#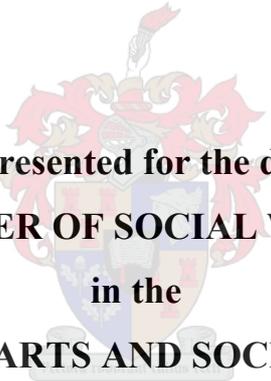 REFLECTIONS OF NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS ON THE EXECUTION OF THEIR MANAGEMENT TASKS IN NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

by

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MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
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DECLARATION

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Date: December 2021

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this achievement to my late father, Papa Edward Mtombeni.

ABSTRACT

Social welfare organisations, both nationally and internationally are faced with the challenging task of adapting and converging to a socio-economic policy agenda as a result of global neoliberal reform. Due to socio-economic policy changes and expectations resulting from neoliberalism, social welfare organisations are shifting away from their traditional philanthropic ideology towards operating from business principles of cost-efficiency and management.

The influence of neoliberalism within the social welfare context has been documented by various scholars. However, while research has identified the impact of neoliberal managerialism on social work practice, there has been little to no effort in exploring this from the perspective of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs), who are being increasingly expected to demonstrate management knowledge, skills, and capabilities in order to meet organisational targets.

This study attempts to identify and explore the execution of various management tasks from the perspective of NQSWs in order to gain an understanding of what management tasks are expected, and how these tasks are executed by NQSWs. The study was particularly interested in the execution of time management, workload management, human resource management, financial management, risk management, change management and programme management as key tasks for the NQSW.

The study approach was qualitative and interpretivist, adopting an exploratory and descriptive research design. Through a combined purposive and snowball sampling approach, fifteen NQSW participants from various non-governmental welfare organisations in the country participated in the data collection process by means of a semi-structured interview; due to COVID-19 restrictions, these interviews were conducted telephonically. Data was analysed thematic analysis and pattern matching was used for verification.

The key findings indicate that NQSWs execute several important management tasks despite not necessarily being occupants of specific levels of management. The findings further indicate that NQSWs execute these management tasks over and above their frontline intervention responsibility. It is often in the process of rendering services that NQSWs find themselves executing specific management tasks. Participants identified several challenges in this informal management role.

The recommendations with respect to the findings is that, regardless of one's position on neoliberal management influence within the welfare context, this is a reality for up-and-coming social workers; training institutions would benefit from integrating management training into the curriculum, adopting a combined bureaucratic and empowerment management approach, that enables social workers to function in a neoliberal environment while retaining the values of the profession. Training institutions and NGOs needs to synchronise the preparation process with the expectations of practice within the work environment in order to ensure optimal performance of these tasks by NQSWs which is equally not at the expense of rendering effective services to the client system.

OPSOMMING

Maatskaplike welsynsorganisasies, beide nasionaal en internasionaal, word deur uitdagings in die gesig gestaar om aan te pas en om te skakel na 'n sosio-ekonomiese beleidsagenda as 'n resultaat van globale neoliberale hervorming. Vanweë sosio-politieke veranderinge en verwaginge as gevolg van neoliberalisme, beweeg maatskaplike welsynsorganisasies weg van hulle tradisionele filantropiese ideologie na die benutting van besigheidsbeginsels van koste-effektiewe bestuur.

Die invloed van neoliberalisme op die maatskaplike welsynskonteks is deur verskeie outeurs gedokumenteer. Nieteenstaande, terwyl navorsing die impak van 'n neoliberale bestuursgerigte maatskaplike werk identifiseer, is daar min tot geen eksplorering gedoen oor hierdie perspektief van nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers nie, van wie dit toenemend verwag word om bestuurskennis, vaardighede en vermoëns te demonstreer ten einde organisasieteikens te bereik.

Hierdie studie beoog om die uitvoering van verskeie bestuurstake vanaf die perspektief van nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers te identifiseer en te eksploreer, ten einde 'n begrip te verkry oor wat van bestuurstake verwag word, en hoe hierdie take deur nuut gekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers uitgevoer word. Die studie is spesifiek geïnteresseerd in die uitvoering van tydsbestuur, werkladingsbestuur, menslike hulpbronnebestuur, finansiële bestuur, risikobestuur, veranderingsbestuur en programbestuur as sleuteltake van die nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werker.

Die navorsingsbenadering was kwalitatief en interpreterend, met 'n verkennende en beskrywende navorsingsontwerp. Deur 'n gekombineerde doelbewuste sneeubal benadering, het 15 nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers van verskeie nie-regeringsorganisasies in die land aan die data insamelingsproses deelgeneem deur middel van 'n semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud; vanweë die COVID-19 beperkinge, is onderhoude telefonies gevoer. Data is tematies geanaliseer en patroonvorming is gebruik as verifikasie.

Die sleutelbevindinge dui aan dat nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers verskeie belangrike bestuurstake uitvoer, ten spyte daarvan dat hulle nie op spesifieke vlakke van besuur werk nie. Bevindinge toon verder dat nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers bo en behalwe hulle eerstelinie intervensie, ook bestuurstake en verantwoordelikhede het. Dit is dikwels tydens die proses van dienslewering dat nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers

bestuurstake uitvoer. Deelnemers identifiseer verskeie uitdagings in hierdie informele bestuursrolle.

Aanbevelings met betrekking tot die bevindinge is dat afgesien van die invloed van neoliberale invloede op die welsynskonteks, is dit 'n realiteit vir beginner maatskaplike werkers; opleidingsinstansies kan baat vind by die integrering van bestuursopleiding in die kurrikulum, aangepas tot 'n gekombineerde burokratiese en bemagtigings bestuursproses, wat maatskaplike werkers in staat stel om in 'n neoliberale omgewing te funksioneer, terwyl die waardes van die professie behou word. Opleidingsinstansies en nie-regeringsorganisasies moet die voorbereidingsproses vir die verwagtinge van die praktyk binne 'n werksomgewing sinkroniseer, ten einde optimale uitvoering van hierdie take deur nuutgekwalifiseerde maatskaplike werkers te verseker, om nie tot nadeel van effektiewe dienste aan die kliëntsisteem te wees nie.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS

AASW	Association of Australian Social Work
ANC	African National Congress
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
DESC	Department of Social Work Ethical Screening Committee
DSD	Department of Social Development
EBP	Evidence-based Practice
EMA	Empowerment Management Approach
ELOs	Exit Level Outcome(s)
HRM	Human Resource Management
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
IFSW	International Federation of Social Work
NASW	National Association of Social Work
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPM	New Public Management
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NQSWs	Newly Qualified Social Worker(s)
QS	Qualification Standards
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professionals
SACSW	South African Council for Social Work
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAW	Social Auxiliary Worker
TQM	Total Quality Management
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Social welfare organisations, both nationally and internationally, are being faced with the challenging task of adapting to a converging socioeconomic policy agenda as a result of global neoliberal reform (Engelbrecht, 2010; Engelbrecht, Ornellas, Martínez-Román & Tortosa-Martínez, 2015; Shanks, 2016; Spolander, Engelbrecht, Martin, Strydom, Pervova, Sicora & Adaikalam, 2014; Ornellas, 2018). Due to socioeconomic policy changes and expectations resulting from neoliberalism, social welfare organisations are shifting away from their traditional philanthropic ideology towards business principles of cost-efficiency and management (Engelbrecht, 2010; Harlow, 2008a). Prior to 1979, the concepts of management and performance were seldom depicted in the social welfare context and were rather associated with the business sector (Spolander & Martin, 2012). Management of social welfare organisations in the present neoliberal context, however, is characterised by New Public Management (NPM) and business principles which exert surveillance and control, exercised through setting targets and measuring performance indicators to achieve compliance with the managerial policy objectives (Payne, 2009). In the last decade, this shift has become more apparent within the South African welfare sector (Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

In South Africa, social service delivery is rendered through both the public sector (government) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). However, NGOs have become prevalent due to the significant role they historically played in providing social services to the poor and vulnerable population groups, filling the gaps in government's social service delivery (Mashale, 2017; Spolander et al., 2014). Many of these prominent social welfare organisations developed alongside the country's colonial and apartheid history, which was characterised by racial exclusion and discriminatory provision of social service (Patel, 2008; Smith, 2014). Post-apartheid, the objective of NGOs shifted to the creation of public value for all citizens (Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019) and NGO service delivery became centred on an equitable, developmental, and redistributive agenda (Ornellas, 2018). However, this is fast being contested within South African NGOs as the welfare sector is increasingly impacted by neoliberal managerial practices and expectations.

South African NGOs act as partners with the government in social service delivery and are required to be registered with the state to ensure accountability and adherence to governance expectations. Such registration allows NGOs to gain access to donors and government funding through the Non-Profit Organisations Act of 1997 (RSA, 1997a). This dependence on government financing for survival, however, as well as growing demands for meeting government managerial and performance mandates, often means that the NGOs are limited in their advocacy, particularly against state-based policy developments such as neoliberalism (Cloete, 2012; Payne 2009; Ornellas, 2018; Spolander et al., 2014). It can be argued that South African NGOs have succumb to the whims of the state, with little resistance to the neoliberal management agenda facing social welfare service delivery (Xaba, 2014). This type of management is fixated on achieving effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability within organisations (Engelbrecht, 2015).

The above changing context has resulted in several challenges within the NGO field, including a notable increase in the number of non-social work professionals occupying managerial positions in social welfare organisations, particularly within NGOs (Engelbrecht, 2015; Ornellas, 2018). According to the Department of Social Development[1] (DSD, 2012a), non-social workers can legally manage social welfare organisations provided that they do not advise social workers on any social work-related matters. However, Engelbrecht (2015), when revisiting this esoteric question on whether non-social workers can (and should) manage social work professionals, concluded that social workers should be able to exercise their professional determination and accountability, regardless of who the manager is.

Consequently, it goes without saying that social service practitioners and specifically Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) are required to be educated and trained to align their practice with the requirements of the latest management ethos. This is done in order to be accountable and to operate with the objective of managing all dimensions of their specific workload and expectations (Rogowski, 2011). NQSWs in this research context refers to social work practitioners who have been in the field for a period of no more than two years (Cloete,

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[1] Hereafter referred to as the Department, or DSD.

2012; De Jager, 2013; van Rensburg, 2009). The educational programme of NQSWs includes practice education, which is part of the social work undergraduate programme. Practice education is intended to prepare students to attain skills required for social work practice through the application of theory in the field (Brink, 2007; IASSW & IFSW, 2002; Isaacs, 2003; Williams, 2012).

However, it is still unknown if the preparedness of NQSWs can solely rest upon organisational factors or qualifying education and training because of the dynamic nature of the social welfare context (Moriarty, Manthorpe, Stevens & Hussein, 2011). Thus, the development of professional competencies and capabilities of NQSWs within the changing context of social work has become a widely debated subject – particularly in terms of management tasks (Bates, Immins, Parker, Keen, Rutter, Brown & Zsigo, 2010; Carpenter, Shardlow, Patsios, & Wood, 2013; Grant, Sheridan & Webb, 2017; Moriarty et al., 2011; Sharpe, Moriarty, Stevens, Manthorpe, & Hussein, 2011). Yet, the competencies and capabilities required of NQSWs to execute their management tasks within South African NGOs are unclear in practice as little to no research has been conducted on what exactly is required of frontline social workers in NGOs in order to effectively manage (Scott-Muller, 2015).

Rankin and Engelbrecht (2019) developed a conceptual framework of management skills, functions, and tasks with the attempt to demonstrate a link between these management competencies and social work principles within a social welfare context. They define management tasks as actual tasks executed daily by social work professionals at any level of management. This includes frontline practice by NQSWs, which requires drawing on specific management skills and functions to be accomplished. Mashale (2017) concurs that the performance of management tasks is an operationalisation of the four management functions, which are: planning, organising, leading, and controlling. The prior mentioned functions were coined by Fayol (1949), who is regarded as a primary author in management studies. On the other hand, Hafford-Letchfield (2009) asserts that the application of management tasks draws on a variety of management skills. There thus seems to exist consensus amongst various scholars about examples of management tasks related to social work, which include workload, change, time, risk, budget, and financial resources management, amongst others (Coulshed, 1990; Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Da Silva, Damain & de Pádua, 2012; Patti, 2013; Rankin & Engelbrecht 2019; Weinbach, 2003).

Although management tasks in social work may appear to be universal at all levels of management, the nature and execution of these tasks on the micro or frontline intervention

level in an NGO is influenced by macro government policies, which are enforced within the meso or organisational environment within which social workers operate (Muinjangue, 2020). Engelbrecht (2015) argues that the danger of amplifying the importance of these accountability and cost-benefit approaches to social service delivery, and to the mission of social work NGOs, is equal to the danger of ignoring them altogether. However, there exists no evidence base for training institutions of social workers in South Africa which can serve as an indicator of the type and scope of management skills that social work students require. Such a baseline set of management knowledge could be transferred into practice by NQSWs. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the reflections of NQSWs on the execution of their management tasks within their day-to-day practice at the NGO level.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Management tasks are often argued to be administrative with management and administration being used interchangeably within social work (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Patti, 2013; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019). However, the distinction between these two terms differs according to various management schools of thought (Engelbrecht, 2015). For example, management tasks can be identified as those tasks that require a selection of specific management functions and skills for execution (Mashale, 2017); others define management tasks as the actual tasks performed by managers (Hafford-Letchfield, 2009; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019), such as workload management, financial management, management of volunteers and project management. Further still, management can be seen as the most integral part of social work practice where social work services are provided through planning, organising, leading and control (Weinbach, 2003).

Within either school of thought, social work professionals fall into the category of managers in terms of the types of tasks they undertake daily. However, this does not imply that they are occupants of a specific management level position, but rather that they are conversant with management activities (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019). Yet, there is little evidence within the curricula of social work education and training which demonstrates that NQSWs are being trained to execute such management tasks. Moreover, studies that investigated the preparedness of NQSWs for entry into social work practice, because of the qualifying education for professional practice, highlight complex interactions between graduates' current work environment and their qualifying education (see for example Sharpe et al., 2011). Scholars such as De Jager (2013), Sharpe et al. (2011) and Tham and Lynch

(2017) suggest that social work education and training, as well as employment expectations, need to be synchronised for a reality-based preparation process. This study, therefore, seeks to answer these recurring questions, specifically in terms of management preparedness for NQSWs. Arguably, this will yield essential results that will inform higher learning institutions in social work to offer a reality-based education and training especially with regards to management tasks.

Furthermore, NQSWs are faced with additional challenges in their transition from university to a workplace, owing to minimal practice experience (Collins & Van Breda, 2010). This study places emphasis on the extent to which NQSWs could transfer general management knowledge articulated by their curricula at training institutions to perform certain management tasks in practice. It is thus not enough for NQSWs to demonstrate written, theoretical evidence about their knowledge; they must also demonstrate the ability to perform (Phillips, 2011). Therefore, it would be essential to identify, explore and describe the tasks NQSWs need to manage in an NGO, to understand how to better train upcoming NQSWs for practice. No studies were found on this topic within South Africa. This study which focuses on management tasks executed by NQSWs in a South African NGO context is thus a novel and valuable contribution to the social work field, both at the practice and training level.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The above discussion gave rise to the following research question:

- What management tasks are executed and/or required by NQSWs within an NGO context, as reflected upon by NQSWs?

This question was unpacked through the following sub-questions:

- o What is the role of management within the South African social work NGO context, per recent neoliberal influence?
- o Which management tasks are being undertaken by the social work professionals, particularly within the South African NGO environment?
- o Which management tasks are being expected of/undertaken by NQSWs and what are the necessary skills and knowledge required for execution?

1.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research was to gain an understanding of the various management tasks NQSWs execute in their practice within an NGO context.

To achieve this aim and effectively explore the above questions, the following objectives were formulated:

- To contextualise and describe the influence of neoliberal discourses on the role of management within the South African social work NGO context;
- To identify and describe the management tasks practised by social workers within the NGO environment. Specific reference will be given to the practice-related tasks identified by Rankin and Engelbrecht (2019) that require management knowledge:
  - Time management;
  - Workload management;
  - Information management;
  - Human Resource management;
  - Financial management;
  - Risk management;
  - Change management; and
  - Programme management;
- To empirically explore what management tasks NQSWs are expected to execute and the skills, knowledge and expertise required to perform these tasks successfully;
- To present conclusions and recommendations to higher education institutions and NGOs regarding management tasks executed by NQSWs within an NGO context and the developments which may be necessary at the curricula level.

