the selection of participants from the entire population and includes decisions concerning which people, settings, events, behaviours or social processes to be observed. The type of sampling technique used for this project was a purposive sampling. The purpose of using a purposive sample is that the evaluator or researcher has interest only in a selected group (Royse, 2010:196). A purposive sampling is referred to as a judgemental sampling; it is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic representative or typical attributes of the population that serve the purpose of the study best (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008:153).

The researcher selected participants for the study who could purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem that is the perspectives of the FCS members regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS (Creswell, 2007:125). The researcher was of the opinion that the selected FCS members could provide rich data and enhance the study.

3.4 Proposed sample, sample size and motivation

The participants in the study comprised of the FCS members within the Northern Cape Province who are responsible for the management of FCS related cases, working directly with forensic social workers within the FCS, and who are all members of SAPS. The South African Police Services in the Northern Cape has a total number of sixteen (16) FCS units that are situated in the five different clusters. The researcher selected participants on the basis of their significance to the proposed study and sampling continued until data saturation was reached. Strydom and Delpont, (2011:393) explain data saturation as the collection of data to the point where a sense of closure is attained because new data provides information that is redundant. Guest, *et al.* (2006:76), concluded that approximately 12 participants are enough when the purpose of the study is to determine a corresponding perception or mind set of a homogeneous group. This

research consisted of approximately 15 participants which is three per cluster. Interviews were held with participants until data saturation was reached and until the researcher has gained insight into the context of which is the perspectives of investigating officers' roles and responsibilities regarding forensic social work in SAPS. The first three investigating officers per cluster that respond, will be selected as participants. During the selection process, participants were made aware that three members per cluster will be selected once they agreed to participate in the research. It must be noted that the participants working in the same cluster as the researcher were not interviewed by the researcher herself, but by an independent field worker. In order to ensure between-interviewer reliability the fieldworker was trained to ask the questions in the same manner as the researcher. The researcher and the fieldworker made use of the same semi-structured interview schedule and interviews were conducted in the same manner.

3.5 Sample inclusion criteria

Layder, (2013:77) mentions that it is important to decide which respondents will be accessible and have the necessary attributes to include and exclude in the research. The participants included in the study had to meet the following criteria;-

- Participants had to be members of the SAPS as the researcher wanted to establish the perspectives of SAPS investigating officers with regard to forensic social work.
- They were rendering services to victims of sexual abuse, as they would be working with forensic social workers and are therefore, knowledgeable on the topic.
- They were working directly with the forensic social workers at the station levels in order to give their perspectives on forensic social work.
- They had to be situated in the Northern Cape, as the study is conducted in the Northern Cape.
- They had to be fluent in English as it is the official language of communication in the SAPS.

3.6 Sample exclusion criteria

The following participants were excluded from the study;-

- FCS investigating officers who were already involved in other research projects as another research project can lead to exhaustion.

3.7 Process of sample recruitment and informed consent

According to Unrau, *et al.* (2007:213), participants are the experimental subjects, people who will be engaged in the study.

The recruitment of participants was conducted in the following manner;-

- Before the commencement of the recruitment process the researcher first seeks authorisation from the General Research and Curriculum Development Committee of the South African Police Services to conduct this study and the research committee acted as a gatekeeper. Legal authorisation to conduct this research was sought from the research Division at the SAPS head office in Pretoria. To do this, the researcher and study leader prepared a letter of application to conduct research and sent it to research Division as a means of negotiating entry into the organisation. A letter of request was sent to the Research Committee.
- After permission was obtained to conduct the study, the researcher approached the Provincial Commissioner (Provincial manager) of the Northern Cape to inform him about the study and the aim of the study in order to obtain his goodwill permission. Thereafter, the researcher approached all the cluster managers of the respective FCS units in order to inform them about the research and to obtain their goodwill permission.
- The researcher appointed an independent person to gain access to the participants. The independent person made telephonic contact with the potential participants. The independent person provided them with the contact details of the researcher to enable them to make contact if they have the need to do so, but the independent person did not initiate the contact. The independent person was a social worker who is knowledgeable about research, however, who had no interest in the study and was independent in the study.
- The researcher also approached another independent social worker, who was also knowledgeable about research and the conducting of semi-structured interviews to interview participants of the cluster that the researcher is working in. This independent

social worker also signed the same confidentiality agreement as the independent person.

- Once contact had been made with the possible participants, interviews between the participants and the researcher were arranged with those who were willing to participate. The independent person provided them with the consent forms, which contained all the information they needed which included; what is involved; where the research will take place; how long it will take; who has reviewed the research for ethical approval and how to contact them; and a statement about the ability to change one's mind after volunteering, and so forth. A document that stipulated what was expected was also given to them. Bryman, (2012:140), indicates that the advantage of such forms is that they give respondents the opportunity to be fully informed of the nature of the research and the implications of their participation at the outset. Participants were also made aware of the fact that they can refuse or withdraw consent at any point without giving any explanation. The independent person was knowledgeable in research and obtained written informed consent from the participants in her presence. The informed consent forms were mailed at least three days in advance to all participants in order for them to decide if they want to participate and discuss it with other people, should they have the need. This also allowed time for the participants to ask questions and to have them answered. After three days, the independent person contacted the participants to determine if they were interested in participating in the research. The independent person then travelled with the researcher to the different clusters. Those participants who were interested to participate in the research were then granted the opportunity to pose questions once again in person to the independent person. The participants signed the informed consent forms in the presence of the independent person.
- The participants were once again informed that their participation is voluntary. Rubin and Babbie, (2005:71), indicate that participation should at all times be voluntary and no one should be forced to participate in a project. Participants were granted three days to decide if they want to participate in the research project. After three days the independent person contacted the participants in order to find out what they have decided.
- The researcher then scheduled appointments for the data to be collected with the selected participants who were willing to participate in the study. During interviews

participants were treated professionally in an attempt to create a pleasant atmosphere for the research to take place.

3.8 Description of procedures/techniques/methods

Interviews are a predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research (De Vos, *et al.*, 2011:342). There are three types of interviews, namely structured, semi-structured and in-depth interview. In this study the researcher utilised semi-structured interviews where an interview schedule was utilized. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to enable the researcher to probe and explore deeper to gain a detailed picture of the participant's perspectives or beliefs regarding the topic under study. After having consulted literature regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work and the gaps that exists with regard to the optimal utilization of forensic social work services and in SAPS, the researcher compiled a set of questions to be included in the interview schedule to guide the interview. These questions were used to gather the data for the study. The advantage of this technique is that it ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant and also allows for an open response in the participant's own words. It also enabled the researcher to follow up on particular interesting avenues that emerged during the interview (Greeff, 2011:353). The semi-structured interview schedule was evaluated by experts from the Department of Social Work at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University who are knowledgeable regarding the construction of an interview schedule and matters of forensic social work nature.

Questions that were included in the interview schedule were theory driven in that they were derived from theory. The interview schedule consisted of five open-ended questions. The questions included in the interview guide are as follows:-

- What is your perspective of forensic social work in SAPS?
- What do you think is the work of a forensic social worker in SAPS?
- Explain to me where you obtained the information of the previous question
- What is your opinion on how the forensic social worker can assist with the investigation of cases of child sexual abuse?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

The researcher was the interviewer in the research, except for the cluster where she works. An independent social worker that was knowledgeable about research and the conducting of semi-

structured interviews, was the interviewer in that cluster. The researcher and the independent social worker were trained to conduct the semi-structured interviews prior to the commencement of the study. Individual interviews were conducted with the participants involved in the study. A single individual interview was conducted with each participant. The duration of the interview was approximately one hour. Interviews were conducted at the offices of the participants during office hours. The researcher ensured that the setting was private with no disruptions.

All the information gathered during data collection was stored in the form of transcripts; which was in a form of formally written responses and audio recordings. Greeff, (2011:373) states that field notes must be written by the researcher after interviews with the participants. Greeff, (2011:359) indicates that an audio recorder is a valuable tool when conducting research, as it will allow the interviewer to pay full attention to and stay focused on the participants.

The researcher was the transcriber in the research study. The researcher made audio recordings during interview sessions. Informed written consent was obtained from the participants for this purpose. A brief explanation was given to participants on the purpose of audio recording prior to their consent to be audio recorded, and they were assured of confidentiality. Each interview was recorded on its own disc to ensure accuracy. Therefore, the researcher will not get confused with the responses of different participants and the risk of deleting data by accident is also minimized.

The use of a co-coder after transcription was implemented in the study to ensure trustworthiness. The co-coder also signed the confidentiality agreement to ensure confidentiality of information. Greeff, (2011:373) states that field notes must be written by the researcher after interviews with the participants.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Babbie and Mouton, (2006:276) state that trustworthiness is an approach that is used to clarify the notion of objectivity as it is manifested in qualitative research. Shenton, (2004:276) outlines four criteria to be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study; credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to internal validity. The researcher ensured that the study is carried out in a way that enhances credibility of the findings, by compiling descriptive field and verbatim transcriptions, implementation of well-recognised research methods and checking of data collected and interpretations. The researcher ensured that categories and themes cover data and that no relevant data is excluded. During an interview, the researcher restated or summarized information and then questioned the participant to determine accuracy. This allowed participants to critically analyse the findings and comment on them. Their comments served as a check on the viability of the interpretation. The researcher also ensured credibility through receiving help from a co-coder on the implementation of a structured analysis process. The researcher will also hand over the interpretation of collected data to her study leader, Dr. Smith, for further assurance of credibility. The researcher will ensure that she stays in the field until data saturation occurs (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:277; Shenton, 2004:73).