1.5. THEORETICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE

The study was conducted from a theoretical point of departure which views management within the context of *neoliberal conceptualisation* and influence; neoliberalism in this context is viewed as a school of thought which primarily signifies a category of economic ideas (Harvey, 2010; Thorsen, 2009). This was undertaken through consideration of the influences of neoliberal tenets on the management of NGOs as explored by Ornellas (2018), which subsequently affect performance and task expectation of the social work professionals, including NQSWs.

Bureaucratic Classical Management Theory (Gerth & Mills, 1958) was also deemed relevant in the context where NGO management is confronted with neoliberal demands. That said, the employment of bureaucratic theory alone is not sufficient for understanding the concept of management within social service organisations (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019). Hence, this

theory is discussed concurrently with the *empowerment approach* which advocates for the avoidance of the assumption that corporate models can be applied to social service organisations without appropriate adjustment and adaptations (Lewis, Packard & Lewis, 2012). The empowerment approach also acknowledges the existence of formal management structures within social service organisations and encourages commitment to empowering all participants (including NQSWs) to be aligned with the organisations' mission and vision (and in this case the mission and vision of NGOs) (Hadina, Middleton, Montana & Simpson, 2007).

Finally, this study further draws on a *management tasks conceptual framework* as presented by authors Rankin and Engelbrecht (2019). This framework unpacks the interrelatedness of management skills, functions, and tasks with respect to management within social service organisations such as NGOs.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section briefly details the research approach, research design, and research methods that the researcher deployed for the purpose of this study.

1.6.1. Research approach

The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of the management tasks executed by NQSWs and how these tasks are carried out within an NGO setting (i.e., the skills, knowledge and expertise required). The study thus made use of a deductive approach, whereby the study begins with a research question, followed by a literature study and empirical data collection and analysis.

The researcher was concerned with the views of social workers themselves, as opposed to statistical or inflexible data. According to Kumar (2005) and Silverman (2011), when the desired end is to attain a comprehensive discovery about the studied complex phenomenon, with the views of participants as the primary source for understanding the identified phenomenon and its complexity, a qualitative research approach is most appropriate.

Emphasis was placed on the meaning and experiences elicited by participants (in this case, NQSWs). According to Fouchè and Delport (2011), a qualitative approach allows for the implementation of a meaningful exploration which will permit the development of a holistic view of the presented social phenomenon. The research study was thus qualitative and interpretivist in nature.

1.6.2. Research design

This research study incorporated both exploratory and descriptive research designs. An *exploratory research design* allows the researcher to gain insight into a specific situation, phenomenon, or selected individuals. The exploratory research design is implemented when there is a lack of information about the research topic, particularly if it is a new area of interest such as was the case with this study. Exploratory research enables the exploration and development of a general picture of the studied phenomenon. A *descriptive research design* stipulates details about a specific situation, phenomenon, or individuals. This approach encourages a more intensive examination of the phenomenon and its deeper meanings (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011). Both approaches according to Fouché and Schurink, (2011) are valuable in understanding phenomena or research questions; the exploratory approach is focused on "what" questions, while a descriptive approach focuses on questions of "why" and "how" (Ornellas, 2018:8). Thus, a combined exploratory and descriptive approach allowed for a richer understanding of the research topic.

1.6.3. Research methods

The sampling method, means of data collection, and data analysis tools are discussed in the section below.

1.6.3.1. Population and Sampling

The researcher utilised a combination of *purposive* and *snowball* sampling. Both approaches fall under *non-probability sampling* techniques. With non-probability sampling, the size of the population is unknown by the researcher and the likelihood of having particular participants selected is also unknown. Purposive sampling involves choosing specific participants which illustrate the features or properties that are of interest for the study at hand (Silverman, 2005). Thus, a purposive sampling technique is considered by some as a form of judgemental sampling.

On the other hand, snowball sampling involves approaching one or a handful of participants that are involved in the matter to be researched, to then gain information on other potential participants. The researcher is referred by the participant(s) to other participants sharing similar characteristics or deemed as holding relevant knowledge/insight into the research question (Strydom & Delport, 2011). The researcher thus deployed purposive sampling in the selection of the first participant(s), as well as the determination of participant characteristics. Following

this, the snowball technique was used in order to populate the remainder of the empirical sample.

To standardise the selection of the sample group, thereby ensuring the most appropriate individuals are involved in the empirical study, it was important for the researcher to postulate the parameters of the population through clearly identified and formulated pre-selection criteria for inclusion purposes (Strydom & Delport, 2011). The sample should be representative of the population group and possess characteristics, opinions, ideas, knowledge, and experiences about the subject of the research study (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2008).

For this study, one participant (who adhered to the criteria for inclusion) was recruited from the researcher's professional network via a telephone call/email with a request to partake in the research study. This participant was then asked to refer the researcher to other NQSWs working in social welfare NGOs (and who adhere to the criteria for inclusion), which may have been part of the participants' professional network; these participants referred the researcher to further potential participants for inclusion. The participant gave the researcher the contact details of a prospective participant, and the researcher then contacted this individual to enquire about their interest to participate in the study. The referred participant received the interview schedule and the document for informed consent; this was returned to the researcher before setting a date for the interview. This process was replicated with each participant until saturation, or ideal sample size was reached.

Greeff (2012) states that a minimum of 12 interviews could result in instability over the participants' views. On the other hand, Bertaux (1981) argued that 15 participants in qualitative research is the smallest acceptable sample size. Therefore, the sample for this study consisted of 15 participants within various NGOs; data saturation could arguably be reached with this sample size.

The study participants were demarcated by a specific focus on NQSWs to explore the management tasks executed at this level, and the knowledge, skills and expertise required by social work graduates upon entering the work environment. The criteria of inclusion for the proposed study were as follows:

- The participant must be a social worker with a maximum of two years of working experience in social work practice (thereby falling within the category of an NQSW);

- The participant must be currently employed within any social work-related NGO setting;
- The NQSWs must reside and work in South Africa;
- The participant must be registered with the SACSSP;
- The participants must be proficient in English.

The sample consisted of only NQSWs working within the NGO environment. However, participants were approached within their personal professional capacity as the research question focused on the management skills of NQSWs (participants) and not the contexts of specific organisations. South African NGO social work practice is largely homogenous, regulated by similar government statutory requirements. Furthermore, approaching participants in their personal capacity protects the anonymity of the NGOs and does not assign findings to any NGOs in particular.

1.6.3.2. *An instrument for data collection*

The instrument used for data collection for the purpose of this study was a semi-structured interview; this is the primary means of data collection in qualitative research. A semi-structured interview process is typical for qualitative research as it is organised around subjects of interest and allows substantial flexibility regarding the scope and depth of exploration (Greeff, 2012).

According to Strydom and Delport (2011) preparing the research schedule in advance enlightens the researcher about the obstacles that might hinder the implementation of the schedule during the interview process. For instance, if the wording used to formulate questions in the interview schedule results in problems that influence its practicality, the necessary adjustment could be made prior to the interview sessions. However, the flexibility of this type of interview is that it treats participants as experts in the phenomenon being studied. Furthermore, there was flexibility for deeper probing during data collection through the semi-structured interviews, which consequently generated rich data. Therefore, the researcher was able to explore the complexity of the phenomenon from the participants' perspective. The interviews were conducted telephonically with the participants due to COVID-19 safety and social distancing compliance. Furthermore, participants were given the interview schedule prior to the interview to ensure participant familiarity with the questions. The interview schedule has been provided as Annexure B.

Interviews were not conducted during participants' working hours or at their workplace and thus did not interfere with their working duties. The researcher audio-recorded the interview

process with the participants' consent and then transcribed the recorded data for analysis purposes.

1.6.4. Data management

The methods of data analysis and verification used for this study are outlined below.

1.6.4.1. *Data Analysis*

Analysing qualitative data refers to a process of converting data gathered from the sample with a specific instrument for data collection into research findings. It is a process of classifying to create order, give meaning and structure to vast data collection (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011). The researcher identified themes and sub-themes in the literature review; these were used to initially code the narrative into relevant themes and sub-themes. From here, patterns within the themes and sub-themes were identified and presented as categories following the discourses with NQSWs.

Schurink et al. (2011) provide a linear guideline for the process of analysing qualitative data. This process ensures successful data analysis, and the researcher can present findings in a logical and meaningful way using themes and identifying emerging categories. Thematic data analysis was performed through a manual coding process of clustered narrative, using six phases to establish meaningful patterns: i) transcribing collected data to be familiar with content, ii) preliminary analyses and generating initial codes, iii) searching for patterns among codes, iv) revising themes, v) listing the identified categories of patterns and lastly, vi) presenting the final report (Strydom & Delport, 2011).

1.6.4.2. *Data Verification*

Data was verified using pattern matching (Yin, 2009), which involves comparing emerging themes from the empirical data and identifying recurring patterns. Data reliability, credibility and dependability was secured through a thorough and systematic presentation of the data collection process; the researcher recorded interviews with the participants following their consent, then transcribed data for analysis purposes and followed the above-mentioned data analysis steps (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011).

1.6.4.3. *Denaturalisation*

The researcher has manually transcribed data collected in the semi-structured interview conducted telephonically with the participants. This enabled an intense exploration of pattern to identify categories falling within the predetermined themes (management tasks) and sub-

themes (functions). During data analysis to enable dialogue interpretation, the process of denaturalisation was undertaken. Denaturalisation permits the opportunity for correcting grammar of the narratives where deemed necessary. However, it must not hinder or obstruct the understanding of the participants' narratives, the process is solely used for the purpose of removing noise like pauses and stutters as well as standardising the non-standardised accents (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005).

1.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical consideration provides a guide for what is considered appropriate behaviour within scientific research, particularly when working with human participants in qualitative research. Strydom and Delport (2011) provide a list of ethical issues which the social science researcher should take into consideration, of which informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality are the main ethical considerations.

Informed consent elucidates the purpose of the study and how the data would be collected. (i.e., the involvement of study participants). All social workers in the sample group voluntarily participated in the study and were given a concrete explanation of the purpose and nature of their participation. Participants completed a signed consent form which acknowledged their consent for the researcher to use the data collected in the interview for the study (see Annexure A). The participants where sent the informed consent together with the interview schedule after confirming their interest to participate in the study; this was sent via email. The informed consent was signed and sent back to the researcher; an interview date was then set. Confidentiality was demonstrated by not recording any identifying details of the participant nor their organisation, to ensure anonymity; the participant could, at any point, request that particular information they have shared not be included in the study and could further withdraw from the study at any point should they have chosen to do so. Information collected from participants was exclusively accessed by the researcher and stored in a password-protected computer and on a Microsoft OneDrive account accessible to the researcher only.

Ethical clearance was granted by the Department Ethical Screening Committee of the Department of Social Work at the University of Stellenbosch, and the University's Research Ethics Committee (project number: 14858), before commencing with the empirical study (see Annexure C) The research study was considered low risk as it explored the reflections of NQSWs regarding the execution of their management tasks. The research participants are

therefore adults and qualified social professionals. The research topic was also not contentious, which made participants less vulnerable.

1.8. REFLEXIVITY

The researcher is herself a newly qualified social worker, and thus shares similarities with the study sample group. The researcher was always thus aware of her own personal bias and opinions regarding the study matter and attempted to remain impartial and objective in her engagement with the participants, as well as presentation of findings.

1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is imperative for the researcher to be aware and identify the limitations of the study according to Fouche and Delport (2011). A limitation of this study can be noted in the limitation of participants to NQSWs employed in NGOs; conclusions and recommendations in this study are therefore applicable only to this population group. The inclusion of more seasoned social workers may have generated richer insight into management tasks and expectations within social work practice. A second limitation is in the sample size which while meeting saturation criteria for per Greef (2012) and Bertaux (1981), does not allow for broader generalisation of findings. Furthermore, the generalisation concern is accentuated when one considers that the sample group was representative of one province (Western Cape), although there was no restriction on location of the participant. Conversely, the researcher thoroughly explains the research process, which can be adapted for a larger and/or more representative sample size in other areas across South Africa, and even internationally.

1.10.   CHAPTER LAYOUT

The research study consists of five chapters. This introduction serves as Chapter One of the study, introducing the research in terms of the rational, problem statement, aim and objectives and the chosen methodology. Chapter Two and Three serve as the literature review chapters and explore the first two sub-questions: 1) What is the role of management within the South African social work NGO context, per recent neoliberal influence? 2) Which management tasks are being undertaken by the social work profession, particularly within the South African NGO environment? Thus, Chapter Two explores and discusses the influence of neoliberalism as it pertains to the conceptualisation of management. This is contextualised within the South African socio-political environment (sub-question 1); Chapter Three then identifies and describes various management tasks related to the social work profession, particularly within

the NGO environment (sub-question 2). The exploration of Chapter Two is thus deepened further through contextualisation of neoliberal management within the social work field specifically.

Chapter Four empirically explores reflections of NQSWs regarding their management tasks, both those executed and/or expected in their practice. This chapter addresses the third sub-question, namely: 3) Which management tasks are being expected of/undertaken by NQSWs, and what are the necessary skills and knowledge required for their execution? The last, and fifth chapter, presents conclusions and recommendations based on the empirical findings and data analysis, addressing the overall study objective: To present conclusions and recommendations to higher education institutions and NGOs regarding management tasks executed by NQSWs within an NGO context, and the developments which may be necessary at the curricula level.

CHAPTER 2

THE INFLUENCES OF NEOLIBERALISM ON SOCIAL WORK AND THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT WITHIN SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL WORK NGOS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The advancements of economic and socio-political contexts have proven to have the capacity to influence and determine the nature of social work (Hyslop, 2018). Under the South African apartheid government, for instance, discriminatory policies impelled the social work profession and social welfare organisations to provide services that encouraged human development along the lines of racial exclusion and segregation (Smith, 2014). In contrast, the South African democratic government's policies introduced post-1994 were centred on a developmental approach to social welfare and social work, with a focus on addressing social issues equally across all racial groups (Engelbrecht, Ornellas, Martinez-Roman & Tortosa-Martinez, 2015). These varying socio-political contexts elucidated a range of progressions and conflicts within social welfare organisations as well as social work practice at large. Consequently, the social work profession and social work NGOs were required to adjust their practice to align with the objectives of post-1994 policy changes.

As mentioned above, the post-apartheid South African social work context followed the social development approach, officially adopted in 1997 (Patel & Hochfeld, 2012). The introduction of the developmental approach resulted in the incorporation of a range of other disciplines, such as economics, within the social welfare context; this included the expectation that the process of advancing population wellbeing must be concurrent with the dynamics of economic development (Engelbrecht, 2015; Parker, 2017). Thus, the economic discipline(s) driving South African socio-political decision-making became evermore influential within social work practice. As will be explored later in this chapter, South Africa's economic commitments have become increasingly neoliberal over the last decade and this influence has begun to infiltrate the social welfare context; as a result, the boundaries between social development and neoliberal commitments have become blurry (Becker, 2020; Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

Neoliberalism is a global political-economic framework that gained prevalence in the 1970s and has attracted critique from social science scholars because of the infiltration of market principles into the social welfare context (Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020; Thorsen, 2009;

Venugopal, 2015). The impact of neoliberalism on social service delivery has been well documented both locally and internationally, as social service organisations and the social work profession continue to be subjected to the influences of neoliberal ideology (Clay, 2020; Duckett, 2020; Haley, 2020; Lynch, Forde & Lathouras, 2019).

2019). The neoliberal concept developed primarily as an overarching economic strategy that signifies various economic ideologies (Venugopal, 2015). However, Ornellas (2018) states that although it may have developed as an economic ideology, its impact stretches beyond the economic realm. For the NGO context, in particular, social work practice is affected by the economic doctrines of neoliberalism; this is most evident within the organisational management of these NGOs (Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

This chapter aims to explore and discuss the influences of neoliberalism on South African social work through three categories: i) neoliberal influence on social work practice; ii) neoliberal influence on social work NGOs; and iii) neoliberal influence on management within social work. Before exploring these three categories, the chapter will offer an overview of the concept of neoliberalism and its infiltration within the South African context. This chapter will therefore address the first objective of the study:

> To contextualise and describe the influence of neoliberal discourse on the role of management within the South African social work NGO context.