To ensure that the researcher remains objective, the researcher used triangulation regarding data analysis by getting a co-data analyser to ensure that the data and interpretations of the findings are sound and confirmed findings. The researcher and the co-data analyser analysed the transcribed interviews along with observational field notes and documents authored by the respondents themselves. Regular discussions were held and adjustments made according to suggestions and recommendations. Triangulation is used to compare data to decide if it corroborates (Creswell, 2007:35), and thus, to validate research findings. It is one of the most important ways to improve the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings. As an insider the researcher had to ensure that introspection and the acknowledgement of own biases, interest, perspectives and values were typical reflexive qualities of a good qualitative researcher, upholding objectivity and being neutral (Creswell, 2007:52).

3.9.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the replication of the proposed study in the same context and making use of the same methods and with the same participants and in this condition the findings should stay consistent. The researcher ensured that there is stability of data over time through careful documentation of data, which was done by writing descriptive field notes and doing audio recordings and using a co-coder (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:277; Shenton, 2004:73). The

researcher adhered to the following criteria to ensure dependability as set out by Botma, *et al.* (2010:231) and Shenton, (2004:64);

- The researcher provide a detailed account on how the data was collected,
- The researcher described the methodology, the planning of the study as well as the execution of the study,
- The researcher ensured that data was correctly coded.

3.9.3 Conformability

According to De Vos, *et al* (2011:117), conformability captures the traditional concept of objectivity. The data collected represented the information participants provided. Information did not figment from the researcher's imagination. During the process of data collection, emphasis fell on transcribing and presenting the findings, and clarity was sought from the research subjects during interviews to determine understanding of what was asked. Descriptive field notes were taken directly after each interview to ensure that findings are a true reflection of the research field. This was done in this manner to ensure that the findings are the product of the focus of inquiry and not of bias (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:278; Shenton, 2004:73). The researcher ensured that as far as possible the study's results were objective and will not be based upon biases, motives and perspectives of the researcher.

3.9.4 Transferability

Transferability is defined by De Vos, (2011:119), as the alternative to external validity or generalisability in which the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another contexts rests more with the investigator who would make the transfer, than with the original investigator. Botma, *et al.* (2010:232) and Shenton, (2004:64), add that transferability will be improved by the selection of resources and sampling, saturation of data and the detailed description of the data. Sufficient descriptive data was provided in the research report to allow consumers to evaluate the applicability of data to other contexts. There was reflection, vivid description, documentation of quality enhancement effort, descriptive field notes and saturation of data (Babbie & Mouton, 2006:277; Shenton, 2004:73).

To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researcher also obtained the opinion of the study leader, Dr. Smith, and other experts at the university such as Prof Roestenburg who are experts at the Department of Social Work (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:38). Prof Roestenburg

and Dr. Smith are experts in qualitative research, mentoring various Doctoral and Masters studies and Prof Roestenburg serves as a Principal Coordinator of research done at the Department of Social Work at the University of North-West. Their expertise, experiences, guidance, advice and suggestions contributed extensively to the trustworthiness of the study. The researcher also obtained feedback from the University's Research and Ethics Committee, as well as other forensic social workers who are knowledgeable in qualitative research.

3.10 Data analysis

According to Fouché and Schurink, (2011:397), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data collected by the researcher. This process does not follow a fixed linear approach but moves in analytical circles (Creswell, 2007:150). In other words the researcher began to transcribe, analyse and interpret the data from the transcripts even before the process of data collection was completed. Data was analysed using guidelines as outlined by Botma, *et al.* (2010:213) and Schurink, *et al.* (2011:402).

- All gathered data was first transcribed.
- During the initial coding, topics were analysed manually through a colour coding system.
- During transcription, enough space was left on both the left and right margins, allowing the researcher to make notes during the process of analysis.
- During the second level of analysis topics and sub-topics were compared and contrasted by the researcher in order to derive themes that interact. This level of analysis enabled the researcher to construct an analytic taxonomy representing the construction of disclosure.
- Once the final stage of analysis was reached, taxonomies were exchanged; coding checked, compared and verified which enhanced the trustworthiness of the research.
- An independent social worker who is knowledgeable about the process of research and trained in qualitative approach was requested to act as an external co-coder to ensure accuracy in the analysis (Botma, *et al.* 2010:224;232).
- The researcher compared the findings with literature for the purpose of literature control. The literature on role theory will be used for this purpose.
- Once the study had been completed and a report had been written, the researcher communicated with the research participants to avail the research report. Each

participant was personally emailed a summary of the research findings. Interested members were also invited for an oral explanation of the research findings.

- A copy of the research findings was also presented as a hard copy to the participants. Once the study had been completed and a report had been written, the researcher communicated with the research participants to avail the research report. Each participant was also personally emailed a summary of the research findings.

4. ETHICAL ASPECTS

Ethics serve as guideline and standards set for the researcher to evaluate his or her conduct (De Vos, *et al.*, 2011:114-120). The study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Faculty of Health Sciences with the following number NWU 00004-18-A1.

The researcher adhered to the following ethical principles.

4.1 Estimated ethical risk level of the proposed study

The research study had a low risk level. No risk was foreseen for the participants. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews at the offices of the participants. The participants are professional people talking about their perspectives of forensic social work, which is not a sensitive topic.

4.2 Probable experience of the respondents

The researcher prepared the participants by explaining the nature of the research to them and then the independent person obtained written and informed consent from different participants. The researcher prepared the interview schedules in English. After the preparation of the interview schedules the researcher evaluated the schedules with three people who were not part of the study. The researcher attempted not to have a negative impact on the participants by giving them a true reflection of what the research might entail so that they could make an informed decision if they wanted to participate or not. The researcher also acted professionally at all times

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants on an individual basis. The researcher ensured that participants were given body breaks and offered light refreshments in

the form of water or fruit juice, whenever necessary. The interview did not last longer than an hour.

The interview itself did not differ in any way from the interviews participants would have on a daily basis and it was research related. The interview also did not cover any sensitive topics, but if members were traumatised by the research, the researcher would have arranged for one session of trauma debriefing to take place by a professional social worker, Charne Mills, at the cost of the researcher. Written permission from the ethics committee of NWU was sought to ensure that the study complied with all the ethical requirements.

4.3 Dangers / risks and precautions

Risks for the proposed study was minimal. Participants were experienced SAPS members who were well informed about the circumstances surrounding forensic social work in SAPS in the Northern Cape Province. The researcher was going directly to the participants to collect data, so there was no cost implication for the participants. Arrangements were made that interviews be conducted at the time convenient to the participants. The researcher was aware though that time pressure, frustration, fatigue and boredom could also form part of some of the risks involved.

4.4 Benefits and risks for respondents

The respondents did not gain direct benefits. In this research, the benefits outweighed the risks in this study. However, the research will contribute to the literature of forensic social work. Participants received a thank you note and a pen with the NWU logo as token of appreciation. Risks for the proposed study was minimal. The researcher ensured that participants are given body breaks and offered light refreshments in the form of water or fruit juice, whenever necessary. The interview did not last longer than an hour. Since the researcher was going directly to the participants to collect data, arrangements were made that interviews be conducted at the time convenient to the participants.

There was no direct benefit for the participants in this study. The researcher intended to hand a personal thank you note to each participant after completion of the study and to provide them with a pen with the logo of the NWU as token of appreciation. The researcher also provided them with oral feedback about the results of the study. There was no form of remuneration offered to the participants for taking part in the study. The token of appreciation was declared

to the manager of the General Research and Curriculum Development, granted permission to conduct the study, so that it will not be mistaken for bribery.

4.5 Expertise, skills and legal competencies

The researcher is a qualified social worker, registered with the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP). The researcher is a post-graduate student for the Masters in Forensic Practice and has been trained in both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The researcher has also attended workshops on qualitative research in preparation for conducting qualitative research. In qualifying for the undergraduate degree in social work (BSW) at the University of North-West (2004), a qualitative research project was undertaken by the researcher entitled “*Social worker’s experience-based perceptions on what constitutes unethical social work practice and how to solve it*”. The researcher also did the TRREE online ethical course. The researcher was supervised by a senior lecturer at the NWU who is experienced in qualitative research methods.

4.6 Facilities

The researcher arranged convenient dates and times with each participant. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants. Incentive and remuneration of respondents. Governmental employees are not allowed to accept remuneration according to policy.

4.7 Dissemination of results

When the research is finalised a summary of the results will be communicated to the participants. The researcher asked participants during the interviews the method they would prefer the results to be disseminated. Options to choose from included an e-mail or personal interviews with the participants.

4.8 Privacy/Confidentiality

The researcher provided a brief explanation on the purpose of audio recording to the participants and assured them of privacy prior to the interviews (Creswell, 2007:121). Informed written consent was obtained from the participants for this purpose. The researcher transferred the recordings immediately after the interviews were conducted, to a password protected computer and erased the recordings from the audio recorder.

The privacy of the participants was safeguarded through safe and secured venues. The interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants. For the duration of the interview, the researcher closed the door and put a “please do not disturb” sign at the door. The phone was also taken off the hook. The researcher assured the participants that everything that was discussed during interviews will be kept confidential and that all the data will be reported anonymously to protect their identities. No identifying particulars were written on field notes.

Confidentiality was also highly regarded by ensuring the participants that the information provided to the researcher will not reveal their identity. The researcher requested the independent person to sign a confidentiality agreement. The co-coder also signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure confidentiality of information. Digital data was stored on a disc. After transcribing the data, it was deleted from the disc. The transcribed data was then loaded onto a memory stick that is password protected and encrypted. For the duration of the study, only the researcher, the person responsible for coding and the study leader were able to access the disc. It was locked away in a lockable cabinet in a lockable office and saved at the offices of Compres for the duration of 5 (five) years. After five years the data will be destroyed.

5. TERMINOLOGY

5.1 Perspective

According to the Collins English Dictionary (2016), perspective is a way of thinking about something, especially one that is influenced by one’s beliefs or experiences. It is also to a certain point pure science, not depending upon the accidents of vision, but upon the exact laws of reasoning. It has an intimate connection with our mental perception and with the ideas that are impressed upon the brain by the appearance of all that surrounds us.

5.2 Investigating Officer

An investigating officer means a member of the South African Police Service designated to investigate a sexual offence case. The focus of their investigation is to provide a sensitive, effective service to the victims and to conduct quality investigation (National Instruction 2 of 2019:4).

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities

According to Malik and Waheed, (2010: 33), roles can be defined as a combination of different tasks assigned to employees who are expected to perform these tasks in the way of the organisation's expectations. According to Hartenian, *et al.* (2011:54), in an organisational context a role is expectations that employees have of each other, or expectations a supervisor has of a subordinate or an employee of his manager. Roles are also functions (activities) or positions (jobs) that employees perform for the organisation. If the expected and perceived roles are different, the individual experiences role ambiguity or lack of role clarity.

Bivins, (2013:20) states that responsibility refers to a sphere of duty or obligation assigned to a person by the nature of that person's position, function, or work. Responsibility could thus be viewed as a bundle of obligations associated with a job or function. It is also a role wherein a person is authorised to make decisions independently.

5.4 Forensic Social Work

Forensic social work as a specialised field of social work that focused on the interface between society's legal and human systems and is characterized by the social worker's primary function of providing expert testimonies in courts of law with the client being the judiciary system (Government Gazette, 2017,47-52; SAPS Forensic Social Work Procedure Manual, 2016:5)

A forensic social worker, for the purpose of this research, refers to a social worker with scientific and specialised knowledge, skills, training and education and experience in forensic social work, who provided the court with written or oral impartial and factual expert testimony. In the context of the SAPS Procedure Manual (2016:3), a forensic social worker is a qualified social worker who practices FSW in the FCS component.

5.5 South African Police Services

SAPS is a law enforcement agent or state development, charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in South Africa, which derives its powers from section 199 of the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 as well as the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995. According to the latter, SAPS is regulated by Section 205 (3) of the Constitution of South Africa to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property and to uphold and enforce the law.

6. CHOICE AND STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The researcher aims to submit the research findings as an article to the *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* journal for potential publication in the journal and the authors adhered to those instructions.

The researchers report is divided into four sections:

- Section A: Introduction and orientation
- Section B: Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and perspectives of forensic social workers in the SAPS (Article)
- Section C: Conclusions and recommendations
- Section D: Addenda

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SECTION B

PERSPECTIVES OF INVESTIGATING OFFICERS ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORENSIC SOCIAL WORK IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

To assist SAPS with this challenging responsibility of investigating cases of child sexual abuse, forensic social work services was established in SAPS on 6 May 1997 and became operational in November 1997 (Stutterheim & Weyers, 1999,:16). The researcher discovered in reviewing literature that there have not been many empirical studies conducted on the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. There is only one study conducted in the Eastern Cape which focused specifically on the perspectives of police management towards the role of forensic social workers in the SAPS. This article presents empirical data obtained from an explorative qualitative study that focused on the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work services in the SAPS at the Northern Cape Province. The findings of the research revealed that the investigating officers do not understand what forensic social work really entails and have limited knowledge on what the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers are.

Key Words: Investigating officers, Roles and Responsibilities, Forensic Social Work, South African Police Services (SAPS)

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

In terms of Article 28(2) of the Constitution of South Africa, the best interest of the child is of paramount importance in every matter concerning a child (South African Constitution, 1996:15). The alarming rate of child sexual abuse and rape cases in South Africa has led to an almost up-rise and an outcry for improved, more effective and efficient intervention by both government and the community at large (Jonkers, 2012:1). In terms of section 54 of the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007, all South Africans have a statutory obligation to report their suspicion of child sexual abuse to the South African Police Service (SAPS). Therefore, the (SAPS) have prioritised the effective service delivery to victims of child sexual offences by the utilization of experts such as forensic social workers in the field of child sexual abuse. A forensic social worker is a social worker with scientific and specialised knowledge, skills, training and education and experience in forensic social work, who provides the court with written or oral impartial and factual expert testimony (Registration of a Specialisation in Forensic Social Work Regulation, 2017:2).

SAPS is a law enforcement agent or state development, charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in South Africa, which derives its powers from section 199 of the Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 as well as the South African Police Service Act 68 of 1995. According to the latter, SAPS is regulated by Section 205 (3) of the Constitution of South Africa to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property and to uphold and enforce the law.

SAPS is an organisation divided into national, provincial and area components with many units and stations operating within these divisions. According to Dette (2008:5), a police member is an official appointed under section 33(1) of the South African Police Service Act, (Act 68 of 1995). A police member can be considered as a front-line employee who performs and is exposed to hands-on police work (functional and operational duties). Managers or commanders at the SAPS are members responsible for making strategic decisions regarding policies and national instructions and also ensure compliance thereof (Department of Police, 2011:25). According to the SAPS National Instruction (2019:2), the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) unit refers to the provincial and cluster FCS Units within SAPS who are responsible for the investigation of sexual crimes, family violence and child protection cases. Thus employees of the FCS units are members of the South African Police Service who

successfully completed the general course for Detectives and the relevant FCS-related courses which qualifies and enables competency to deal with child sexual abuse cases. Employees of the FCS units are referred to as investigating officers (National Instruction, 2019:4). According to the SAPS National Instruction (1998:1), an investigating officer of FCS means a member of SAPS that is designated to investigate sexual offence cases. The focus of their investigation is to provide a sensitive, effective service to the victims of these crimes and to conduct quality investigations.

In a study conducted by Ntlatleng (2012: v), it was indicated that due to the sensitive nature of child sexual abuse cases, finalising such cases successfully becomes a major problem. The author states that trained professionals are needed in order to deal with the issues of sexual abuse and that proper investigations need to be conducted. The fact that investigating officers attended a detective learning course and an FCS course does not guarantee that they will be able to handle child sexual abuse cases in an adequate manner (Ntlatleng, 2011:27). Jonkers (2012:8) concurs that the investigation of child sexual abuse cases is a challenging terrain that calls for specialised training, commitment as well as expertise and, therefore, the forensic social workers play an important role as they have to assist the investigating officer in this regard.

To assist SAPS with this challenging responsibility of investigating cases of child sexual abuse, forensic social work services was established in SAPS on 6 May 1997 and became operational in November 1997 (Stutterheim & Weyers, 1999:16). Scheepers (2008:4) states that there were twenty two police social workers, between March and September 1997 who underwent special training in forensic investigations to assist in assessing allegations of sexual offences against children. In 2013 the number increased to 75 social workers. Currently there are 106 forensic social workers throughout the country placed at various FCS units to improve the quality of the FCS components services and expedite the FCS component's investigations with regard to sexual abuse cases involving children (Forensic Social Work Standard Operating Procedure Manual, 2016:3). The first national commander of forensic social work was only appointed during 2012 (SAPS National Office Human Resource Circular 5/3/1 (2012)). The driving force behind the introduction of forensic social workers in the South African Police Services was the increase in cases of child sexual abuse and a shortfall of skilled social workers to address the need for successful prosecution in the courts of law (Iffley, 2012:19). When considering this information, one can conclude that forensic social work is still a developing field in the SAPS.

The Government Gazette (2017:3) states the functions of forensic social workers as the following:

- Conducting forensic social work investigations of all cases that require forensic assessment using scientifically validated protocols and techniques in relation to forensic social work
- Applying relevant legislation and techniques to interpret data used in the compilation of the forensic social work report
- Compiling and submitting forensic social work technique based forensic social work reports to primary clients
- Providing expert advice on relevant matters
- Engaging in research and developing the field of forensic social work.