In doing so, this chapter will attempt to answer the following research sub-question: *What is the role of management within the South African social work NGO context, per recent neoliberal influence?* Thus, a key focus for this chapter is how social work practice has potentially evolved to emphasise the execution of management tasks in addition to therapeutic intervention by practitioners and social welfare organisations such as NGOs in light of neoliberal influences. The researcher will additionally explore the role of management within South African social work NGOs, particularly in terms of how different schools of management though affects social work practice under neoliberal influence. This will enable the reader to understand the effect of neoliberalism on social work organisations and management execution which subsequently affects the nature of tasks undertaken by social workers to meet managerial expectations. The identification and discussion of literature findings on the actual management tasks taken up by social workers will be presented in the third chapter and will be empirically explored in Chapter Four.

2.2. DEFINING NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism is a complex term and does not necessarily have a singular meaning (Thorsen, 2009). There exists debate around its uniformity (Harlow, Berg, Barry & Chandler, 2012; Ornellas, 2018). Furthermore, neoliberalism is routinely found to be left undefined in empirical research irrespective of whether it is the study's independent or dependent variable (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009). For instance, scholars such as Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005) were found to be using the term neoliberalism with no pure theoretical definition. Over the last few decades, however, there have been several attempts to define neoliberalism. According to Jones (2012), neoliberalism is an umbrella term for various macroeconomic and political ideologies. Barnett (2009) indicates that some identify neoliberalism as a distinctive form of governmentality, while others refer to it as an economic policy model. Other scholars refer to it as a degree of hegemony (Hyslop, 2018; Ornellas, 2018).

Harvey (2010:2) provides an expansive and widely quoted definition which proposes that neoliberalism is "a theory of political economic practices" as opposed to a complete (homogeneous) political ideology:

> Neoliberalism is a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

Venugopal (2015), however, a political science scholar, criticises Harvey for suggesting neoliberalism as a turning point in the world's social and economic contexts. Besides raising the purportedly overshadowing importance of neoliberalism, Venugopal maintains that this supposedly led to the overwhelming growth in neoliberal critique within literature and the strikingly different patterns of usage between economic and non-economic scholars.

According to Thorsen (2009), when taken from a political science perspective, neoliberalism is seen as demarcating a loose set of political beliefs which ultimately believe that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard commercial and private property rights. However, from this conviction rises the belief that the state ought to minimise its intervention in strength and size. Thorsen (2009) further suggests that per the political science perspective, neoliberalism comprises of a general belief that free-market mechanisms are the optimal way to organise exchanges of goods and services. Thus, free markets and free trade unleash creative potential and inspire entrepreneurial spirit which in turn manifests into individual liberty,

wellbeing, and the efficient allocation of resources. Engelbrecht (2015) and Ornellas (2018) argue that this perpetuates the belief that the free market is likely to result in economic growth which will trickle down to relieve the poor (Harvey, 2010). Lastly, Thorsen (2009) states that neoliberalism includes a perspective on moral virtue where the good and virtuous person (or organisation) is one who is able to access the relevant markets and function as a competent actor in these markets. The individual (or the organisation) should be willing to accept the risks associated with participating in free markets and to adapt to rapid changes arising from such participation.

Despite the varied definitions and understandings, neoliberalism has become a global phenomenon and South African socioeconomic policy has seen an increasing neoliberal influence over the last decade.

2.3. NEOLIBERAL INFILTRATION WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA

Smith (2014) wrote an extensive paper on the history of social work in South Africa and identified the need to challenge dominant discourses during various eras within the evolution of the profession. In doing so, Smith suggests that the development of the social work profession correlates with economic and socio-political events. Thus, the pre-colonial era and colonial conquest; industrialisation and mining revolution; and the apartheid era where some of the phases in which social work developed and evolved from the 1400s through to 1994. Though not limited to the above-mentioned phases (Lester, 1996; Worden, 2008), these were seen as having significant impact on the nature and identity of the profession, followed by the current context of a social development approach within the post-apartheid era.

The social work profession in South Africa underwent significant changes after 1994, through the adoption of a developmental approach to service delivery which advocates for an equitable, people-centred, distributive, and democratic social welfare system (Nefdt, 2003; Ornellas, 2018; RSA, 1997b). However, as with South Africa's socioeconomic post-1994 policy, the development of the social work profession and its context occurred alongside the international advancement of neoliberalism on macro socioeconomic policy development. This resulted in an inevitable influence of economics and business ideologies on social welfare service delivery. The South African democratic government emphasised a developmental social policy and economic perspective that sought to empower and change the lives of citizens by lifting them out of inequality, poverty and unemployment inherited from the apartheid government (Narsiah, 2002). The newly democratic phase required social work organisations to address the

challenges from the apartheid era, as well as the former historic context, through adhering to the new social development approach policies and legislation to service delivery such as the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997b), the Non-profit Organisations Act (RSA, 1997a), the Public Finance Management Act (1999) and the Codes of Good Practice for South African Non-profit Organisations (DSD, 2001). However, according to Sebake (2017), the procedure towards such liberation was substantially influenced by macro-economic neoliberal policies that prioritised monetary measures and conditions of exchange to services rendered by the public sector. Thus, social workers had the responsibility to equitably advance the population's wellbeing, resulting in social change that evolves concurrently with the dynamic process of economic development (Engelbrecht, 2015). Post-apartheid social development, alongside neoliberal influences, has further required a transformation in the governance structures of non-profit social welfare organisations, and necessitates management boards to transform their roles, as well as compels competency in the reporting standards; this has led to growing concerns about the management of NGOs by non-social work professionals (Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

It has been argued that the slow adoption of a neoliberal influenced developmentalism by the South African government resulted in the private sector gaining stronger influence over the public sector, given its capacity to provide services and boost the economy (Ornellas, 2018). Hence, it can be argued that the South African democratic policy perspective progressively became that of an ongoing contradiction between neoliberal and socialist (developmentalist) commitments as a result of global economic and political pressures (Becker, 2020; Mwipikeni, 2020; Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

Neoliberalism originates from economics; however, its impact has extended to all spheres of life ranging from politics, social policy, business, and social services (Harris, 2014). Economics scholars consent that neoliberal economic policies have resulted in increased unemployment and economic inequalities that are associated with control and used of machinery in the private sector to maximise profit as opposed to being labour intensive in order to distribute wealth fairly (Habib, 2003; Harvey, 2010; Sebake, 2017). Social science scholar Ornellas (2018) concurs that the gap between the rich and poor is broadened through prioritisation of economic means over and above human dignity and rights. Consequently, it can be argued that the association with neoliberal policies resulted in more South Africans being pushed into poverty.

The adverse impact of developing and implementing government policies influenced by neoliberalism post-apartheid is broad. However, the following section seeks only to provide an

overview of the influence of neoliberalism within social work and social welfare organisations due to increasing demand for the prioritisation of business principles in service delivery (Ornellas, 2018; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004).

2.4. THE THREE AREAS OF NEOLIBERAL INFLUENCE: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE, NGOS AND THE MANAGEMENT ROLE

The latter understanding of neoliberalism regards social service organisations, including NGOs, as participants in the market for the provision of welfare services (Ornellas, 2018). Furthermore, it challenges these organisations, as well as the social work staff, to acquire specific competencies, adapt to changes within the markets, and accept the associated risk of the invisible hand (Harvey, 2010). Thus, the roles and management of social welfare and social work NGOs are increasingly influenced by neoliberal and market-driven principles (Spolander et al., 2014). According to Ornellas (2018), the expansion and influence of neoliberalism on South African social work can be measured through its principles which manifests itself in varying degrees through specific tenets. Though Ornellas (2018) uncovered four neoliberal tenets, only three tenets are applicable to this study: de-professionalisation, marketisation and managerialism; the fourth tenant, consumerisation, extends beyond the scope of this study. These three tenets contextualise the impact of neoliberalism on the NGO, its management and service delivery. In particular, the impact of these tenets requires social workers, particularly NQSWs, to adapt their professional practice in order to meet the needs of the changing socio-political and economic context by undertaking management related tasks. Figure 1 offers an overview of the three tenets; these are discussed in more detail in the sub-sections that follow.

2.4.1. Neoliberalism and Social Work Practice

Social work is a relationship-based practice that begins and ends with a human encounter through individual, group, and community intervention (Rogowski, 2011). However, the pressure on management to inject market principles in the operations of social welfare organisations creates additional pressure for social service professionals to practice with sensitivity towards costs and efficiency while at the same time being responsive to client's relationship-based needs. In this way, managerialist principles reshape the nature of social work practice (Rogowski, 2011). The challenge arising from these neoliberal developments is the corresponding requirement for increased skill and expertise in implementing management tasks and knowledge while still maintaining core social work values and principles. This will be unpacked below under the neoliberal tenant identified by Ornellas (2018), namely *de-*

professionalisation. According to Ornellas (2018), this neoliberal tenet serves as an umbrella term for other tenets identified throughout literature as representing the neoliberal impact on the profession by scholars such as Engelbrecht (2015) and Sewpaul and Holscher (2004).

Figure 1. Three influential neoliberal tenets in social work
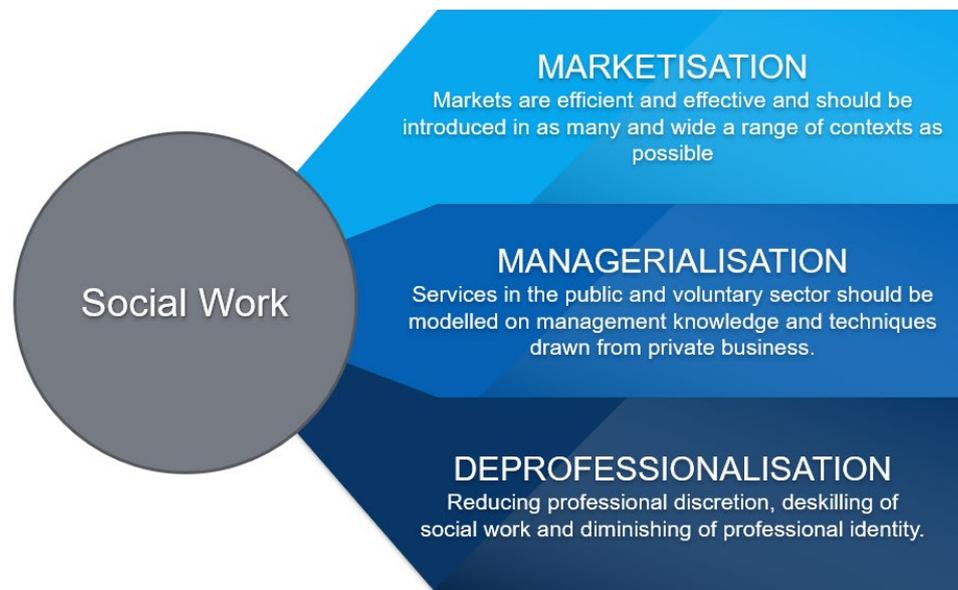
Source: Adapted from Ornellas (2018:51).

2.4.1.1. Influencing neoliberal tenet: De-professionalisation

Social workers have been at the centre of social welfare services for decades; however, the profession has come under attack during changing social welfare contexts due to neoliberal reform (Ornellas, 2018). The current arrangements for welfare service provision generally undermine the importance of human interdependency relationships. Consequently, the significance of empathetic, caring and relationship-based practice has become neglected (Froggett, 2002; Harlow, 2008b; Rogoskwi, 2011).

Additionally, the new role of social workers has meant that they have had to undertake some managerial responsibilities. Harlow (2008b) identifies these responsibilities in a way that demonstrates a change in social workers' roles and asserts divergence from earlier versions of social work practice:

- Social workers cannot advocate on behalf of clients because they have become implicated in the budgetary responsibilities;

- Social workers themselves are not seen as service providers, instead, they are co-ordinating services provided by others;

- Social workers are not attempting to create change, they are attempting to reduce risk and maintain the welfare of an individual. Put another way, social workers manage a situation or set of circumstances rather than aim to change it;

- Social care/services can be undertaken by professionals other than social workers, such as occupational therapists, for example. This means that there is no expectation that social work education provides expertise specific and essential to the role of the social worker.

The above is resulting in the de-professionalisation of social workers. The implications of de-professionalisation are explained in more detail below.

a) <u>Reducing professional discretion</u>

The neoliberal de-professionalisation of social workers often involves the reducing of professional discretion. In this case, the emphasis is increasingly on technical procedure rather than the intellectual and balanced expertise of social work practice. Coupled with the subjection of managerial oversight, this has the likelihood of affecting social work professional discretion (Engelbrecht, 2015). Predominant values become that of instrumental goals of demonstrating organisational success through effective and efficient completion of tasks, rather than meeting the needs of the client (Rogowski, 2011). As a result, social workers, including NQSWs, often have little to no option except to comply with the neoliberal context demands and at the same time oppose the deformation of professional social work by defining social work practice within this confusing and pressurised context.

Surely social work involves more than the narrow concerns of the current preoccupation with technical competence, which are often concentrated on paperwork and statistical forms. Social workers are expected to execute this standardised technical practice over and above the need to have an interest in and the ability to work with human relationships (Rogowski, 2011). Thus, a practice that places increased focus on procedures and protocols has the potential to constrain critical reflection and the use of established theories within social work practice. Furthermore, managers fixated on targets and occupational standards resort to making intervention-related decisions based on defendable choices rather than basing decisions on what is best for practice (Engelbrecht, 2015; Ornellas, 2018). The focus of practice potentially shifts to the mere assessments of needs, identification of risk, analysis of formal and informal resources, and

debating the rights and responsibilities of service users (Spolander et al., 2014), rather than seeking to engage in specialised theoretically informed social work intervention processes.

These changes are summarised in Table 1 on the page that follows. This table is adapted from Payne (1997), who compared four varying perspectives within, and approaches to, social work practice. However, for the purpose of this paper, only two are applicable: The reflective-therapeutic perspective versus the managerial-technicist perspective. The table is understood by means of the following themes: reflective and relationship-based practice and the fragmentation and technicism of practice or the changing knowledge base of practice.

b) <u>Deskilling of social work</u>

As illustrated in Table 1, the changes to social work practice as a result of neoliberal influence (from therapeutic to managerial) results in mechanical social work practice which in turn contributes to the deskilling of social workers, as they essentially become 'doers' with little room for divergent thinking (Engelbrecht, 2015). This results from the reality of social work itself being subordinated to the needs of managers and their organisations (Engelbrecht, 2015; Harlow, 2008b; Rogowski, 2011). The study of Hyslop (2018) indicates that social workers remained resistant and resilient in their day-to-day practice despite the growing managerial preoccupation with practice efficiency and the competent application of technical and instrumental assessment and intervention. Social work managers are required to follow clear management policies and instructions to undertake tasks in a way that guarantee funds from the state and donors (Engelbrecht, 2015).

As a result, there is control over social workers, who are reduced to administrators; the client system become customers and the social work process is diminished to a mere production process (Spolander et al., 2014) following norms, framework and standard associated with the checklist practice. This is a process Engelbrecht (2015) and Ornellas (2018) refer to as McDonaldisation, whereby a large task is broken down into constituent tasks so that the precise number of resources can be allocated for their delivery and the practice can be replicated for maximum effect. As a result, employers believe that social workers no longer need to have specific skills in therapeutic or specialised social work interventions (Spolander et al., 2014).

Table 1. The therapeutic versus managerial approach to social work practice and policy

FEATURE	REFLECTIVE- THERAPEUTIC PERSPECTIVE	MANAGERIAL-TECHNICIST PERSPECTIVE
Individualisation	Social worker aims to help individuals achieve self-fulfilment	Social workers coordinate packages of care in response to the need of individuals.
Use of Knowledge	Knowledge allows workers to act skilfully and without risk to clients	Social work use knowledge of the law, policy and organisational procedure s to carry out their duties.
Relationship	Relationship carries communication which influences clients and also creates personal involvement which 'moves' clients to respond	Impersonality increase as contact its brief, clients become consumers choosing services, and written contracts represent a partnership
Organisational Context	Agencies' functions to give focus therapeutic intervention	In line with the government directive, technologies of performance define the activity of social workers.
Need	Social work identifies and works with the needs that clients exhibit or express	Indicators of need are defined centrally and practitioners work to the assessment schedule
Maintenance of social institutions	Social work helps clients participate in social structures which give them support and fulfilment	Social institutions, like social work itself, are in the of re-figuration
Advocacy	Social work helps people gain personal power to achieve their aims in life	Co-opted into budgetary responsibility social workers do not act as advocates and service users are expected to advocate themselves

Adapted from Payne (1997:296-296).

c) <u>Diminishing of social work identity</u>

Engelbrecht (2015) provides a clear indication of when the social work profession started diminishing under socioeconomic influence. According to Engelbrecht (2015), the dominance of the social work profession within the social welfare context was affected during the

evolution of the former South African Council for Social and Associated Work, which was established in 1980. The Social Work Act (Act 110 of 1978) was amended in 1998 to make provision for the establishment of the professional boards for various social service professionals under auspice of the council. Thus, the South African Council for Social Work (SACSW), according to the social work Act, was renamed the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP); this resulted in social work losing its dominant position in social welfare services when its council assumed the title "social service profession" to include other social service professionals such as childcare workers and social auxiliary workers (SAWs). Furthermore, tasks that might previously have been undertaken by social work professionals only are now undertaken by paraprofessionals who may be cheaper to employ (Ornellas, 2018). The Recruitment and Retention Strategy of the Department of Social Development (DSD, 2007) further acknowledged that social workers are increasingly utilised in non-professional tasks (Brink, 2007).