Stutterheim and Weyers (1999:13) stated the functions of forensic social workers in SAPS as the following:

- The scientific investigation and assessment of a person or persons who are involved in a criminal case, as well as the presentation of these assessments to the courts of law
- To provide expert testimony in courts of law with regard to factors that would place the case concerned in perspective, but that are not based on an investigation of the person involved
- To investigate civil cases and administrative enquiries about child abuse cases and present the findings to the courts of law
- To make recommendations to courts of law regarding appropriate sentences or court orders.

The Standard Operating Procedure Manual for SAPS forensic social work states that the role and responsibilities of SAPS forensic social workers include being a forensic evaluator and an expert witness (Standard Operating Procedure Manual, 2016:8). The forensic evaluator conducts the scientific investigation and assessment of individual/s who are involved in a criminal case and present these assessments to a legal authority or to a court of law. As an expert witness their function includes providing expert testimony to courts of law that is based on the investigation of persons involved, Criminal Procedure Act, Act 51 of 1977. Similar to the role

of the forensic evaluator the forensic social worker as an expert witness acts as an impartial scientist who provides an objective professional opinion based on the appropriate evaluation method (Standard Operating Procedure Manual, 2016:8-9). However, recently the scope of work of the SAPS forensic social worker was also expanded to include statement taking from children as well as preparing child witnesses for court. Most of the forensic social workers in SAPS underwent training to 1) become equipped with skills on how to obtain child statements, 2) to be able to prepare children for court proceedings (Department of Police, 2016:11).

However, the researcher is of the opinion that when a child's statement is taken by a forensic social worker who works for the SAPS, prior to the assessment of the child, that forensic social worker is no longer objective and neutral towards the case, as the forensic social worker now has knowledge of the nature and extent of the case. Having prior knowledge of the case is contradictive to that of the role of the forensic investigator as a neutral and objective fact finder (Carstens, 2006:192; Cordisco-Steele, 2012:100; Faller, 2007:5; Saywitz & Comparo, 2009:105). Besides possibly becoming biased, forensic social workers within the South African Police Service experience a number of other challenges which include minimal utilisation of forensic social work services, skills shortages and non-recognition of their speciality (Iffley, 2012:14). Osifo (2012:9) argues that before there can be effective coordination of service delivery, a clear delineation and definition of the roles and responsibilities of forensic workers in the SAPS must be determined. The term "Role clarity" could be seen as the extent to which an individual receives and understands information required to do the job (Mukherjee & Malhotra, 2006:446). The role and responsibilities of forensic social workers need to be clearly defined within the FCS units in the SAPS in order to cultivate mutual understanding with whom as well as role enactment by FCS members in order to foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork, ultimately to promote more effective and efficient service delivery.

Jonkers (2012:54) states that if role players, which in this case are the investigating officers of the FCS, are not entirely familiar with what forensic social work entails, could not only complicate matters for the forensic social worker, but it could also mean that their services are not optimally and effectively utilised. According to Mukherjee and Malhorta (2016:446), a lack of clarity on the role has a negative impact on job performance, and could potentially have negative effects on job satisfaction, organisational commitment and service quality. Findings revealed clarity on the role that a person fills is critical for explanation of when employees' perspectives of service quality are sought. Findings made by Mukherjee and Malhorta

(2016:446) also indicated that matters such as feedback, participation and team support significantly influence clarity of the role the employer takes on, which in turn influences job satisfaction and organisational commitment. So one can conclude that the possibility exists in the SAPS environment that investigating officers can be negatively and wrongfully informed about the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers.

Jonkers (2012:36) concluded in her study that investigating officers at FCS unit in the SAPS have a poor understanding of forensic social work. Little research has investigated what the perspectives of the officers at FCS's are on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. According to the researcher, a need exists for transformation within FCS units, transformation needs to be driven by FCS investigating officers. Transformation should include delineation and clarification of roles and responsibilities regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work services in SAPS. According to Leonard (2005:31), organisational learning is the key, as a continuous nature of change exists. Gaotsiwe (2001:33) states that transformation entails a process of learning and development. In an organisational context, behaviours allocated to specific roles are those that entail recurring patterns of actions that are considered important for effective functioning in that particular role and in that particular organisation. 'Roles' imply sets of interactive, interdependent, and interrelated responsibilities, rights, and opportunities for individual and collective agency (Turner, 2011:415).

A study in which the perspectives of the FCS investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS, will hopefully contribute towards obtaining clarity with regards to what is expected to be their role and their responsibilities. The study will also help SAPS forensic social workers in addressing the prevailing police culture characterised by paramilitary, bureaucracy, rigid systems and procedures, inflexible structures that contribute significantly to lack of coordination and slow response; resulting in inefficient service delivery (Gqada, 2014:12). These dominant feature causes resistance to any change initiative such as the perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers and are perceived with negativity. Hence forensic social work in the SAPS is a developing field of speciality, with its own principles, ethical codes and values, different to the SAPS culture and not clearly understood.

Parker and Wickham (2005:3) concur when they indicate that for an organisation to function optimally there needs to be consensus regarding the expectations of enacted roles and the manner in which these roles interact. According to Mofomme (2001:1), managers give meaning to the organisation by creating rules and conditions necessary to create uniformity within the organisation. This study will hopefully lead to the empowerment of managers' as well as investigating officers' knowledge regarding the mandate of forensic social workers and how they can utilize their services to ensure increased convictions and justice on sexual abuse cases. The study may also create opportunities for the development of other forensic social work educational programmes for FCS units. According to Kleingeld (2004:84), the successful empowerment of personnel will not only benefit the individuals involved. It will also enable them to deliver an even more professional service to all South Africans.

Knowledge gained through this study will hopefully also contribute towards changing the perspectives and attitudes of FCS investigating officers with regard to forensic social work services within the SAPS. More knowledge may contribute towards optimal utilization of forensic social work services within the FCS units. The study may also encourage members to work together as a team to achieve common objectives of the organisation for efficient and effective service delivery. This idea is referred by Malone (2005:13) as coordination which is the function of establishing such relationships among various parts of the organisation that they all pull together in the direction to achieve unity of action for the accomplishment of organisational objectives. In order to achieve this, the researcher used the paradigm of role theory as the data will be used to interpret the literature and to make recommendations. Role theory associated with every work environment is a set of activities or roles that are defined as potential behaviours to be performed in accordance with a specific job (Sheryl *et al.*, 2004:41). It helps analyse client systems in dynamic interaction with their environments based, in part, on role expectations, social role functioning and associated personal and social responsibilities (Turner, 2011:414). As a theory of human behaviour, role theory points to assessment opportunities within the context of role related distress associated with complexities of role functioning as well as transitions in role expectations. With this research the client structure where transitions in role expectations will take place will be the management of FCS.

The researcher hopes that the outcome of the study will create platforms for new interventions by police managers in collaboration with forensic social workers to ensure that the child sexual abuse cases are dealt with adequately within the FCS units and that forensic social workers are utilised optimally. This information can then be presented to management on National level in order to address the problem of wrong perspectives with regard to the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. This discussion leaves the researcher with the following research question: “What are the perspectives of investigating officers in the Northern Cape on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work in the South African Police Service?”

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Neuman (2003:68), methodology refers to the techniques that a particular discipline uses to manipulate data to acquire knowledge. The researcher used a qualitative research method and took an exploratory-descriptive research design for this study. For the purpose of this study the researcher found the qualitative research approach best suited in that it would facilitate an understanding regarding individual shared experiences concerning the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work services in the SAPS.

Purposive sampling was used for the study. A purposive sampling is referred to as a judgemental sampling; it is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic representative or typical attributes of the population that serve the purpose of the study best (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008:153). The researcher took into consideration factors such as the researcher’s access to the target population and the characteristics of the chosen sample when selecting the sampling techniques. The researcher selected participants for the study who can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem that is the perspectives of the FCS members regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS (Creswell, 2007:125).

Participants were selected on the basis of their significance to the study and sampling continued until data saturation was reached. The method of data collection adopted in the study was semi-structured interviewing. Semi-structured interviewing facilitated opportunities which were necessary for the participants to be able to explore their opinions, perspectives, thoughts and

experiences. Semi-structured interviewing also enabled the researcher to probe, rephrase or ask other questions related to the topic, which were not necessarily included in the interview schedule. Semi-structured interviewing also gave the researcher enough room to probe, rephrase and ask questions related to the topic, which were not necessarily included in the interview guide. The researcher compiled an interview schedule with a set of questions to guide the interview. Questions that were compiled in the interview guide were theory driven, and were used to gather data for the study. Once data saturation was reached the researcher began the process of data analysis. For the purpose of data analysis the researcher began to transcribe, analyse and interpret the data from the transcripts even before the process of data collection was completed. The researcher further identified themes and sub-themes to analyse data accordingly.

The study adhered to the ethical guidelines as approved by the Health and Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University. Once ethical approval was obtained from the HREC, written consent to conduct the research within the SAPS was requested from the National Head Organisational Development and Strategic Management. The researcher started with the research once written approval to conduct the study was received from the Provincial Commissioner of the Northern Cape. The study adhered to the following ethical issues: avoidance of harm to the participants, obtaining informed consent from participants, voluntary participation, avoiding deception of participants, ensuring the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The aim of the study was to explore the perspective of investigating officers in the Northern Cape on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work in the SAPS. From the findings, it was clear that though forensic social workers make a valuable contribution in the investigation of child sexual abuse cases, challenges such as a shortage of forensic social workers, minimal utilisation of forensic social workers and misconception of their speciality contribute to a failure in providing a proficient service. The researcher followed a qualitative approach to the study in order to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of the investigating officer's individual experiences regarding forensic social work. Purposive sampling was adopted by the researcher to draw participants from FCS Units in the Northern Cape Province.

3.1 Profile of participants

Thirteen (13) FCS members were interviewed who met the inclusion criteria as participants in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to obtain data.

3.1.1 Identifying Profile of Participants

Thirteen participants from the FCS in the Northern Cape, voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. According to Boeijs (2010:51), the participants are motivated to participate in research when they believe that their experience may be valuable in assisting others. The participants in the study were the FCS members within the Northern Cape Province who are responsible for the management of FCS related cases, working directly with forensic social workers within the FCS, and who are all members of SAPS.

Table 1

| PARTICIPANTS | GENDER | SAPS RANK | YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN FCS |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| P1 | Male | Sergeant | 15 years |
| P2 | Male | Warrant Officer | 9 years |
| P3 | Female | Warrant Officer | 7 years |
| P4 | Female | Constable | 3 years |
| P5 | Female | Warrant Officer | 9 years |
| P6 | Female | Captain | 6 years |
| P7 | Male | Warrant Officer | 12 years |
| P8 | Female | Warrant Officer | 14 years |
| P9 | Male | Sergeant | 7 years |
| P10 | Female | Captain | 13 years |
| P11 | Male | Constable | 5 years |
| P12 | Male | Constable | 1 year |
| P13 | Male | Warrant Officer | 9 years |

Table 1 indicates that 13 participants were interviewed. The majority of the participants namely 7 were male and 6 were female. Three of the participants hold the rank of a constable which is the lowest rank in the SAPS. A rank of constable represents the entry level on the rank structure of SAPS which is the junior members, hence the said participants have minimum years of experience.

Participant 1 who holds the rank of a Sergeant had the longest experience which was 15 years and participant 12 who holds the rank of a Constable had the least experience, namely 1 year of experience. When one looks at the years of experience, one can conclude that the participants are fairly experienced members.

3.2 Themes and subthemes obtained from interviews

Four themes and seven sub-themes were distinguished as a result of data analysis of the information collected. Creswell (2014:212) states that the process of interpreting the findings involve stating lessons learned, comparing the findings with past literature and theory, raising questions and advancing an agenda for reform. Quotes from the interview will be highlighted in the article to complement the findings.

Table 2: Themes and subthemes obtained from interviews

| Theme no. | Theme | Subtheme |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1. | Perspectives regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Statement taking of children ➤ Communication with children in complexed cases for court purposes ➤ Report writing ➤ Assist the investigating officer and victim in court |
| 2. | Opinions on how FSW can assist in the investigation of child sexual abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Forensic Assessment of children |
| 3. | Participant's acquired knowledge regarding forensic social work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No formal training regarding forensic social work |
| 4. | Additional information to add | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of forensic social workers in FCS units |

A discussion of the four themes and seven sub-themes that arose from the semi-structured interviews follows;

THEME 1: PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORENSIC SOCIAL WORK

Forensic social work is a specialised field of social work that focuses on the interface between society's legal and human systems and is characterized by the social worker's primary function of providing expert testimonies in courts of law with the client being the judiciary system (Government Gazette, 2017:47-52; SAPS Forensic Social Work Procedure Manual, 2016:5). Green *et al.* (2005:146) indicate that forensic social work applies and adapts generic skills, particularly systemic awareness, to the legal system. Assessment, report writing and the inter-relational effects of the justice system are fundamental skills in the area of forensic social work.

The researcher posed a question to the participants on what their perspective of forensic social work is, as well a question on what the roles and responsibilities of a forensic social worker are. The same themes emerged from those questions and the researcher combined the responses. The following four subthemes were identified namely, statement taking of children, communication with children in complexed cases for court purposes, report writing, and, assisting the investigating officer and victims in court.

Subtheme 1: Statement taking of children

The majority of the participants stated that forensic social workers assist the investigating officers with statement taking. The following participant's narratives can be regarded as the most meaningful and most representative of the responses.

- *They help us so much with the statements (P5)*
- *Forensic social workers assist in the investigation and obtain statements (P7)*
- *They help us in obtaining child statements (P4)*

The role of the forensic social worker in SAPS has been expanded to include obtaining statements from child victims (Department of Police, 2015:213; SAPS, 2016). These perspective of the participants is thus in line with the Standard Operating Procedure Manual (SAPS, 2016) of SAPS, but the researcher is of the opinion that the taking of statements influences the objectivity and neutrality of the forensic social worker. In practice it will be expected of the forensic social worker to obtain the child's statement and in future the court requests the same forensic social worker to conduct a forensic assessment on the same child the statement was obtained from. When the forensic social worker must assess the same child

from whom a statement was obtained, the process is no longer blind. A blind assessment involves a forensic social worker's initial assessment based only on the biographical information of the child (Liebenberg *et al.*, 2015:141). Poole and Lamb (1998:4) describe a blind interview as an interview without knowledge prior to the circumstances surrounding the allegations. Bow *et al.* (2002:572) indicate that forensic social workers must have no involvement prior to the case and must be neutral and objective throughout the entire interview. Smith (2014:176) supports this statement and is of the opinion that blind assessments are the best for conducting forensic investigations. Faller (2007:6) states that forensic social workers obtain uncontaminated facts from the child. Kaliski (2006:381) adds that in a forensic assessment, the social worker should be factually orientated with the purpose of collecting relevant information for expert testimony in a court. If a forensic social worker previously obtained a statement from a child and it is later on expected to assess the same child, the forensic social worker is no longer objective and factual.

Thus is the researcher's opinion that statement taking should not form part of the responsibilities of the forensic social worker in SAPS, but participants are "educated" by the system of the SAPS that it is part of forensic social work. If there is no other choice, guidelines must be implemented, stating that the same forensic social worker who obtained a statement from a child, cannot be the same forensic social worker conducting the forensic assessment.

Subtheme 2: Communication with children in complex cases for court purposes

From the responses obtained from the participants it seems that they regard forensic social workers as an aid to assist them to communicate with children in complex cases. Participants 6 and 8 stated that forensic social work is about communicating with children, especially when it is difficult for the investigating officer to communicate with children. Participants 7 and 10 responses are aligned with the responses of the previous participants as they indicated that forensic social work is when one has specialised training to obtain information, which implies communication with children, and the professional will use that information in court proceedings: "*They have a specialized background and training to get through to a child's level to obtain information that can assist us in court proceedings (P7)*". Participant 13 indicated that the forensic social worker must prepare the child for court proceedings: "*They assist us with the victim to prepare victims for court (P13)*".

Four participants indicated that the forensic social worker must communicate with the child with the aim in mind of testifying in court. Children's communication about the experiences of the alleged sexual abuse, are often the only available evidence of the crime (APSAC, 2012:3; De Voe & Faller, 2002:6; Hewitt, 2012:121-122). Researchers agree that interviewing children in the forensic context is difficult and that it requires cognizance of a growing body of specialised knowledge (Fouché & Joubert, 2009:43). Powell and Snow (2007:57) stated that obtaining reliable and detailed information from children on events or situations, such as abuse, is a complex process that requires specialised skills in forensic interviewing. From the literature it is clear that communication with children as well as the assessment process is complex and specialised skills are necessary as stated by the participants. This is consistent with the Government Gazette (2017:3) that states one of the functions of forensic social workers is to conduct forensic social work investigations that require forensic assessment using scientifically validated protocols and techniques in relation to forensic social work. Courts are frequently relying on the expertise of forensic investigators to assess allegations of sexual abuse. Such evaluations are complex and require knowledge of techniques used in sexual abuse and sexual offender evaluations (Bow, Quinnell, Zarfs & Assemany, 2002:566). When one considers the literature it is clear that the assessment of children is a complex and specialised field that must be performed by the forensic social worker. Literature and the researcher support the participants' perspective that communication with children in order to assist the court, is part of forensic social work.

Subtheme 3: Report Writing

Another sub-theme emerged, which is the compiling of reports by forensic social workers. Participant (1) and (3) stated the following;

- *Forensic social workers assist us in compiling reports from the minor victims that they are interviewing (P1)*
- *They are a good assistance to us in compiling reports for the case to be well prepared for court (P3)*

According to the SAPS Standard Operational Procedure Manual (2016:6), the scope of practice of forensic social workers includes providing scientifically based court reports in order to assist the investigating and legal process. Government Gazette (2017:3) also states that the functions

of forensic social workers includes applying relevant legislation and techniques to interpret data used in the compilation of the forensic social work report, compiling and submitting forensic social work technique-based forensic social work reports to primary clients and providing expert advice on relevant matters. Testimony by the forensic social worker on the results of the forensic assessment, is primarily given by means of a report, compiled by the forensic social worker (Fouché & Fouché, 2015:107). During April 2016 and March 2017 a total number of 3 228 forensic social work assessment reports pertaining to sexual offences complaints against persons under the age of 18 years were compiled for courts by SAPS forensic social workers (SAPS, 2017).