As a resulting impact of the tenet of de-professionalisation, the diminishing of social work identity stems from distinct commitments and interests of managerialism over those of the social welfare context. The current management approach runs NGOs with more business-like tactics, embraces business wisdom and is primarily concerned with the organisation (Rogowski, 2011). According to Clarke (2004a), there has been a shift from what were professional identities to ones that are organisation-centred, where the organisation becomes the point of identification, loyalty and commitment for social workers. Thus, social workers are challenged to leave behind their professional identity. Hyslop (2018) also provides research evidence of the difficulty of sustaining the social work discourse in the current political-economic policy climate.

d) <u>Commodification of social work</u>

Social work is transformed into a commodity that is measurable in monetary terms (DSD, 2013a, 2013b, 2015). Cash and contracts, as a result, became the base for partnership between the state and NGOs which are awarded on account of job performances (Engelbrecht, 2015). Consequently, social work practice is now understood in terms of constituent competencies where each competency is considered to be existing independently, open to observation and measurement (Harlow, 2008b; Ornellas, 2018). Furthermore, neoliberal ideologies and managerial practices gave rise to the employment of non-social workers professionals to manage social welfare organisations and social workers due to their entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and training in managing of commodities (Engelbrecht, 2015). The success of social

work practice is therefore measured against managerial targets and management is preoccupied with quantitative productivity measurement (Harlow, 2008b; Hyslop, 2018; Rogowski, 2011). NQSWs are confronted with an approach to practice that places emphasis on output, such as in the production market, rather than the process undertaken to achieve the result; this emerges from the bureaucratic managerial ethos of monitoring and measuring performance.

Thus, the combination of the deskilling of social work, the diminishment of its professional identity, and the commodification of its practice is resulting in the de-professionalisation of social work. The second category of neoliberal influence that will be discussed is that of the NGO, alongside the tenet of marketisation.

2.4.2. Neoliberalism within Non-Governmental Organisations

Engelbrecht et al. (2015) maintain that the advancement of neoliberal ideologies within the recent social work context of the social development paradigm, affects not only the sustainability of NGOs and their relationship with the state but indeed their entire identity. Considering the latter influence, various scholars concur that neoliberal advancement is resulting in the reduction of state funding to NGOs (see for example Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020). Furthermore, the way NGOs are funded is influencing how they operate, and this has the potential of preventing many organisations from achieving their primary aims of empowering the marginalised and combatting poverty (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Ornellas, 2018). The current circumstance of neoliberal advancement has the NGOs fitting the description of a "Trojan Horse" (Wallace, 2009: 202). To counter adverse influences caused by the neoliberal influence, social workers can draw valour from a reflection made by Gray (1998) a few decades ago that is evermore applicable today. According to Gray (1998), the ability of social workers to adapt their practice tasks to meet the changing needs of South African socio-political and economic context is crucial for determining and restoring the degree of confidence that people have in their services. Therefore, this necessitates the effort to understand the impact of neoliberal ideologies within the social welfare organisation. A misalignment between social practice and the vision, mission and core values of the welfare organisation could place strain on the survival of NGOs. The tenet through which neoliberal influence is most evident in this context is that of marketisation.

2.4.2.1. Influencing neoliberal tenet: Marketisation

The assumption within neoliberal thought is that markets are efficient and should be introduced in as wide a range of various contexts as possible (Harris, 2014). Marketisation is characterised

by the growing expectation for social services and NGOs to rely less on government support and funding, and to function more as private operations (Ornellas, 2018). In this context, social welfare is seen as an element of the government's excessive spending and is thus shifted to the market, where it is believed that service delivery will be more efficient (Harvey, 2010). This tenet links with the broader assumption of the first and third ideology of defining neoliberalism provided earlier in the chapter. The first ideology determines the role of the state, which apparently relates to less support and funding by the belief that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard commercial and private property rights in order to aid economic liberalisation. Thorsen (2009) describes economic liberalism as an essential belief that the state ought to refrain from intervening in the economy, and instead leave as much as possible to individuals to participate in a free and self-regulating market. The third ideology defines neoliberalism on the basis of moral virtue, where NGOs are regarded as participants of specific markets and are supposed to function as competent actors within their market. Furthermore, they are expected to achieve this by accepting the risks associated with participating in free markets and adapting to rapid changes arising from such participation (Thorsen, 2009).

Ornellas (2018) emphasises that the introduction of markets into social work has had several consequences for the profession, the most prominent of which is the aforementioned expectation for NGO to survive with little support from the state. Therefore, managers and practitioners are compelled to process cases as quickly as possible and with as little recourse to the public purse as possible (Rogowski, 2011). Practice within this context requires social work practitioners, including NQSWs, to be knowledgeable about management tasks, especially what to manage and how to manage it in order to achieve the neoliberal demand of efficiency. The context created by the tenant of marketisation, which necessitates the execution of such management tasks, is discussed below.

a) Outsourcing and deinstitutionalisation

NGOs gained prevalence in their progression within the South African welfare context post-1994 and subsequently have become significant role players providing social service alongside the government (Mashale, 2017). However, Engelbrecht (2015) and Ornellas (2018) argue that this has been achieved in partnership with the state as a supporting mechanism or advocative watchdog. Marketisation, however, results in changes of such provisions by fostering a fragmentation of the relationship between the state and NGOs. As a result of marketisation, social service organisations such as NGOs are faced with the challenge of relying less on the

state regardless of the state-based departments increasingly outsourcing services to the NGOs and private sector (Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

Ornellas (2018: 72) identifies outsourcing of services to NGOs and the private sector as being a result of marketisation when what were previously known to be state-provided services are outsourced to the private sector or NGOs:

> It is not necessarily a matter of the nature of work being undertaken by NGOs and private entities in the realm of social welfare, but rather a reflection on what of that work has been more recently moved over from state responsibility to other groups with little corresponding support and structural investment.

The outsourcing of social services to NGOs and private entities is congruent with deinstitutionalisation, which can often serve as a guise for governments to significantly cut on social service spending and pass the responsibility to NGOs with little resources, structure, or funding support (Ornellas, 2018; Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020). According to De Jager (2013), the South African welfare sector has its own challenges with caseloads totalling 600 cases and 3000 cases in extreme circumstances for NGOs. NQSWs are, therefore, confronted with the task of managing workload challenges as a result of outsourcing and deinstitutionalisation in order to survive the transformation brought on by neoliberalism.

b) <u>Contractual relationship</u>

Marketisation has consequently resulted in the dominance of contractual relationships within social work. One of the greatest concerns regarding the influence of neoliberal advancements is that NGOs ' critical functioning is being silenced by a dedication to the performance-based awarded contracts, managerial control and neoliberal discourse disguises of accountability (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Therefore, direct state social welfare service provision becomes less central as activities previously performed by state agencies are outsourced through contracts. Private and voluntary agencies are brought into new relationships of partnership with the state, either by regulation or dependence upon such contracts for survival (Rogowski, 2011). Thus, social welfare organisations end up becoming merely service providers equal to the producer of goods and services, rather than participatory and critical partners in service delivery (Engelbrecht, 2015).

Engelbrecht (2010) and Harris (2014) describe another form of contractual relationship as one of a shift of service users to that of consumers, who are essentially purchasing or contracting services as one would within a business environment. According to Ornellas (2018), this

approach within social work fosters an input-output social work-service-user relationship. In this regard, neoliberalism promises that markets will liberate service users from their alleged roles as passive recipients and/or victims of social work services and turn them into active, rational, self-interested, choice-making customers (Harris, 2014). Instead, however, this only serves to minimise the impact of social work intervention and turn the client-worker relationship into one of ticking boxes and value-for-money considerations (Ornellas, 2018). When put in other ways, the marketisation context emphasises rationality, fragmentation, technicism, and positivistic evaluation of performance while denying the emotional content of practice and the significance of relationship (Harlow, 2008b).

The final category of influence that will be discussed is that of the role of management, alongside the neoliberal tenet of managerialisation.

2.4.3. Neoliberalism and the role of management

Cronje (1994) noted some decades ago that it is no longer acceptable for an organisation to be a closed system that is separate from or remains unresponsive to its environment. The growing neoliberal managerial discourse is having an impact on managers employed in social welfare organisations across the world (Engelbrecht, 2010; Ornellas, Spolander, Engelbrecht, Sicora, Pervova, Martínez-Román, Law, Das Dores Guerreiro, Casanova, Garcia, Acar & Martin, 2019). The bureaucratic style is directive and authoritarian, it involves organising, deputising, and supervision (Cronje, 1994; Nefdt, 2003; Payne, 2009). The advancement of the neoliberal tenet of managerialisation has significantly transformed the nature of relationship-based service within social welfare into one of such bureaucracy, resulting in changes in the distribution and balance of power within social services and social work. South African organisations are experiencing division of labour through functional specialisation, a set of rules covering the rights and duties of employees and a system of procedures for dealing with work situations, impersonal relations between people and promotion and selection of employees based on technical competence (Payne, 2009; Rogowski, 2011; Sridhar, 2008). Considering the latter, various scholars who studied the preparedness of NQSWs found that the majority of NQSWs felt prepared for practice in areas such as conducting assessments, building professional relationships as well as communication; however, NQSWs reported less preparedness in terms of the instrumental aspects of the role such as IT systems and working with accountability mechanisms (Carpenter et al., 2013; Grant et al., 2017; Sharpe et al., 2011). The managerial tenet is explored in more detail below.

2.4.3.1. Influencing neoliberal tenet: Managerialisation

Managerialism, per neoliberal influence, is preoccupied with procedures, norms, and standards and the predominance of management knowledge (Harris, 2014). According to Dixon, Kouzmin and Korac-Kakabadse (1998), managerialism emphasises the implementation and management of policy rather than focusing on its design and development. Much concentration rests on efficient, effective and quality processes. Furthermore, managerialism advocates for the use of a private-sector management approach within the public sector, supporting competition and requiring the representation of accountability by outcomes instead of the assumed process. Correspondingly, the management of social work organisations by non-social work professionals can, according to Engelbrecht (2015), be traced back to neoliberal ideologies and the subsequent expectations for social welfare organisations including NGOs to employ efficiency and cost-effectiveness as the yardstick for effective practice.

The above managerialism is having a significant impact on the management of social welfare organisations (Engelbrecht, 2010). The most influential belief is the assumption that these organisations would benefit from importing managerial ideas and techniques from the business sector. Great emphasis is therefore placed on the use of corporate management in public service and the use of business models as the appropriate way of managing these organisations (Engelbrecht, 2015; Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020; Ornellas et al., 2019; Spolander et at., 2014). Management within social welfare organisations as a result of neoliberalism became a term used to refer to the handling of more strategic issues such as setting a clear direction of the organisation and ensuring attainment of the overall targets, leading to a rise of managerialist management processes (Berggren, Blomberg & Petersson 2010; Marobela, 2008; Wastell, White, Broadhurst, Peckover & Pithouse, 2010). Management is expected to increase both direct and indirect methods of control, in order to enhance productivity, increase profit and/or reduce costs (Macalpine & Marsh, 2008). However, whilst these aims seek to achieve efficiency and accountability, core values guiding social work practice such as equality, equity and participation become de-emphasised, (Gregory, 2007; Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020). As a result, welfare organisations including NGOs are increasingly expected to be competitive; this aligns with the third neoliberal ideology according to the political science definition of neoliberalism provided earlier in the text, whereby organisations constructively synchronise their management activities with those of the business market, relying on the prevailing practices and jargon which are most popular at the time (Spolander et al., 2014).

Ornellas (2018) argues that managerialism is the most impactful neoliberal tenet on social work practice in recent years, with the driving assumption underlying managerialism being that welfare organisations would be more effective if they operated using business principles and managerial norms, procedure, and standards. Organisational objectives identified are thus achieved through meeting the predetermined targets set as performance indicators by means of monitored progress (Harris & Unwin, 2009). According to Clarke (2004b) performance is a distinct progression within this framing of organisational control. This concept was adopted from the business sector into social service organisations post 1979 (Spolander & Martin, 2012; Rogowski, 2011). These business principles minimise the human element of social work practice by demanding completion of tasks in a manner that is considered the most efficient use of time, resources, and finances (Flynn, 2007). The primary changes brought by neoliberal managerialism are discussed below.

a) <u>Changing management language</u>

The changing language used to describe the communities served by social workers implies an approach influenced by management narrative towards service provision (Payne, 2009). For instance, the recent sensitivity costs and need to be responsive to consumers' needs within public service required managers to adopt market discipline for efficiency, innovation and effective services. Terminologies such as consumers and service users surfaced with reference to the social service client system as a result of associating management language with business jargon (Hafford-Letchfield 2009; Patti, 2013; Rogowski, 2011). Social welfare organisations are referred to as service providers equal to the producer of goods and service (Cowden & Singh, 2007). Consequently, beneficial, and favourable practices considered worthy for replication are those with success rates with promotional value as the focus is on quantity rather than quality (Engelbrecht, 2015). Hence, social work practice has been reduced to the performance of ticking boxes (Engelbrecht, 2015; Ornellas, 2018). Despite these changes, Patti (2013) maintains that it remains the job of the manager and the social worker to undertake programmes, services and tasks that are competently and fairly administered to intended consumers. Social service management has thus become a multifaceted practice and process with the primary concern being to develop and implement programmes and services that change the social conditions of consumers.

b) <u>Employing cost-effectiveness</u>

As a result of managerialism, management as a central mechanism in social service organisations is highly concerned with cost-efficiency rather than effectiveness (Ornellas &

Engelbrecht, 2020). Given that social work advanced under the influence of neoliberal tenets, Harlow (2008b) asserts that the emphasis of delivering social services with utmost economic consideration, efficiency and effectiveness has been maintained for over twenty-five years. There is thus a notable involvement of general managers within social work context due to the increasing focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation rather than the needs of users, which in turn involves the need to control practitioners (Engelbrecht, 2010, 2015; Rogowski, 2011). Engelbrecht (2015) maintains that balancing considerations of costs with client satisfaction is an important aspect of professional social work management practices, and it can be traced back to neoliberalism as a school of thought that expounds the belief in the absolute supremacy of the free market and prioritises the rhetoric of efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Harris, 2014; Harvey, 2010).

c) <u>Preoccupation with standards, norms, and procedure</u>

As illustrated above, it is anticipated that the principles of the market environment would drive up standards of social services at the same time as reducing the cost of operation within social service. Therefore, to ensure a uniform practice, social work performance standards are set against managerial or organisational standards (Harlow, 2008b). As a result, managers use a range of techniques such as procedures and performance indicators to exert control and achieve organisational goals (Rogowski, 2011). Consequently, managers apply rigorous standards of accountability and define jobs per performance standards as a result of imposed market principles within a social service organisation (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Patti, 2013).

Managers under the influence of neoliberal managerialism are thus preoccupied with setting standards and norms for redesigning accountability to improve quality of social welfare services and performances of social workers (Engelbrecht, 2015). Hence, total quality management (TQM) became the managers' norm for best practices achieved through evidence-based practice (EBP) consisting of practice guidelines, norms, and standards for social workers (Spolander et al., 2014). The subsequent managerial developments result in social work service delivery being presided over by managers. Furthermore, social workers are challenged to practice within a maze of rules and procedures while simultaneously adhering to deadlines and targets to meet organisational performance indicators (Rogowski, 2011). Consequently, this type of environment leaves little room for professional autonomy by insisting on standardised procedures. In the same vein, the standardised practice has the potential to diminish academically informed practice which uses underpinning theoretical models, theories, and perspectives in the pursuit of meeting managerial standards (Engelbrecht., 2015). This has

reduced social work practice to the ticking of boxes through the execution of standardised frameworks and norms, as previously mentioned (Ornellas, 2018). The changes to social work practice result from the impact of neoliberalism on the relationship between the state and social service organisations which further emphasise its management amid social work and business principles (Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

The impact of managerialism on social work can be seen as detrimental to the profession, however it cannot be ignored. Against this backdrop of growing expectation for management within social service delivery, it is necessary for social work to consider varied management approaches and adopt that which is most in line with the values of the profession.

2.5. LOCATING THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL WORK NGO WITHIN THE NEOLIBERAL CONTEXT

The transition of South Africa post-1994 resulted in the development and introduction of policy and legislation that inevitably changed the welfare context, given the difference between the democratic and apartheid government. According to Wyngaard (2013), with this transition, there was a strong commitment from the democratic state to create an environment that allowed NGOs, including social work organisations, to flourish through providing guidance and support toward enhancing the performance capacity of such organisations to fulfil their function. This was cemented through the introduction of the NPO Act 71 of 1997 (RSA, 1997a). Consequently, NGOs were registered in order to secure their accountability and governance lines, amongst other reasons, as stipulated by the Act (DSD, 2011; Mashale, 2017). Thus, locally registered NGOs became trusted entities that could enter into a partnership with the state and provide various social services, as delegated by the state, in exchange for public funding allocated on a contractual basis (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015).

There are an estimated 200 000 registered NGOs in South Africa today (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020), while in 2015 there were just over 140 000 (Ornellas, 2018). This increase in the number of NGOs could imply that these organisations are addressing an important service gap brought about through limited or non-existent government services (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020). While the growing number of NGOs could thus be a representative of the failure of service provision by the state resulting in NGOs extending its agency for basic service provision, it raises some concerns, particularly in terms of increased competition within the welfare sector, with a high number of registered NGOs competing over limited resources such as funding. This drives non-

social work management operating from business principles and compromising the practice and mission of NGOs.

Building on the NPO Act, the government has, over the years, set conditions for the allocation of funds in support of local NGOs, following a detailed review of how an organisation will be expending its financial resources. Thus, cost-effectiveness and efficiency compliance became the central requirements for NGOs to procure government funding; organisations had to ensure that they were able to achieve state-expected service outcomes, ensure service user satisfaction and attain value for money in order to secure their contract (DSD, 2011; Patti, 2013). Engelbrecht et al. (2015) argues that the use of particular terminology in the Department's conditions for the awarding of financial assistance, which included phrases such as contracts, cost-efficiency, customer satisfaction and value for money, demonstrate clear neoliberal influences, as unpacked in the previous chapter. Against such business-centric standards, some organisations were deregistered as a result of non-compliance and/or an inability to meet the required reporting standards for securing funds (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Several organisations which faced the risk of deregistration as a result of non-compliance were small and less formalised community based NPOs, often with limited capacity to meet the required reporting and efficiency standards of government contracts (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019; Wyngaard 2013). South Africa had an estimation of 100 904 registered NGOs during 2012/2013, according to the Department NPO Directorate audit (DSD, 2013b; Mashale, 2017). However, of the estimated 85 039 organisations that were registered in 2012, an average of 23 034 NGOs were deregistered by the Non-Profit Organisations Directorate due to non-compliance by the 31st of June 2012 (DSD, 2012b; De V Smit, 2019). The deregistration of more than 28% of NGOs brought about a national crisis within the wider South African non-profit and welfare sector. Subsequently, an urgency to address this transformation within the social welfare non-profit sector within the country followed.

There has been debate as to whether the deregistration of some NGOs was due to the changing service delivery context as a result of neoliberalism, or whether noted non-compliance with the NPO Act was as a result of failure to meet necessary management standards (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019). Nonetheless, either argument appears to suggest that the introduction of this Act had a direct impact on the identity of NGOs, their relationship with the state, as well as their professional practice. Thus, the discussion in this study aims to move beyond the debate of whether this was neoliberalism or management and focus on whether or not NQSWs are prepared to work in this business-like context of social work practice; this is significant

34

regardless of the underlying drivers of the non-compliance measures. According to DSD (2018), the department worked on its interaction with NGOs through roadshows and capacity building programmes to ensure capacitation and compliance with the Act. However, there still exists inconclusive debate about the impact of management standards borrowed from the business sector and neoliberal advancement within social service organisations.

2.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter offers an overview of how neoliberalism has influenced change within the social work NGO context. The discussion follows three broad categories namely, neoliberal influence on social work practice, neoliberal influence on organisations, and neoliberal influence on management within social work. These areas of influence are discussed through the unpacking of related neoliberal tenets, in terms of de-professionalisation, marketisation and managerialisation; this is then contextualised within the South African NGO environment. Generally, management within social service organisations as influenced by neoliberalism is preoccupied with timeliness, procedural compliance, standardised assessment, and productivity measurement (Engelbrecht, 2015). Given the changing context of social welfare against the backdrop of neoliberal influence, it is clear that there are challenges in implementing one managerial approach over another, given the contrasting nature of social work practice and current neoliberal and managerial pursuit. The empowerment management approach is a facilitative management approach which is distinct from the bureaucratic approach and flows from a normative stance and principles. Though the bureaucratic management approach may better ensure the survival of the welfare organisations in a neoliberal environment, the empowerment approach conserves the traditional nature of social work and ensures best service delivery for social work service users.

The changing social welfare environment as a result of neoliberalism has thus resulted in the need to employ two competing management approaches within social welfare organisations in order to maintain stability and functionality within the recent welfare context. The next chapter aims to identify and discuss areas of improvement for NQSWs given the changing context of practice which requires management knowledge and the execution of management tasks. The discussion incorporates management on a frontline level to ensure the practice readiness or the preparedness of social work practitioners to work in the current practice environment. The chapter aims to discuss management tasks that are required to be undertaken by the social work

profession in order to counter the negative impact of neoliberalism on social work practice. The discussion will be done within the South African context.

CHAPTER 3

MANAGEMENT TASKS EXECUTED BY NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter demonstrates that neoliberalism is an external factor holding business ideologies, prescriptions and values that seek to explain, predict, understand, and shape organisational behaviour (Harvey, 2010; Patti 2013). These external factors typically have the potential to influence broad organisational goals, delivered programmes, funding and accountability arrangements within social service organisations, including NGOs. South African social work organisations have largely remained true to those who held hegemonic discursive power in society, and this has further exposed them to the adoption of neoliberal and managerialist approaches to social welfare, often disguised as social development (Ornellas, 2018; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004; Smith, 2014). Though the developmental approach has, on the surface, gained dominance, it is often done so in ways that represent overarching ideals of free-market participation. The social development approach aims to promote social and economic development; facilitate the participation of the socially excluded; improve the quality of life of people; build human capabilities; promote social integration and human rights (Midgley, 2001; Patel, 2005; Patel, Hochfeld, Graham & Selipsky, 2008; RSA, 1997b).

Although the social development pursues important social justice ideas, when transposed onto the neoliberal capitalist agenda, it becomes co-opted for the maintenance of the corporate and capitalist system (Ornellas, 2018; Smith, 2014). For instance, over the past few years, owing to changing political and socioeconomic realities rooted in different disciplinary traditions and professions such as political science, economics, and business, neoliberalism progressed into a variable that is recently associated with organisational performance. According to Nefdt (2003), the challenge facing NGO management boards in South Africa is the need to transform from the traditional hierarchical model of governance to models that embrace the demands of the changing external environment that influences and shapes social welfare practice. This confirms that NGOs are faced with the responsibility to uphold the mission of their respective organisation while considering the influence of other external determinants. Consequently, this divides the management of these organisations into two contradictory approaches: one of a

business approach and one of social development. This divide and conflict consequently have specific practice implications for which NQSWs need to be more readily prepared.

NQSWs are faced with the challenge of executing management tasks in order to meet the requirements of neoliberalism that are emphasised trough bureaucratic management within social welfare organisations, a context that seeks to empower its client system. These changes within the social work services context make it inevitable that qualifying curricula and the definition of 'preparedness' as well as 'practise readiness' for NQSWs would not be dynamic (Moriarty et al., 2011). This chapter aims to identify management tasks that NQSWs are required and/or expected to fulfil within an NGO environment, which are directive of neoliberalism as this affects the management approaches employed in social welfare organisations (as referred to at the end of Chapter Two). Therefore, more insight is needed regarding the nature of tasks executed by NQSWs within their work environment, specifically in NGOs as they face the risk of deregistration following non-compliance with the contractual requirements.

This chapter aims to meet the second objective of the study, by identifying and describing various management tasks related to the social work profession, particularly within the South African NGO environment. The chapter will begin with an overview of dominant management theory within social work and explore these schools of thought against the backdrop of neoliberal influence within the NGO environment. The chapter will then explore the management tasks currently practiced by/expected from NQSWs within the South African social work NGO and how these have been influenced by and/or relate to underlying neoliberal ideals. This chapter will better offer a final contextualisation for the empirical consideration of management preparedness of NQSWs which is presented in Chapter Four.

3.2. THE MANAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS OF NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE NGO SECTOR

Historically in social service organisations, including NGOs, management tasks were seen as involving only those at the higher levels of organisational management. However, over time it was realised that many of these tasks can be better performed with the involvement of other managers at various management levels (Weinbach, 2003). Recently, considering the influence of neoliberalism these tasks had to transcend management levels and require the involvement of every manager within the organisation including social work practitioners. Thus, social workers both seasoned and newly qualified are required to execute management tasks over and

above their responsibility to uphold the demands of the social development approach to practice. The management of social work NGOs on business principles as proposed by the neoliberal context is considered an anathema to the objective of welfare organisation and social work practice (Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019) and scholars suggest that as a result, social workers cease to immerse themselves in intervention activities only (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Engelbrecht 2015).

Yet according to Patti (2013), despite all these changes within the welfare context, it remains the responsibility of both managers and social work practitioners to translate any neoliberal directives into programmes and services that still address the needs of the intended client system. Therefore, at the very least, it is suggested that managers at various levels of management within the organisation need to be aware of what these tasks entail for practitioners and how they can provide the necessary support towards their execution (Weinbach, 2003). Hence, the empowerment approach within social work cannot be limited to the client system given the changing context for practitioners too. Management and leadership are increasingly important within the social service organisations as well as to professionals delivering services, such that it had to form part of the social work qualification framework (Lawler & Bilson, 2009).

The South African Council on High Education (CHE) (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2015) maintained that social work education and training cannot remain static given the dynamic nature of the social welfare context. It was inevitable that the changing context of management in social welfare organisations such NGOs would require a revision of the existing Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) curricula and the development of new learning outcomes that align with the current practice environment. Hence, there was an introduction of the Qualification Standards (QS) curricular for BSW to replace outcome-based education curricula. From 2007, the BSW degree was acquired through meeting the requirements of an outcomes-based education which consisted of 27 exit- level outcomes (ELOs) (De Jager, 2013; Simpson, 2010). Management knowledge was articulated by ELO no. 22 which requires NQSWs to demonstrate an understanding of the roles, functions, principles and characteristics of management and administration within social service delivery. The newly introduced QS curricular also requires the demonstration of knowledge about social work management, administration, and supervision. Although both the old and the new curricular require the development of management knowledge, neither specifically outlines the expected management tasks, nor required evidence of the execution of the tasks in NGOs through practice education. According

to Bates et al. (2010), developing professional competency and capability within the changing context of social work for NQSWs has become a widely debated subject, particularly in terms of management tasks.

Middle-level managers or supervisors are identified as a key learning and support mechanism for NQSWs to fill this knowledge gap, particularly in their first year of employment. The lack thereof can be considered a potential stressor for these newly qualified workers (Bates et al., 2010; Jack & Donnellan, 2010; van Rensburg, 2009). Hence in South Africa, the Recruitment and Retention Strategy (DSD, 2007) concurs that insightful and competent management and supervisors are a pivotal instrument for ensuring skills retention, particularly where NQSWs are concerned. However, according to Muinjangue (2020), the middle-management or supervisory positions often comprise of social work professionals who are charged with the responsibility to guide frontline workers, include NQSWs. They themselves are equally not equipped, especially with regards to management knowledge, and are therefore not necessarily contributing effectively to the required level of learning and capacity building of NQSWs. This makes it crucial for NQSWs to be knowledgeable about management tasks and the means for effective task execution upon graduating; this will enable them to become better workers even in NGOs where supervision is often limited or even non-existent (Ornellas, 2018). This is further exasperated by the limited understanding of the need for structured supervision amongst non-social work managers who are recently allowed to manage social work organisations (DSD, 2007, 2012b).

3.3. DEFINING MANAGEMENT

Scholars within both the business and social welfare sector have long concurred that we live in an organisational world, one where such organisations cannot function without some form of management (Drucker, 1986; Weinbach 2003). Management has, however, achieved growing and prevalent attention in recent times due to an increased emphasis on organisational performance, where funders and social service managers have sought new organisational models and management techniques that promote cost-effectiveness (Briggs & McBeath, 2011; Pal & Bansal, 2012; Sridhar, 2008). The evolution of management theory and practice led to exploration for a suitable management approach within social welfare and consequently in social work organisations, including NGOs.

Although the management concept was adopted from business into the social welfare context over 40 years ago, there seems to be a lack of common agreement amongst experts and

practitioners in both fields about the precise definition of the managerial concept. The advancement of management knowledge brought further changes to primary management theories and practices leading to the development of different schools of management thought (Pal & Bansal, 2012; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019). A definition of the term management within this context is necessary for its teaching and research, and to improve its practice.

As indicated, management has several definitions, for example:

> "The function that coordinates the efforts of people to accomplish goals and objectives by marshalling and using available resources efficiently and effectively" (Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), 2015:3);

> "The coordination of all resources through the process of planning, organising, leading, and controlling. Management is task orientated and the manager engages in a number of activities related to the establishment of a plan, the development of the organisation, the provision of leadership and direction and the evaluation and control of performance" (Crow & Odewahn, 1987:2).

The above definitions are from both the social welfare and business context and have something in common in terms of reference to management as a practical activity. However, both definitions have differing understandings of how management is executed, although neither definition demonstrates concrete insight into the type of knowledge required for such execution. Though the last definition gives more information than the former, undeniably management is a complex term which requires more uniform definition within both the business and welfare context.

Hafford-Letchfield (2009) notes this in her definition of management, whereby she suggests that the concept constitutes a practical activity applied by drawing on a variety of skills that are not easily categorised yet essential for integration into practice. It is from this understanding that the researcher opted to utilise the conceptual framework for management skills, function, and tasks as the lens through which the concept of management is unpacked in this study within the social welfare context. The skills, function and tasks of management depend on the school of thought being followed. In terms of management theories, existing and emerging theories will remain of great importance for social workers as they are challenged to demonstrate the efficiency and effectiveness of their services and programmes (Goliath, 2018; Weinbach, 2008). Social service organisations employ relevant management schools of thoughts for their accountability purposes by drawing from a pool of existing theories and approaches to management that have some utility and some limitations, as per Sridhar (2008), there exists no

single best theory of management. Within social work, there are two primary schools of thought that dominate management knowledge.

3.3.1. Competing schools of thought within social work management

According to Payne (2009), management is a practice just as social work is a practice and any changes affecting the social welfare context as well as social work practice require relevant management practice. The current context necessitates social and economic consideration within management as a result of neoliberalism and emphasises the quantitative, procedural, and positivistic evaluation of performance through bureaucratic management; however, one should not overlook the empowerment of social work to maintain emotional content of practice and the significance of relationship (Harlow, 2008b). Given the importance of the bureaucratic and empowerment management approaches as competing schools of thought within social work, a discussion of what each management approach entails within social service organisations is presented below.

3.3.1.1. The Bureaucratic Management Approach

Non-profit welfare organisations have for a long time been challenged to be more responsive to their social context and to social pressures for participation, transparency, accountability, and empowerment (Nefdt, 2003; Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020; Xaba, 2014). However, in a contemporary context where social work practice is influenced by neoliberalism, there is an added weight given to marketisation, managerialism and the commodification of social work as a result of bureaucratisation (Ornellas, 2018; Rogowski, 2011). The tenets of marketisation and managerialism have been described earlier in this chapter.