Jonkers (2012:14) supported this notion that social workers practicing forensic social work need to draw on a specific knowledge base and apply it within a legal context, for the specific purposes of assisting the judicial system to understand psychosocial issues relating to a victim and or witness of crime, and presenting all the facts to the court in a neutral and objective manner, thus enabling sound and just decision making. Smith (2014:322) concurs as she states that the court report is the end product of the overall forensic investigation, further that the report gives a full discussion of all the facts at hands and provides analysis of the expert who compiled it as well as contains clear conclusions and expert opinions. Barker (2003:166) confirms that forensic social work is a practice speciality focusing on the relationship of the client with the legal system and that the task of the forensic social worker include a comprehensive assessment, compiling scientific report and expert witnessing in a court of law.

From this information the researcher concludes that the participants are conversant with the fact that forensic social workers have a primary task of compiling reports that address the likelihood of sexual abuse so that the court can reach a just and fair decision. In this instance, the participants' responses are consistent with the reviewed literature regarding the fact that forensic social workers assist the investigating officers in compiling reports for court.

Subtheme 4: Assist the investigating officer and victim in court

Participants were of the opinion that forensic social workers must assist the investigating officer and the victim as well as the victim's family during the court proceedings. The following narratives emerged from the participants responses:

- *Their role is to assist us for the information gathered from a particular child to be taken to court, that's their main role (P1)*
- *The work of the forensic social worker is not just the victim but also the victims' people to help them to come to terms with the crime that happened to the family, to get emotional help for them (P6)*
- *The work of a forensic social worker is to help us achieve our convictions in various cases of rape especially where the victims are minors (P9)*

From the responses received from the participants it is clear that they confuse the roles of a forensic social worker with that of a clinical social worker or a therapist. Forensic assessments do not entail any therapy to the victim of sexual abuse, or their families. (Smith, 2007:43). Faller (2007:5) also states that the client of the forensic social worker is the court. According to the South African Council for Service Professions (2008:11), forensic social work is defined as a “specialized field of social work that focuses on the interface between society’s legal and human systems and is characterized by the social worker’s primary function of providing expert testimonies in courts of law with the primary client being the judiciary system”. It is strongly recommended that forensic investigators act as objective and neutral fact finders (Connell, 2009:439; Pence, 2011:327; Saywitz & Comparo, 2009:114; Saywitz *et al.*, 2007:222; Van Eyes & Beneke, 2012:78-79). When considering the literature, it is clear that the forensic social worker is a neutral and objective fact finder and the court is the client of the forensic social worker. The implication of this is that the forensic social worker is not employed to “assist” the investigating officer or the victims and their families, but to act as objective fact finders to assist the court. Unlike forensic social work, the clinical social worker has a vested interest in the child and supports the child. The information provided by the child is usually taken at face value and not questioned by the clinical social worker (Ryan, Hunter & Murrie, 2012:108). The child is also the client of the clinical social worker (Faller, 2007:5).

Jonkers (2012:24) indicates that forensic social workers can only be utilized effectively if role-players in the field are aware of the concept of forensic social work and if they are familiar with their service delivery methods or work protocol. The information provided by the participants indicate that although their perspectives of what forensic social work is as well as the roles and responsibilities of a forensic social worker are accurate. The instances where it is not accurate can be attributed to wrong information that is provided by the SAPS Standard

Operating Procedure Manual. Jonkers (2012:23) states that investigating officers are not entirely familiar with what forensic social work entails, which could lead to forensic social workers not being utilized effectively. According to the researcher, this might be contributed to the fact that the role and functions of forensic social workers are wrongly indicated in the SAPS Standard Operating Procedure Manual. According to Liebenberg *et al.* (2015:138), forensic social work is a fairly new practice speciality in South Africa which may cause the ignorance, role confusion and role conflict. It is also still a developing field in SAPS, as it only became operational in November 1997 (Stutterheim & Weyers, 1999:16), the first National Head for forensic social work was only appointed in 2012.

THEME 2: OPINION ON HOW THE FORENSIC SOCIAL WORKERS CAN ASSIST WITH THE INVESTIGATION OF CASES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

A question was asked to the participants on how the forensic social worker can assist them during the investigation of child sexual abuse cases. From the responses of participants the forensic assessment of children was identified as the subtheme.

Subtheme 1: Forensic Assessment of children

The following were narratives from the sub-theme identified;

- *The forensic social worker can help obtain information from the child as we are afraid we may be harmful in our approach to the victim (P10)*
- *The forensic social worker can assist us much in getting certain information from children so that we can also check does the child really have the ability to testify or to demonstrate as to what happened to them (P11)*
- *The forensic social worker with them there's this assessment where they tell the investigating officer whether the child can be a witness in court. (P12)*

In the SAPS Forensic Social Work Manual (SOP, 2015:11) some of the roles of forensic social workers are stipulated as follows;

- To assist the SAPS members in cases of child sexual abuse and to achieve the relevant goals set by the SAPS.
- Conduct forensic assessments in cases of alleged child abuse referred by SAPS and the judicial system.
- Provide scientifically based court reports in order to assist the investigative and legal process.

The Government Gazette (2017:3) states that conducting forensic social investigations of all cases that require forensic assessments using scientifically validated protocols and techniques in relation to forensic social work. The purpose of the forensic interview, according to Muller (2001:8), is to obtain a truthful account from the child in a manner which will best serve the interest of the child while at the same time being legally acceptable. Fouché and Fouché, (2015:105) state that forensic social workers are frequently employed by SAPS and that cases of child sexual abuse, is often referred to these social workers with specialised knowledge and skills who can test the veracity of the child's claims with regard to sexual abuse (Carstens, 2006:185:189; Fouché & Joubert, 2009:42). It is believed, forensic social work can play a formidable role in providing this much needed service within the field of sexual abuse, a service that could ultimately assist the South African Police Service in reaching its goal of providing an effective and efficient specialized service to child victims of sexual crimes Jonkers (2012:1).

Considering the perspective of the participants it seems that their responses are consistent with literature, and that forensic social workers can indeed assist them with the forensic assessment of children.

THEME 3: PARTICIPANT'S ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE REGARDING FORENSIC SOCIAL WORK

During the interviews with the participants the researcher asked them as to where they have acquired knowledge regarding forensic social work. The following subtheme emerged from their responses;

Subtheme 1: No formal training regarding forensic social work

From the participant's responses, it emerged that they had no formal training on what forensic social work entails. The majority of the participants indicated that they learned about forensic social work while performing their duties and one participant indicated that he was informed about forensic social work on a Detective review session.

The following were responses from the sub-theme identified;-

- *The knowledge that I have is from doing field work (P1)(P2)(P3)(P4)(P5)(P6)(P13)*
- *It was explained at the review session in Kimberley (10)*

- *I didn't even know there were forensic social workers in SAPS until I interacted with the forensic social worker that we are using and picked up a few things on what they are doing(P12)*
- *To be frank and truthful I do not have a lot of experience with the forensic social workers because we don't have one in our area (P7)*

Molwedi (2004:5) states that in practice, a huge communication gap still exists between the police and social workers during child sexual abuse case and argues that this can lead to lack of coordination. Perrang (2016:49) made a meaningful recommendation that investigating officers should receive forensic social work training to have a better understanding of the process followed by forensic social workers and the importance thereof so as to gain shared knowledge base. Jonkers (2012:24) concluded that forensic social workers can only be utilized effectively if role-players in the field are aware of the concept of forensic social work and if they are familiar with their service delivery methods or work protocol. From the participant's responses it can be concluded that much still needs to be done in SAPS to educate the FCS investigating officers on what forensic social work entail and their roles thereof.

THEME 4: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO ADD

Participants were asked if there was anything they would like to add as an input to the study. The participants stated the lack of forensic social workers in FCS Units. Subsequently the sub-theme will be discussed in detail.

Subtheme 1: Lack of forensic social workers in FCS Units

The following narratives evolved from the above theme;

- *I feel there must be more forensic social workers in the police or in Northern Cape to help us with cases of crimes against the children. Our nearest forensic social worker is in Upington, its 400km from Calvinia (P2)*
- *Kuruman to have their own forensic social worker because the area we are covering is very big (P3)*
- *We want more forensic social workers because we are 210 km away from our forensic social worker and her diary is so full to help us immediately (P5)*
- *From the background I have from forensic social workers, I would like that there should be one in our area who can readily assist us (P7)*

- *More forensic social workers are needed very much in SAPS and the explanation of what their role is, the broader members in the police don't know about forensic social work including senior officers (10)*
- *I feel if we can have a forensic social worker, because sometimes we have to drive a long way to the forensic social worker (P12)*

From the participants' responses it is clear that there is still a need for forensic social workers in SAPS. At the Northern Cape Province where this study is currently conducted there are 6 (six) forensic social workers out of which 3(three) are placed at various stations to serve 91 stations within five clusters (Northern Cape Provincial Fixed Establishment, 2016-2019). The Standard Operating Procedure Manual (2016:3) concurs with the participants that the presence of an internal social worker would improve the quality of the FCS components services and expedite the FCS component's investigations with regard to sexual abuse cases involving children. Mnguni (2018:34) also concluded in his study that forensic social work is considered as one of valuable expertise needed by the SAPS in the investigation of child sexual abuse.