Bureaucracy is classified as a classical management theory; Max Weber is considered as one of the first major scholars to formulate the concept of an ideal bureaucracy in an organisation (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019). According to Gerth and Mills (1958), organisational management per a bureaucratic management approach is characterised by the following principles:

- Clear and central hierarchy of authority and responsibility;
- High degree of specialisation –workers are organised based on the type of work they do or the skills they have;
- Prescribed systems or rules and procedures;
- Hiring and promotion based on technical ability;

- Impersonal and not focused on social relationships –the idea is to treat all employees equally and not to be influenced by individual difference;

- Extensive use of written documentation.

The management board of NGOs is a policy-making body of the organisation with a legal duty to ensure that the organisation's actions are consistent with its goals and objectives (Nefdt, 2003). Bureaucratic management requires productive operations. Within this management approach, activities and objectives are rationally thought out and divisions of labour become explicitly spelt out (Ehiobuche & Tu, 2012). Although this management school of thought was developed with the ideal applicability in all organisations, today we often think of bureaucracies as vast, impersonal organisations that put impersonal efficiency ahead of human needs. We should be careful, however, to not apply a solely negative connotation to the word bureaucracy. Like scientific management, bureaucratic management is meant to improve the performance of organisations through making their operations predictable and productive (Beddoe, 2019). The bureaucratic management was envisioned as a large machine for attaining organisation's goals in the most efficient manner possible. In doing so, it ensures the attainment of organisational goals, especially for large-scale organisations of all types including NGOs as they are faced with investing significant resources into collecting data on selected indicators and targets as required by the neoliberal context.

The bureaucratic approach is deemed relevant considering neoliberal demands on social service managers (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019). As discussed in the previous, the present neoliberal context compels managers to approach social service delivery as a commodity in response to market demands (Harvey, 2010) rather than a response to the needs of the client system. That said, when applied alone within the social welfare context, this management approach does have several disadvantages. Firstly, it does not value innovation and flexibility as much as efficiency and predictability. Secondly, in bureaucratic organisations, if individuals of specialised positions learned their importance to the organisation and are not empowered to execute their tasks, they may begin to exercise their power in the position. These conditions usually shift power from the managers to the bureaucrats (Wilkinson, 1998). Bureaucracy is a particular type of administrative structure developed through the rational-legal authority. Thus, NGOs management are traditionally viewed as being hierarchical in structure with the plan to evaluate and monitor organisational programmes and establish standards that would ensure that the mission and vision of the organisation are accomplished (Nefdt, 2003; Carver, 1990). Through the firmly ordered hierarchy of supervision-management and subordination, written

records of management, expert training, and official activity taking priority over other activities (Ehiobuche & Tu, 2012).

Gortner, Mahler and Nicholson (1997) note that bureaucratic management has the potential to destroy spontaneity and critical thinking, especially in organisations challenged to respond to the ever-changing needs of service users and a turbulent work environment. Therefore, in dealing with and managing complex human issues in addition to following managerial protocols, social workers are expected to be creative and innovative in responding to clients' needs and problems. Muinjangue (2020) concludes that bureaucracy as a management approach would thus not be the ideal theory for any social service organisations, including NGOs. As a result, it would be safe to argue that the bureaucratic management approach is not sufficient for the context of social work practice, which seeks to achieve social development (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019).

3.3.1.2. The Empowerment Management Approach

A vast body of literature on empowerment focuses on assisting members of stigmatised groups through influencing the institutions that have power over them. In social work, such literature generally addresses the needs of clients and community members (Lauffer, 2009). In South African social work in particular one such influential empowerment policy is the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997b), which sought to transform the social services by incorporating a developmental approach to service delivery; the developmental approach is meant to foster the empowerment of individuals and communities through a rights-based context for inclusive practice (Mashale, 2017; Patel, 2005; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019).

The psychological scholar Rappaport (1984) defined the concept of empowerment as a mechanism through which individuals, organisations and communities gain mastery of their lives. From an organisational level, the application of this framework implies that empowerment may consist of organisational processes and structures that primarily intend to enhance staff participation and improve organisational effectiveness to achieve stipulated goals. However, organisational empowerment does not simply imply an aggregate empowered individual. Empowerment may be a process whereby individual employees learn to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them, that is the relationship between their efforts and outcomes (Mechanic, 1991). In this context, it can be referred to as a process where NQSWs learn about their organisational goal and the required management tasks for execution to attain the intended outcomes.

The Empowerment Management Approach (EMA) counters bureaucratic management by breaking down power hierarchies (Hardina, Middleton, Montana & Simpson, 2007). It encourages workers to use their own judgement rather than blindly following instructions as is emphasised through neoliberal narrative. The empowerment approach is a people-driven process which requires the inclusion of different stakeholders in the decision-making process; it is a management system completely contrasting to bureaucratic management beliefs, while still considering neoliberal influences and expectations. The influence of the empowerment approach is the preservation of the human relationship that gets lost in the quest for managers to run social welfare organisations based on market principles which result in a consumer-seller relationship that is likely to diminish social work principles towards an empathetic intervention process (Rogoskwi, 2011). From this approach, service users are no longer seen as marginalised and disempowered groups but as participative stakeholders.

The transition from an authoritarian and bureaucratic management model to a management approach that is participatory and empowering in welfare organisations has been found to be the greatest challenge facing social work managers today (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019; Nefdt, 2003). O'Connor and Netting (2009) found that the empowerment approach requires human service organisations to consciously think about how clients or consumers will be involved in every aspect of organisational functioning. Engelbrecht and Terblanche (2019) concur that the empowerment approach requires that appropriate organisational structures and policies be put in place to promote more participation in decision-making. Hardina et al. (2007) suggest the presence of the following elements towards organisational management when deploying EMA:

- Formal structures for the participation of service users in organisational decision-making;
- Partnership with service users, staff and the organisation's board members as equal participants;
- Service user involvement in service delivery;
- Bridging of cultural, ethnic, gender and other demographic barriers to ensure effective service delivery;
- Ideological commitment of top managers to the empowerment of both staff and service users;
- Psychological empowerment and motivation of workers;
- Team building and collaboration among staff members;

- Encouragement of staff to advocate for improvements in services and policies;

- Maintenance of a consistent funding base to produce effective outcomes;

- Involvement of services users, stakeholders, and staff members in the on-going evaluation of services and programmes renewal;

- Increasing political power of the organisation as well as the political influence of service users;

- Acknowledgement of the limitations of participatory management;

- Proactive measures to balance inclusion in decision-making with organisational maintenance.

EMA is believed to have the potential to transform organisations into service user and employee-friendly organisations to increase the chance of ensuring that organisations remain responsive to their context (Nedft, 2003). Thus, the central purpose of EMA is to enhance the power of staff members and the service users as well as to restore the conflict and disconnection between neoliberal bureaucratic requirements and the social work professional values and principles (Muinjangue, 2020; Parker, 2017; Tham & Lynch, 2017).

Empowerment has become part of daily management language and associated with various management departments such as human resource management (HRM) and total quality management (TQM) (Hennestad, 1998; Wilkinson, 1998). Empowerment is regarded as providing a solution to the age-old problem of tailored and bureaucratic workplaces where creativity is stifled, and workers become alienated. Empowerment generally refers to a form of employee participation and focuses on task-based involvement within the organisation (Wilkinson, 1998). However, with the empowerment approach managers could unleash the talents of the staff member, in this case of NQSWs by dismantling strict application of organisational bureaucracy and trust the involvement of employees. In the evolution of the industrial sector, there was no notion of employees having a right to a say: it is employers who decide whether and how to empower employees (Wilkinson, 1998).

Although EMA can certainly be considered a desirable management approach, its effectiveness has been questioned (Solomon & Steyn, 2017). The aim of the researcher in presenting both the bureaucratic and empowerment management approaches is to illustrate and recognise the developments of each approach and the differing contribution to current management practices within the social work NGO. An examination of both approaches can help to highlight existing strengths and weaknesses and enable the reader to see how both managerial practices may seem appropriate, or hold some relativity, within the current context of social work practice as

influenced by neoliberalism. In fact, a combination of the two approaches, which draws from the differing strengths, may be the most beneficial means for understanding, as well as preparing NQSWs for, the management tasks executed in practice.

3.4. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT TASKS, FUNCTIONS AND SKILLS

Engelbrecht's (2014, 2015, 2019) conceptual framework of management provides comprehensive management tasks, functions and skills recognised as being necessary within the social work context; these originate from the corporate, bureaucratic context, while incorporating the principles of EMA. Figure 2 presents an overview of this framework.

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of management skills, functions, and tasks
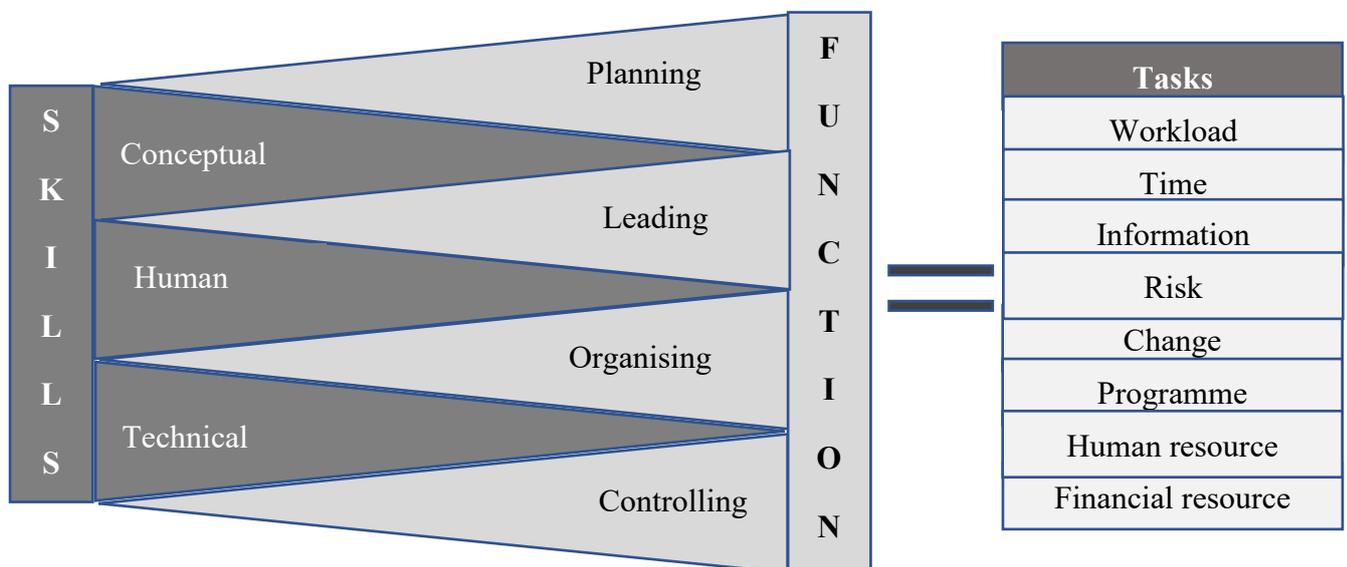
Source: Engelbrecht (2014:24).

3.4.1. Management Tasks

Management tasks in social welfare organisations are defined as actual tasks performed by managers drawing on specific skills and functions to execute them. Considering that the management tasks list is not exhaustive, the conceptual framework of management skills, functions and tasks coined by Rankin and Engelbrecht (2019) will be utilised to guide the identification and discussion of management tasks executed within social service organisations that could be required of NQSWs. Earlier scholars who studied the management concept within the social welfare context have identified the connection between management tasks executed at different levels of management and the level of practitioners. They have concluded that these tasks, referred to as management task in this study, are similar across all levels of management

and the difference lies only with the intensity with which these tasks are performed and the intended goal for execution (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Engelbrecht, 2019; Weinbach, 2003). These tasks can therefore be transferred from practice to management to fulfil specific management tasks and vice versa. However, the body of management knowledge within social service organisations focuses on various management levels contained by the hierarchical structure of the organisation with less focus on management practices executed by social work practitioners. This study seeks to close this gap by identifying and discussing specific management tasks at the lowest level of management: the practitioner level, with a specific focus on NQSWs.

3.4.2. Management Functions

Management functions are understood per the definition of Lewis et al. (2012), who view management as a process designed to achieve the goals of the organisation through careful planning, evaluation and revisiting the plans accordingly. Thus, management functions refer to those functions that help managers or frontline social workers to deliver quality services (Engelbrecht, 2019). These management functions include:

- *Planning:* Planning forms the basis of all management functions because it gives direction to an organisation and defines actions or interventions;

- *Organising:* Organising is the process of arranging and allocating work, authority, and resources among employees of an organisation so that they can achieve the goals of the organisation;

- *Leading:* Leadership sets activities in motion and keeps the activities moving until the goals have been accomplished;

- *Control:* Control involves narrowing the gap between the planning and the actual achievements of the social service organisation (Engelbrecht, 2019: 51, 57, 59, 67).

3.4.3. Management Skills

Management skills are understood to as the ability to execute management functions and tasks (Engelbrecht, 2019). Coulshed and Mullender (2006) claim that the skills needed to manage the client/service user caseload and resources in social work intervention are the very same skills required to manage organisations. Thus, this creates a management level of its own in even the entry levels of the organisation and challenges any social work professional, including NQSWs, with the responsibility of contributing to the management of both service user and

the organisation. The most common management skills required and practiced within the social service context, according to Engelbrecht (2019) are human, technical, and conceptual:

- *Technical skills:* The ability to use the method, process, procedure and/or techniques in a specialised area;
- *Human or interpersonal management skills:* Management skills which attempt to create an environment where the communication channel is opened to ensure good individual and group relationships. These include communication, negotiation, decision making, motivation and empathy. The latter is considered difficult to maintain during practice within the bureaucratic management however (Rogoskwi, 2011);
- *Conceptual skills:* Abilities that allow an individual to understand complex situations to develop a creative and successful solution.

3.5. THE MANAGEMENT TASKS OF NQSWS

The tasks that will be discussed are those identified as relevant by social work scholars (see Coulshed, 1990; Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; da Silva, Damain & de Pádua, 2012; Patti, 2013; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019; Mashale, 2017; Muinjangue, 2020; Weinbach, 2003) as being relevant to social work practice. These tasks include workload, time, information, risk, change, human resource, financial and programme management.

3.5.1. Workload Management

The term workload considers more than just the direct work of individual client-worker transactions but refers to all activities required and performed by social work professionals, including NQSWs in an organisation of employment. Workload therefore includes the time spent providing direct services to clients as well as the time spent performing other activities necessary to support intervention programmes as well as implementing best practices outlined by the organisational policies to ensure compliance and the achievement of its mission and objectives. The management of these activities and the undertaking of such responsibilities would be referred to as workload management. According to Engelbrecht (2019), the task of workload management has received increased attention recently, as has the related need for the enhancement of the effectiveness and efficiency of workload management and measurement in order to fulfil the neoliberal demands for quantification of work undertaken by social workers.

49

Workload management comprises of various tasks and acknowledges that social workers operate within a professional and complex environment. Thus, workload management requires the involvement of managers and employees at all levels within the organisation.

Conversely, caseload management sets out the nature and volume of work undertaken by the social worker. It is a headcount of case files, individual service users and/or families to which services are rendered; caseload management alone may not necessarily be a sufficient indication of the actual work involved in social work practice. There is evidence that the demand for social service has increased and changed because of added pressure on social service delivery (Scott-Muller, 2015). In South Africa, the workload of social workers appears to be extremely high, especially within the NGO sector. Scholars concur that the average caseload specifically in child welfare and child protection amongst social workers ranges between 100 to 500 cases (Baldauf, 2007; Joseph, 2017; Narsee, 2013). Within the bureaucratic management approach, the measurement of workload management would be quantitative and therefore incapable of assessing the quality of the work done with such high caseloads.

An effective workload system will offer clear information for managers and reduce inefficiency (Wilkinson, 1998). However, seeing that social workers manage their work by planning and making decisions about when and how to accomplish their responsibilities, the question is whether it is suitable or feasible to develop a formal systemic workload management process to prioritise, allocate, monitor, measure and balance a NQSWs' workload (Engelbrecht, 2019).

That said, poor workload management has far-reaching consequences. Firstly, it has the likelihood of affecting practice and its outcomes negatively. Secondly, it contributes to an increase in the average stress levels amongst NQSWs which can affect their level of job satisfaction and productivity. Thirdly, it is associated with the burnout, poor retention, and possible compassion fatigue (Dillenburger, 2004; Joseph, 2017; Stevens, 2008). The workload management knowledge of NQSWs, therefore, would be beneficial, considering the negative impact resulting in the lack of such understanding.