Subtheme 2: Informing management about forensic social work

The participants stated that the services of forensic social workers should be marketed and that management should be informed about the services that they can render and the need that they fulfil.

Participant 10 stated in this regard: *“More forensic social workers are needed very much in SAPS and the explanation of what their role is, the broader members in the police don't know about forensic social work including senior officers.* This is corroborated by Mnguni (2018: 41) that it also appears that SAPS has failed to take advantage of opportunities to inform and educate their members as well as relevant role players about the role of forensic social work services. Furthermore, that workshops and information sessions would result in improved understanding of forensic social work services. According to the Forensic Social Work Standard Operating Procedure (SAPS, 2016:7), marketing the role of forensic social workers to state prosecutors, detective commanders and all relevant stakeholders is one of the objectives of forensic social work services. The researcher is of the opinion that forensic social workers should take the responsibility to market their services to management.

4. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study was to explore the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. The results showed that the investigating officers at the FCS Units have limited knowledge regarding forensic social work. They perceive forensic social work as a valuable aid in assisting them with their investigation. However, the lack of role clarity has a negative effect which impacts on the effective utilization of their services by investigating officers within the FCS Unit.

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SECTION C

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this research study was to explore the perspectives of investigating officers on roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the South African Police Services (SAPS). The respondents that took part in the study were all members of SAPS within the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit (FCS) who are directly involved with forensic social workers in dealing with cases of child sexual abuse. The researcher conducted a qualitative study in exploring the participant's perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to obtain their opinions and knowledge regarding the subject, until data saturation was reached.

The research findings offered an in depth understanding of the investigating officers' perspectives regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS. From the responses of participants it was clear that investigating officers within the FCS units in SAPS are not entirely familiar with what forensic social work entails as well as their roles and responsibilities thereof. This entails that forensic social work as a speciality is still under-developed within SAPS and that there is a lack of role clarity regarding forensic social work services within the FCS Units, which seems to have resulted in the minimum utilization of forensic social work services. The researcher was able to answer the research question by documenting the views and perspectives of the participants.

2. CONCLUSIONS

The researcher conducted a qualitative study to explore and understand the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the South African Police Services. The results of the study concluded that;

- The majority of participants have more than five years' experience as investigating officers at the FCS environment. One would expect that at their level of experience they should have been entirely knowledgeable about what forensic social work entails, including their roles and responsibilities.
- The responses received from the participants, indicated that the investigating officers within the FCS Units are not entirely familiar or knowledgeable on what forensic social work entails. Their responses reflected that they also do not understand the functions of a forensic social worker.
- The results of the study indicated that the investigating officers expect forensic social workers to obtain statements from child victims of sexual abuse, who are unable to open up and speak to them. This may compromise the forensic social worker's objectivity and neutrality on the case.
- It is clear from the participant's responses that they confuse the roles of a forensic social worker with that of a clinical social worker or a therapist. Participants were of the opinion that forensic social workers role is to help the victim and their family to come to terms with what happened, as well as to seek emotional help for them. This is in total contrast with the roles and responsibilities of a forensic social worker.
- The participants also indicated that they expect forensic social workers to prepare victims of child sexual abuse for court purposes. This is therapeutic in nature and also compromises the forensic social worker's objectivity and scope of practice. The client of the forensic social worker is the court not the community.

- The participants indicated that they expect forensic social workers to compile court reports to prepare their cases for court. This expectation is in line with literature as well as the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers.
- The results of the study indicated that the participants are aware of the fact that forensic social workers conduct forensic assessments on sexually abused children.
- Most of the participants also mentioned that there is a need for more forensic social workers in SAPS, who can help expedite their investigation. The participants indicated that they would like to have forensic social workers based at their respective FCS Units who will be available at all times, to utilise their services and develop work coordination for effective delivery of services.
- The participants indicated that they do not know much about forensic social workers as they were not exposed to any training regarding FSW. One participant indicated that the police senior management and broader FCS members are also not informed regarding forensic social work and their roles and responsibilities thereof.
- The participants expect the services of forensic social workers to be marketed at all levels of Detectives, so that management can be informed about the services that they render and the fact that it is a field of speciality.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations;-

- FCS members must be educated on the roles and responsibilities of the forensic social workers and what the profession entails.
- FCS members must be informed about the dynamics of forensic social work, amongst others, the role of objectivity and neutrality. They must be made aware that statement taking might compromise the neutral stance of the forensic social worker.
- FCS members must be educated on the difference between forensic social work and clinical social work.
- FCS members must also be educated that the court is the client of the forensic social worker, and not the child and their families.
- Forensic social workers should continue building on the good practice of supporting FCS members by means of writing good and scientific reports, and the conducting of legally sound forensic assessments.
- SAPS must employ more forensic social workers, as it is a need amongst FCS investigating officers.
- The marketing of forensic social work services should take place on all levels of SAPS management.
- For future research, the researcher is of the opinion that future research could be developed in other provinces where there are numerous forensic social workers. This would assist in testing whether the findings of this research are accurate and is a true reflection of the perspectives of investigating officers.

4. TESTING THE CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

This study was based on the argument that a gap exists in literature regarding the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work in the SAPS. Though there has been growing research on the field of forensic social work in South Africa, and the SAPS, the gap still exist in literature about the perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work in SAPS.

5. CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH

The study contributes to research in the field of forensic social work in the South African context. By obtaining an in-depth understanding of investigating officers' perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work in SAPS, role clarity and coordination between forensic social workers, and investigating officers within the FCS may be achieved. The phenomenon was driven amongst others by the notion that forensic social work services are not optimally utilised within the FCS units, due to what seems to be the lack of clarity with regard to their roles and responsibilities, as found by Jonkers, (2012). Based on the discussed findings and conclusions of this qualitative research, the central theoretical argument was proven by means of a qualitative research.

6. LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

This was a qualitative study restricted only to the Northern Cape Province, based on a small group of participants. This will not support the overall presumptions relating to FCS Units in all the Provinces in South Africa. Thus, the research findings cannot be generalised.

SECTION D: ADDENDA

ADDENDUM A: SAPS PERMISSION AND APPROVAL

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS  SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

Privaatsak/Private Bag X 94

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Verwysing/Reference: | 3/34/2 |
| Navrae/Enquiries: | Lt Col Joubert AC Thenga |
| Telefoon/Telephone: | (012) 393 3118 |

**DIVISION: RESEARCH
SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE
PRETORIA
0001**

- A. The Provincial Commissioner
NORTHERN CAPE
- B. The Divisional Commissioner
DETECTIVE SERVICE

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: PERSPECTIVE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICERS ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORENSIC SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS): NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: DM NDWENI

- A-B. 1. The above subject matter refers.
- 2. The researcher, Ms DM Ndweni, is conducting a study with the aim *to develop an understanding on the perspectives of Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Investigating Officers of the Northern Cape regarding the roles and responsibilities of Forensic Social Work Services in the South African Police Service.*
- 3. The researcher is requesting permission to interview 15 Police Members who are working directly with Forensic Social Workers and responsible for the management of FCS related cases in Northern Cape.
- 4. The proposal was perused according to National Instruction 1 of 2006. This office recommends that permission be granted for the research study, subject to the final approval and further arrangements by the office of the Provincial Commissioner: Northern Cape and the Divisional Commissioner: Detective Service.
- 5. We hereby request the final approval by your office if you concur with our recommendation. Your office is also at liberty to set terms and conditions to the researcher to ensure that compliance standards are adhered to during the research process and that research has impact to the organisation.

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: PERSPECTIVE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICERS ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORENSIC SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS): NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: DM NDWENI

6. If approval granted by your office, this office will obtain a signed undertaking from researcher prior to the commencement of the research which will include your terms and conditions if there are any and the following:
 - 6.1. The research will be conducted at his/her exclusive cost.
 - 6.2. The researcher will conduct the research without the disruption of the duties of members of the Service and where it is necessary for the research goals, research procedures or research instruments to disrupt the duties of a member, prior arrangements must be made with the commander of such member.
 - 6.3. The researcher should bear in mind that participation in the interviews must be on a voluntary basis.
 - 6.4. The information will at all times be treated as strictly confidential.
 - 6.5. The researcher will provide an annotated copy of the research work to the Service.
7. If approval granted by your office, for smooth coordination of research process between your office and the researcher, the following information is kindly requested to be forwarded to our office:
 - **Contact person:** Rank, Initials and Surname.
 - **Contact details:** Office telephone number and email address.
8. A copy of the approval (if granted) and signed undertaking as per paragraph 6 supra to be provided to this office within 21 days after receipt of this letter.
9. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.


**LIEUTENANT GENERAL
DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONER: RESEARCH
DR BM ZULU**

DATE: 2018/09/05



Private Bag
Privaatsak/ X20501
Mokotla'Poso

My Reference 3/34/2
My Verwysing
Tshopo ya ka
Enquiries Brigadier Coghlan
Navrae
Batlisa ho

Tel : 053 839 2852/03
Fax : 053 831 8752

THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER
DIE PROVINSIALE KOMMISSARIS

NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
NOORD KAAP PROVINSIE
KIMBERLEY
8301

Divisional Commissioner : Research
South African Police Service
PRETORIA
0001

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: PERSPECTIVE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICERS ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORENSIC SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS): NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER:DM NDWENI

1. Your letter with reference 3/34/2 dated 2018/09/05 refers.
2. This office has perused all documentation regarding the research of DM Ndweni and concurs with recommendations.
3. Approval is granted for the researcher to conduct interviews with members of the organisation in the Northern Cape Province as referred to in paragraph 3 of your letter
4. Contact details of the member who will coordinate the research is as follows:

Contact person: Capt AN Shivuri
Contact numbers: 053 839 2853
Email address: ShivuriA@saps.gov.za
5. The following stakeholders will be sensitised regarding the research intention to conduct in-depth interviews with members once the date/s of the intended visit/s is made available and confirmed to this office.

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SAPS: PERSPECTIVE OF INVESTIGATING OFFICERS ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORENSIC SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS); NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY: MASTERS DEGREE: RESEARCHER: DM NDWENI

- Deputy Provincial Commissioner Detective
- Provincial Head Detective

Kind regards



MAJ GENERAL
F/PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER: NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
KC OTOLA

Date: 2018/09/11

ADDENDUM B: ETHICS APPROVAL OF THE STUDY



Dr S Smith
Forensic Social Work
COMPRES

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research,
Training and Support**

**North-West University Health Research Ethics
Committee (NWU-HREC)**

Tel: 018-285 2291
Email: wayne.towers@nwu.ac.za

Dear Dr Smith

10 July 2019

APPROVAL OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE PROGRESS OF THE STUDY

Ethics number: NWU-00004-18-A1

Kindly use the ethics reference number provided above in all future correspondence or documents submitted to the administrative assistant of the North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC).

Study title: Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in SAPS

Study leader: Dr S Smith

Student: DM Ndwenii-16301080

Application type: Single study

Risk level: Minimal (monitoring report required annually)

Expiry date: 30 September 2019 (monitoring report due at the end of September annually until completion)

You are kindly informed that the documentation submitted to the NWU-HREC, as per the conditions set in your approval letter, was reviewed by the designated reviewers and the researchers can proceed with the relevant phases of the study, related to this documentation. The reviewers have indicated that the submitted documents are acceptable, however, the following conditions specific to the progress of the study, still need to be addressed as indicated:

- a. The researchers will have to provide the NWU-HREC with copies of the signed confidentiality agreements from the mediators/fieldworker/transcribers, once they have been obtained.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research, Training and Support at Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za.

Yours sincerely

Digitally signed by Wayne
Towers
Date: 2019.07.10
15:28:48 +02'00'

Prof Wayne Towers
Chairperson: NWU-HREC

Prof Minrie Greeff
Head of Health Sciences Ethics
Office for Research, Training and
Support

Current details: (23239522) G:\My Drive\9_ Research and Postgraduate Education\9.1.5.3 Letters Templates\9.1.5.4.1_In-Progress_Approval_letter_HREC.docm
30 April 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.1

ADDENDUM C: CONSENT FORMS

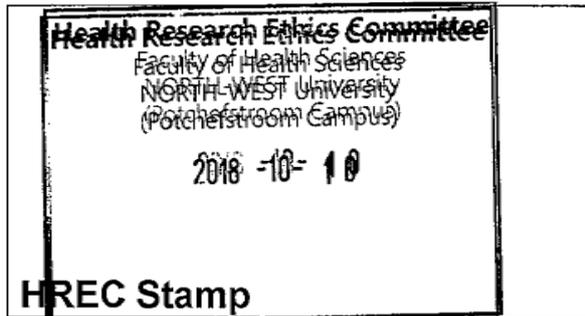


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INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR MEMBERS OF SAPS PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: **Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the SAPS**

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00004-18-S1

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Sufran Smith

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Mrs DM Ndweni

ADDRESS: North-West University

Faculty of Health Sciences

Private Bag X6001

Potchefstroom

2522

CONTACT NUMBER: 0764125584. dorah.ndweni@gmail.com

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my master's degree of Social work: Forensic Practice. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are

fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

6. This study has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU NWU-00004-18-S1) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

7. What is this research study all about?

- *This study will be conducted at the various FCS Units at the Northern Cape Province and will involve semi-structured interviews with FCS unit investigating officers with experienced health researchers trained in conducting semi-structured interviews. Approximately 15 participants will be included in this study.*
- *We plan to explore the Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the SAPS.*

8. Why have you been invited to participate?

- *You have been invited to be part of this research because you are a member of the South African Police Service who will be able to provide information regarding the perspectives on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social work in SAPS, due to your relevant knowledge and significant work experience in the FCS units.*
- *You also fit the research because you are fluent in English, you are an FCS member situated in the Northern Cape and you work closely with Forensic Social Workers.*
- *You will not be able to take part in this research if you did not give written informed consent or are involved in other research projects.*

9. What will be expected of you?

- *You will be expected to:*
- *Have a one-on-one semi-structured interview with the researcher at a time convenient to you. It will be expected of you to answer five open ended questions. The duration of the interview will not be more than an hour.*
- *Your participation is voluntary therefore you must give written informed consent and consent on being video recorded.*
- *You will not be forced to participate in this study and can withdraw at any time from the study.*

- *You will be one of approximately 15 participants that will be interviewed.*

10. Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

- There are no direct benefits for you as a participant in the proposed study but through the study you will be able to share or provide information and perspectives regarding the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers within the South African Police Service.
- *Your input will ultimately contribute to the design of relevant interventions that will ensure the optimal utilization of forensic social work services within FCS Units and high detection rates on child sexual abuse cases.*

11. Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- The risks to you in this study are minimal. The topic is of an intellectual nature. The researcher is aware that time pressure, frustration, boredom and fatigue could also form part of some of the risks involved but will be limited by the researcher. The researcher will conduct the interviews in the shortest possible time and will give body breaks when necessary. The interview itself will be of a research nature. The interview will also not cover any sensitive topics. However, if you are traumatized by the research in any manner, you will receive one session of trauma debriefing from a qualified social worker at the cost of the researcher.
- There are more gains for you in joining this study than there are risks

12. How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

- *Anonymity will in the study is ensured. During the transcription, data will be coded to ensure that no link can be made to a specific participant. Privacy will be ensured by the way data will be captured, changing identifying data during transcription and deleting the digital recordings once data have been transcribed. Privacy will be maintained, in that no participant's name will be disclosed or linked with a particular response. The researcher will collect electronic data in the form of audio recordings as well as written data. The written as well as audio data will be stored on a disc after the completion of the interviews. This data on the disc stick will be password protected and encrypted. Only the researcher, her study leader and the person responsible for coding the data, will have access to the data. The discs and the memory stick will be locked away in a lockable cabinet in a lockable office at all times, when not in use. After the data is transcribed, the researcher will delete the data and the transcribed data will be stored as explained. Once the research is completed, the discs and the memory stick will be saved at the offices of the Research Entity named Compress in a locked cabinet. After five years all data will be destroyed.*

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- *The findings of the study will only be used for the purpose of this study. This is a once off collection and the data will be interpreted and included in an article which will be disseminated to the public in the Journal for Social Work during the year 2019.*

How will you know about the results of this research?

- *The researcher will ask you during the interviews the method you would prefer the results to be disseminated. Options to choose from can include an e-mail or personal interviews with the participants.*

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

- *This study is funded by the researcher herself. Participants will not be compensated for taking part in this study.*
- *Interviews will be held during office hours at a time convenient to you and during your personal time.*
- *The researcher will personally travel to your respective FCS units for the collection of data and the location of the meeting will be arranged with each one of you beforehand.*
- *You will receive a token of appreciation to thank you for your endurance to participate in the research. The token of appreciation will be in a form of a pen with a logo of the North-West University on it.*
- *There will thus be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.*

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- *You can contact the principal researcher Mrs Dorah Ndweni at 0764125584 if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.*
- *You can contact the study leader Dr Sufran Smith from the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences of the North- West University at 018 299 1682; sufran.smith@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.*
- *You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.*
- *You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.*

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: **Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the SAPS**”

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

1.1.1 Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....

Signature of person obtaining consent

.....

Signature of witness

1.1.2 Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) declare that:

- I had the information in this document explained by
who I trained for this purpose.

- I did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged participants to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....

Signature of researcher

.....

Signature of witness

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH FCS MEMBERS

Researcher: DM Ndweni - MSW (Forensic Practice) Student

Study leader: Dr S Smith

Research Study: Perspectives of investigating officers on the roles and responsibilities of forensic social workers in the SAPS

SECTION A: INTERVIEW

- What is your perspective of forensic social work in SAPS?
- What do you think is the work of a forensic social worker in SAPS?
- Explain to me where you obtained the information of the previous question
- What is your opinion on how the forensic social worker can assist with the investigation of cases of child sexual abuse?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?