The emphasis on preparation of NQSWs to improve how they deal with managing their workload highlights the need to prepare graduates to deal with uncertainty and complexity within the work environments (Fook, Ryan & Hawkins, 2000; van Rensburg, 2009). On the other hand, high workloads, with minimal time frames for the completion of such loads contributes greatly to the experience of stress in the workplace (Sharpe et al., 2011).

3.5.2. Time Management

Research conducted on the preparedness of NQSWs practice with NQSWs themselves, as well as managers and supervisors, indicated areas in which NQSWs felt under-prepared and could improve, including report writing, record keeping, dealing with conflict, court skill and time management (see for example Grant et al., 2017; Pithouse & Scourfield, 2002; Sharpe et al., 2011). Bates et al. (2010) on the other hand, found that NQSW identified their current development needs as including report writing, record keeping, time management, case management, dealing with conflict and care management and contracting.

Time is a valuable resource that cannot be increased; thus, employees' time is an essential resource that necessitates being effectively rationed (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Engelbrecht, 2019). Time management entails making a conscious decision about how one uses their time. Attributable to the fact that social work is a time and labour-intensive practice, De Jager (2013) and Engelbrecht (2019) maintain that effective time management is one of the most important skills to be acquired by social work practitioners. Interestingly, Engelbrecht (2019) found that males spend little time during the day for activities not directly related to work while females make time during the day for such activities. Patti's (2013) study of licensed social workers indicated that men were more likely than women to be spending any of their time on administration.

Given the correlation between workload and time management, van Rensburg (2009) and Noblet (2003) corroborate that increased or high levels of workload, as well as time constraints, contribute to the stress levels of NQSWs. Employees within such an environment cannot be expected to respond very well under bureaucratic management seeking to meet a deadline for submission (Weinbasch, 2003). Bureaucratic managerial preoccupation with timeliness, recording, procedural compliance, standardised assessment, productivity measurement and risk aversion detracts from quality decision-making informed by a relational approach to social work practice (Hyslop, 2018). Therefore, a complementary management approach, such as the EMA, may foster the ability of NQSWs to succeed in meeting the time deadlines and producing quality results even when faced with a difficult and complex working environment.

3.5.3. Information Management

Communication is a critical function within effective organisations. The manager plays a key role in the management of information, communication flow and maintenance of the existing systems within organisations. Communication is a multi-direction flow of information and

enables the manager to pass information, gather vital intelligence and engage in external communication with internal and external parties and stakeholders (Smit & Cronje, 1999). Communication as a managerial task requires that managers be familiar with technological advances in the communication field (Engelbrecht, 2019). Technological advancement includes the fast pace and commonplace use of electronic email communication as mechanisms for correspondence, which is fast replacing the telephone and conventional postal mail (Reyneke, 2019). The development of social media and email has changed communication and requires a new skill set, which includes writing, editing, tone selection and formality which conventional face-to-face communication does not require to the same extent (Reyneke, 2019). The ability to use and apply technological advances in communication has therefore become both a job and personal required competence (Engelbrecht, 2019).

Much like communication means, information technology is advancing at a rapid rate and has begun to significantly impact human services (Patti, 2013). Technology has transformed not only the way organisations communicate but also how they store and process information. Appropriate recording, documentation and storing of data have always been part of social work practice. However, the management of information is an evolving process. Over the past decade, social workers have had to access to a variety of data collection and entry options as a result of significant advances in information technology, methods of data entry, and changes to the funding sources requirements. Initially, the keeping of paper-based orderly systemic information on the cases and permanent recording of activities was expected, and social workers-maintained shelves or cabinet with files on service users, group activities or project (Engelbrecht, 2019). However, Kettner, Moroney and Martin (2013) argue that recently the government, funders, donors, and sponsors require a more precise match of needs and service delivery, performance management, overall programme cost-effectiveness, transparency and reporting of results. The growing use of performance contracting, and the deployment of information systems that measure outcomes as well as processes, are all indicators of bureaucratic management.

In social service organisations, these processes cannot be separate from the daily actions of employees involved within the work undertaken by the organisation. Powell (2003) argues that the responsibility of information management must rest with the organisations' managers at all levels. Thus, the ability to manage information can be seen as a personal competence of employees, irrespective of their management level within the organisation. That said,

Engelbrecht (2019) recommends that information technology professionals are consulted to assist with the actual work of setting up appropriate information management systems.

In terms of communication, the NGO is primarily concerned with creating linkages and flows of information via internal and external platforms (Lewis, 2007). Therefore, the manager's role is in differentiating useable knowledge and information to advance organisational goals. Utilising the right information and communicating it most efficiently to the relevant stakeholders, as well as reviewing the impact of that communication, can be an added advantage in terms of professional knowledge and skill (Engelbrecht, 2019).

Despite the significance of information management, some research studies indicate that feedback on the preparedness of NQSWs have favoured areas such as conducting assessments, building relationships, and communicating with clients, with less emphasis on preparedness for more instrumental aspects of the role such as commissioning services, dealing with IT systems and working with accountability mechanisms (Grant et. al., 2017; Moriarty et al., 2011).

3.5.4. Risk Management

Risk forms an intrinsic part of our personal and organisational life and the reality is that we live in a risky society. Changes in the internal or external environment of the organisation directly influence the risk an organisation is exposed to. Risk assessment attempts to determine the probability of harm occurring in the future and attempts to predict the eventuality of such occurrence in an attempt to prevent reoccurrence and protect vulnerable groups (Webb, 2006). Risk management is an inherently complex, contingent, and negotiated activity. It is a continuous process requiring identification and analysis of risk, developing, and implementing risk-reduction measures to control the risk and the monitoring of risk. Tchankova (2002) claims that all aspects of organisational activities are covered by risk management and that it is included at all management levels.

Social work practice is exerted through a system of risk management and audit (Broadhurts, Hall, Wastell, White & Pithouse, 2010). Social work practitioners are obliged to comply with risk reduction technologies, although the informal risk management process continues to play a critical role in shaping decision-making (Broadhurts et al., 2010). Supervision in all contexts is intended to ensure that risks are effectively managed, that interventions are based on accumulated knowledge (evidence-based practice), and that social workers are supported to carry out their work effectively (Spolander et al., 2014).

Therefore, social workers are active, engaged, and reflective professionals who skilfully use interpersonal communication, interaction, ethical and political processes, and change strategies to initiate and sustain positive social processes and outcomes for clients. They are active rather than passive change agents, engaged in taking risks rather than being risk-averse, and are motivated by a professional community of social work professionals with shared practices, knowledge, and core values (AASW, 2015).

In the exploration of the readiness of NQSWs in the study by Grant et al. (2017), a striking consensus emerged in support of the view that Higher Educational Institutions are proficient in preparing NQSWs across a wide variety of areas including interventions, assessment skills, values, anti-oppressive/anti-discriminatory practice, and understandings of risk. The findings of these studies suggested a general agreement, however, that risk management was an area in which NQSWs were poorly prepared (Grant et al., 2017). In other similar studies, managers and supervisors agreed that risk management skills could be improved and called for better teaching on assessing risk, prioritising, and time management (Moriarty et al., 2011; Pithouse & Scourfield, 2002). Fook (2012) highlights social work graduates' emphasis on assistance to improve their risk assessments, dealing with hostility, and managing their workload and highlights the need for NQSWs to be prepared for dealing with uncertainty and complexity. NQSWs need to at least understand the principles of risk assessment, and why these are important in social work practice; this may better prepare them better for varied working environments.

3.5.5. Change Management

With the changing South African social work environment and the people, it serves, change management becomes a key management task. Change management is the process of managing and supporting the organisation's transition in response to environmental, technological, political, and funding changes and diversities in order to maintain continuity in operations with as little disruption as possible (Weinbach, 2003). NGOs operate within a dynamic and fluid environment that is influenced by socioeconomic, political, and global events. Most notably, globalisation and its influence on national states has changed the cultural dynamics of organisations, making nation-state borders more porous and enabling more mobility cross countries (Eriksen, 2007). This changes the types of groups requiring social work intervention and the nature of such intervention, thereby affecting organisational strategy.

Social service organisations and professionals do not operate in isolation from society, where continuous changes are taking place. Therefore, the ability to redesign and reorganise and adapt

in response to change is critical for effective and efficient service delivery and is one of the most essential management tasks (Engelbrecht, 2019). The need to change can be stimulated or brought on by external factors, such as the government's changed agenda in terms of legislation and policies post-1994. Since 1994, the required transformation within social welfare was the driver for the redesign of social service organisations in South Africa (Patel, 2005). Recently, for example, social workers world-wide have been required to continue their professional roles and practice amid the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. They resume their work on multiple fronts, including within the NGO environment, as a vital skill, to prevent the spread and holistic impact of COVID-19. While the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended the use of certain safety precautions with an understanding of the need for face-to-face contact with clients, social workers in this climate are faced with difficult intervention decisions regarding in-person contact by ensuring access to services through teletherapy (IFSW, 2020; NASW, 2020). This correlates with information management skills, in terms of the role of technology in changing the way organisations communicate, brand and market themselves, as well as the way they gain access to information and conduct intervention (Reyneke, 2019).

Factors within the organisation might provide an opportunity for, or even necessitate change, such as budget shortfall, employee's low morale and burnout, or the need to provide new services. Change is challenging and can either be invigorating and exciting, or frustrating, stressful, and confusing. Unfortunately, change is necessary and must be managed; as Brueggemann (2014) explains, managing risk often requires change management abilities. For example, adaptability – being able to apply social work skills and knowledge in a variety of situations at times of rapid change, was mentioned by managers as a useful quality (Sharpe et al., 2011).

Engelbrecht (2019) identifies different types of change. Organisational change efforts target the shallow end of the organisation by focusing on structure of the organisational culture which is generally adaptive and incrementally focussed of making the organisation efficient (Stead & Stead, 2014). Transformational change, also referred to as second-order change, appears to be the most complex, intense, and distressing types of change. It often happens when the survival of the organisation is threatened. This might alter the mission and core values of the organisation, change the culture of the organisation, and/or increase the capabilities of the organisation. Transformational change requires fundamental efforts to shift the beliefs, values,

and linear steps toward organisational change in order to identify and develop new ways of doing things (Stead & Stead, 2014).

The influential tenets of neoliberalism explored in Chapter 2 demonstrate the transforming context of social work practice which requires an appropriate response by social welfare organisations and social work professionals. Amongst the variously defined managerial roles, Menefee (2001) identifies the role of *Futurist-Innovator* as critical for a manager as it focuses on understanding and adapting to changes in the social, economic, political, demographic, and technological environment that may pose threats and/or opportunities which require planning to anticipate and shape appropriate responses. Weinbach (2008:333) noted, "The best managers are lifelong learners. They are never content with their current knowledge and skills, always seeking to improve." Social workers need to familiarise themselves with new theories and developments within the field of management as an integral part of their practice. It is the responsibility of social workers to keep abreast on new information in the social work field to improve intervention programmes and the development of efficient and effective projects.

3.5.6. Human Resource Management

According to Parameswari and Yugandhar (2015), the human resource function has progressed from its traditional role of hiring and firing to a more strategic function with finance and other operations within the organisation. Human resource has become more concerned with ensuring that businesses and welfare organisations get the most out of their employees. In other words, human resource management intends to deliver a high return for the organisation's investment in its employees. This makes human resource management a highly complex task as it does not only deal with technical management issues but human ones as well. However, the bureaucratic management approach favours technical operation while minimising considerations of human relation issues, hence, when applied alone within social welfare organisations this management approach would not suffice (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019; Harlow, 2008b). Social work service delivery is concerned with interpersonal relationships knowledge and skills through which social workers can enhance the quality of a person's life. Thus, any human service organisation, including NGOs, services are provided through human interactions and become highly dependent on the effectiveness and quality of its staff (Jack & Donnellan, 2010). NGOs rely heavily on their staff members and volunteers to ensure quality service delivery, which makes appropriate human resource management an essential management task.

The challenge for human resources is often not where to find NQSWs, as the shortage of social workers in South Africa was addressed through the Recruitment and Retention Strategy for

Social Workers by the Department (Cloete, 2012). Instead, the primary concern is with how to redirect and channel the energy of NQSWs in a way that is constructive and serves to accomplish the organisational mission and objectives. Channelling the energies of the right candidate in the right position and keeping them happy is a central activity of human resource management (Mashale, 2017). This may be achieved through the empowerment management approach which could potentially enable employees, through delegation, training, and development, to serve the best interests of the respective client system within the changing context of practise for NGOs.

As noted in Chapter Two, the current neoliberal context favours technical–rational approaches over critical–reflective approaches to social work practice (Moorhead, Bell & Bowles, 2016). However, through field placement, students can be introduced to the process of attaining required skills for professional social work practice (Williams, 2012). Therefore, from practice education, students are empowered and equipped for beginner practice, enabling them to do the work as expected and effectively. These first few months of practice are vital for the developmental phase and may also be the most challenging time for students (Donnellan & Jack, 2015). That said, practice education arguably offers low-cost human resources to NGOs through student social workers in exchange for capacity building of NQSWs.

On the level of frontline workers, human resource management relates to the fifth management function identified by Weinbach (2003), namely staffing. This function is primarily concerned with the human resource capability of an organisation to deliver on its plans (Mashale, 2017; Weinbach, 2003). Throughout their undergraduate studies, social work students are required to identify individual, group and community problems and further, develop and implement intervention plans which engage with and utilise various systems and community resources. This equips social workers to develop projects that ensure a collaborative contribution to the empowerment and advancement of the client system's wellbeing. In this way, the ability of NQSWs to identify, involve and achieve the desired end of the intervention programme demonstrates their human resource management ability. However, this management task has never been described this way before due to NQSWs being drawn to the field because of their interest to help vulnerable people, rather than manage them (Engelbrecht, 2015).

3.5.7. Programme Management

Social workers and social work managers are constantly involved in project design and programme development. Lewis et al. (2012) refer to a programme as a smaller scale version of the services of a specific service agency to meet specific needs. Thus, programme planning

is the set outcome of a certain client system, family or communities used to design and plan a specific service or intervention plan programme (Lewis et al., 2012). Programme planning typically forms part of operational planning in a welfare organisation and includes aspects such as management of resources in line with the primary strategy of the organisation (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006).

According to Weyers (2011), a project refers to a series of planned tasks which aims to reach a specific objective within a certain time and budgetary constraints. Project planning refers to the detailed implementation plan for a broader programme (Lewis et al., 2012; Spolander & Martin, 2012). Thus, project management entails the managing and monitoring of the process of implementing a project within the specified constraints of the organisation. Flanagan and Finger (1998) offer a more simplistic definition of project management by referring to it as the steps a manager must follow in order to complete specific tasks and related sub-tasks according to a specific schedule and through continuous monitoring. According to Herbst (2019), a key part of the bureaucratic managerial role is the ability to design, resource, execute, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive social service. Spolander and Martin (2012) identify the primary characteristics of project management as planning and serving clients to achieve specific objectives within a clearly set timeframe, using the available human resources with the necessary skill set to complete the tasks. Project management in a social welfare organisation often tasks both seasoned and NQSWs with the responsibility of improving performance with limited resources in a dynamic and changing internal and external policy and social environment (Spolander & Martin, 2012). Social services programmes, as a result, often rely heavily on the ability of managers within organisations to raise funding in order to execute projects or programmes. As discussed in Chapter Two, the impact of neoliberalism on social work practice requires NQSWs to be able to implement efficient and effective practice. This requires appropriate programme and project management knowledge. Martin (2000) further noticed a growth in the human resource management's effort to create awareness of programme management within social welfare to control costs and make more efficient use of limited organisational resources.

3.5.8. Financial Management

Financial management within NGOs is primarily concerned with the development of strategies to acquire funds and decisions about the allocation and management of financial resources, rather than focusing on the technical intricacies of managing money. In South Africa, local NGOs currently find themselves under pressure to comply with appropriate reporting standards

and illustrate a positive social impact to secure their funding contract with the state (Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020). In dealing with challenges unique to the non-government sector, NGO managers are placed under pressure to execute relevant strategies and organisational structures that are bringing them closer to their business counterparts; managing these organisations requires increased entrepreneurial skills and innovation for financial sustainability (Hendrickse, 2008; Ogliastri, Jager & Prado, 2015).

According to Biwott, Toroitich and Kiplel (2014), from the business context, an assessment of an NGO's financial sustainability entails a consideration of the organisation's net income, its liquidity as well as its solvency. Within traditional welfare approaches, however, the financial sustainability of an NGO simply refers to the organisations ability to adequately fund its planned operations for several years (De V Smit, 2019). This approach is prevalent within the South African NGO, as it is challenged to operate in what Radebe and Nkonyeni (2020:1) refer to as a "starvation-cycle" context due to limited funding; this is when NGOs can only cover programme related costs and not the indirect costs associated with delivering an intervention or programme. This often means NGOs are not capacitated to deliver high social impact and this can, in some instances, lead to the financial mismanagement of organisations. Moreover, an unequal power dynamic between NGOs and funders, including the state, means that these organisations are not positioned to challenge the rationale for underfunding indirect costs which would allow NGOs to invest in sustainable impact.

Although there is a growing number of NGOs in the social welfare sector as noted in the previous chapter, this may arguably represent the state's failure to provide social services which result in NGOs becoming extension agents. The high number of NGOs contributes to an increase in competition for funding. Consequently, the higher number of NGOs to meet state service delivery gaps results in a reduction of funding and places NGOs under significant pressure to deliver sustainable social impact whilst keeping up with the expected reporting standard from scarce funders (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020). The survival of these organisations depends on their ability to meet the expectations of its most important stakeholders, such as funders (Ornellas, 2018). Within this environment, sustainability is not a construct limited to a single capacity of a company. This may require the involvement of NQSWs in assisting organisational managers in attaining its financial goals through compliance with relevant legislation and frameworks of legal entities, such as the Independent Code of Good Governance for NPOs (Inyathelo, 2012), and the Department's policy on financial awards to service providers (DSD, 2011).

NQSWs are often required to collaborate their efforts with an organisation's financial goals. Biwott et. al. (2014) defines collaboration as bringing together tangible resources, in this case, the NQSW human resource of the organisation to solve a set of problems which neither can solve when operating as distinct entities within one organisation confronted with the same problem. Thus, management of these organisations and social work practitioners, especially NQSWs, are challenged to work within the confines of restricted funding grants while continuing to illustrate positive outcomes (Ornellas, 2018; Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020). In previously highlighted studies on NQSW practice preparedness, NQSWs felt most prepared for completing assessments, communication and least prepared for dealing with finance during practice (Carpenter et al., 2013; Grant et al., 2017; Sharpe et al., 2011).

3.6. CONCLUSION

Managers at all levels of human service organisations, especially NGOs are responsible for seeing that their organisations have the necessary fiscal and human resources to achieve its goals and objectives. In today's neoliberal environment, performance management as a component of supervision must be concerned with both quantitative and qualitative social work service delivery. This necessitates the implementation of both the bureaucratic and empowerment management approach within social service organisations, in order to account for both quantitative reporting standards required by funders and the qualitative reporting standard to explain the process- and relationship-based achievement of the social service organisation.

A vast body of literature on management knowledge focuses on those at a higher level of the organisation and less on practitioners (Mor Barak, Davis & Bess, 2004; Patti, 2003, 2013). There are growing concerns as to whether social work training provides a comprehensive curriculum necessary to adequately prepare students for management careers (Engelbrecht, 2019). These concerns result from the changing context of practice which necessitates the preparedness of NQSWs for various management tasks, including workload, time, information, risk, change, programme, human resource, and financial management. While these are significant areas of practice, in-depth coverage in essential management subjects may not be possible in programmes with only a management and administration module that is just a few weeks long. An on-the-ground understanding of the management tasks executed by NQSWs and their perceptions regarding their preparedness would better enable the development of management knowledge training that is appropriate, informed, and empowering; this should

incorporate an understanding of the neoliberal and bureaucratic context in which NQSWs find themselves, while maintaining the empowering values of the profession.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE REFLECTIONS OF NQSWS ON THEIR EXECUTION OF MANAGEMENT TASKS IN NGOS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to meet the third objective of the research study as outlined in Chapter One, namely, to explore what management tasks NQSWs are expected to execute and the skills, knowledge and expertise required to perform these tasks successfully in the NGO environment. Little is known about NQSWs management obligations resulting in various terms such as workload management and caseload management being used loosely in literature and in social work practice (Grant et al., 2017; Office of Chief Social Worker, 2014; Social Work Policy Institute, 2010; Social Work Task Force, 2009). Hence, this study seeks to provide clarity through identifying and discussing specific management tasks executed at the lowest level of management, the practitioner level.

Chapter One and Two presented the foundation for the study by exploring general factors contributing to the need for the execution of these management tasks by social work practitioners. Chapter Three expanded upon the theoretical context of identified management tasks by framing relevant concerns within the ambit of social work practice, especially by NQSWs within the NGO context.

Against this backdrop, this chapter presents an account of the empirical findings from the data collection of the study. As outlined in Chapter One, the study adopts a qualitative research design using exploratory and descriptive approaches and qualitative semi-structured telephonic interviews to elicit empirical data from participants. Data collection was completed through giving participants (NQSWs) the interview schedule (see Annexure B) prior to the telephonic interview due to the anticipated rich response resulting from familiarity with the questions that would be asked during the interview. Information saturation resulted from the total sample size of fifteen NQSWs of different social work NGOs, identified through a snowball sampling method. Furthermore, the process of denaturalisation has been applied to present clear and concise narrative without obstructing the meaning of participants' narratives.

Considering what has been expanded upon in the previous chapters, this chapter will explore empirical data as it relates to management tasks on a practitioner level; for the interview schedule and this chapter, preselected themes based on literature were identified in terms of

eight management *tasks*: workload management, time management, information management, change management, risk management, human resources management, programme management and financial management. Sub-themes were presented as management *functions*, also identified through the literature review: planning, leading, organising and control. For a detailed description of these tasks and functions, refer to Chapter Three. Finally, emerging patterns within each of these themes and sub-themes were identified through thematic analysis and have been presented as categories that allow for a richer understanding of the execution, challenges and successes of management tasks and functions as reflected on by participants. Although the discussion around the themes, sub-themes and categories can have application for various levels of management, the focus of this study is the management concept as executed by NQSWs.

4.2. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 2 presents the identifying details of the fifteen study participants (n=15). Codes are used (A-O) to substitute the names of the participants in order to ensure their anonymity, one of the ethical issues that required a distinct consideration (Rubin & Babbie, 2009; Strydom and Delport, 2011). The information regarding their identifying details was included in the interview schedule with the purpose of building a profile of the participants that contributed to the empirical investigation. The variables were the participants' gender; age; number of months that they have been in practice; the year in which they completed their Bachelor of Social Work; and the nature of service delivery in their respective NGOs.

Table 2. Identifying details of participants (n=15)

No.	Code	Gender	Age	Months of Practice	Year of completion of BASW	Nature of service delivery
1	A	Female	24 years	12 months	2018	Child protection service
2	B	Female	24 years	14 months	2018	Child protection service
3	C	Female	24 years	19 Months	2018	Serve people with disabilities
4	D	Female	25 years	6 months	2019	Serve intellectually challenged adults

5	E	Female	24 years	9 months	2018	Serve families in general
6	F	Female	25 years	11 months	2018	Child protection service
7	G	Female	24 years	18 months	2018	Child protection service
8	H	Female	25 years	5 Months	2019	Child protection service
9	I	Female	24 years	11 months	2018	Child protection service
10	J	Female	23 years	6 months	2019	Serve in a school setting
11	K	Female	24 years	6 months	2018	Victim-Offender mediations service
12	L	Female	24 years	5 months	2019	Child protection service
13	M	Female	24 years	14 months	2018	Serve victims of crime an abuse (NQSW& office manager)
14	N	Female	31 years	6 months	2017	Serve in a school setting (NQSW& office manager)
15	O	Female	24 years	2 months	2018	Crime prevention and the diversion service

4.2.1. Gender

The gender profile for this study was 100% (n=15) female. This is consistent with literature that identifies social work as continuing to be a female-dominated profession. This imbalance in gender is supported by various scholars declaring oversubscription of female social workers to frontline practice (Mashale, 2017; Patel, 2009; Scott-muller, 2015). However, this does not deny the availability of males in the field; they are, in fact, identified as dominant occupants of the management positions within social work organisations. Although there is seemingly significant gender disparity, it does not equate to any levels of competency that is required to execute the management tasks effectively. Therefore, this only gives an indication of the NQSWs recruits within the profession.

4.2.2. Age

The oldest participant (n=1; 6,67%) amongst the sample group was 31 years old with a master's degree; she fit the profile of NQSW as she had, up until recently, never practiced social work.

Most participants were 24-25 years old (n=13); ten participants were 24 years old (66,67%) and three were 25 years old (20%). The youngest participant was 23 years old (n=1), making up 6, 67% of the sample group (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Age of Participants (n=15)
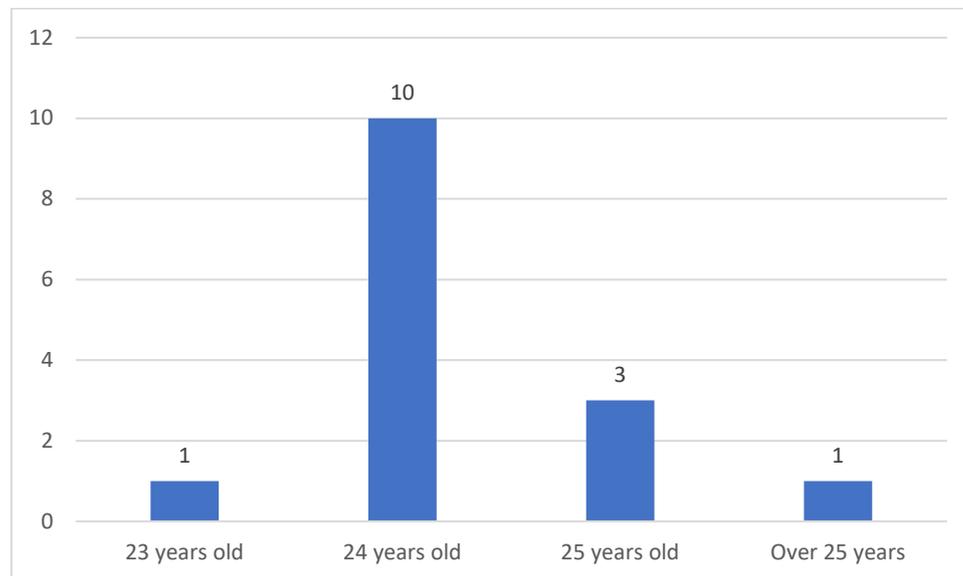
Most of the participants in the study were aged 24 years old with less falling below and just above the age of the majority. Thus, it can be concluded that participants were mainly within a developmental stage of young adults at their first professional job, thus meeting the study inclusion criteria as NQSWs.

4.2.3. Months of practice

As discussed in Chapter One, a key criterion for inclusion in the study was that the participant be a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW). In this research context, NQSWs refers to social work practitioners who have been in the field for a period of not more than two years (Cloete, 2012; De Jager, 2013; van Rensburg, 2009). Thus, all participants fit the inclusion criteria and did not exceed the maximum months, with the lowest number of months of practice being only two months (n=1; 6.67%) at the time of the telephonic interview. The highest months of practice was 19 months (n=1; 6,67%). Therefore, the maximum and the minimum number of participants within the lowest and the highest constitute the same percentage of 6.67% (n=1). The rest of the participants fall below or above the median of 11 months of practice. On average, participants had six to ten months (n=5, 33,33%) or eleven to fifteen months (n=5; 33,33%) work experience (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4. Months of Practice of Participants (n=15)
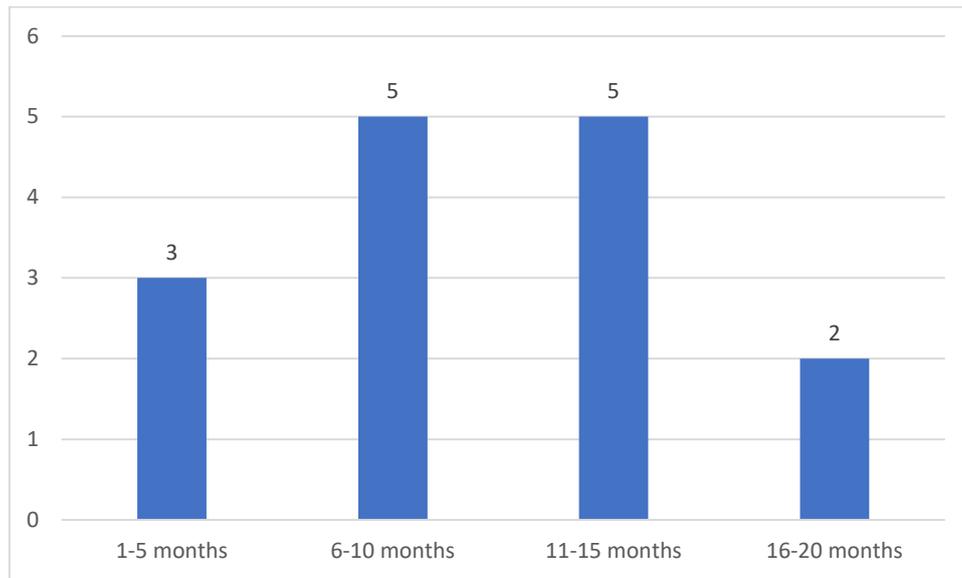
Most of the participants had 6 to 12 months experience, with some just below 6 months and others just above 12 months of practice experience. It can thus be concluded that the participants had enough experience to reflect on their execution of management tasks in order to meet the objective of the study, which was to gain an understanding of the various management tasks NQSWs execute in their practice within an NGO context.

4.2.4. Year of completion

There is a strong correlation between the year of completion of Bachelor of Social Work and the months the NQSWs have been in practice (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Participants' year of completion of bachelor's degree (n=15)

66
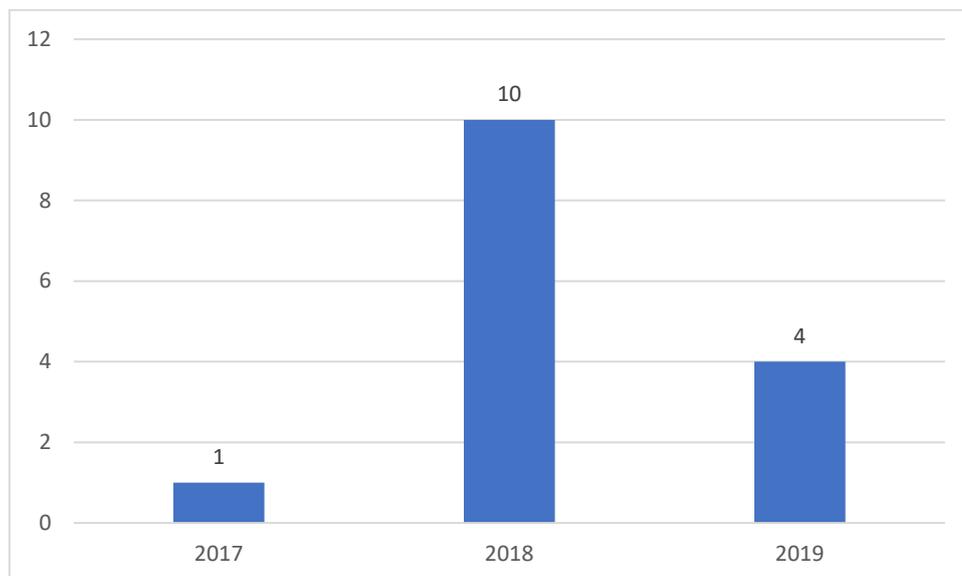
For example, all participants (except one) completed the social work degree two years ago, making it impossible for them to have had more than 2 years' experience of practice. Only one participant (n=1; 6,67%) reported having a master's degree with under 2 years of social work practice experience and therefore fitting the description of NQSW; she completed her bachelor's degree in 2017. From the remaining participants, ten (n=10; 66,67%) completed their degree in 2018 and four participants (n=4; 26,67%) completed their degree in 2019.

4.2.5. Organisation's focus of service delivery

Most participants in the sample group identified themselves as working within a child protection organisation (n=7; 46, 67%); the researcher notes that these were seven different organisations; none (n=0; 0%) of the participants in the sample group were working in the same organisation. The high number of participants from child protection organisations can be a representation of the high need for child protection service in South Africa.

Figure 6. Nature of service delivery of participant's organisation (n=15)
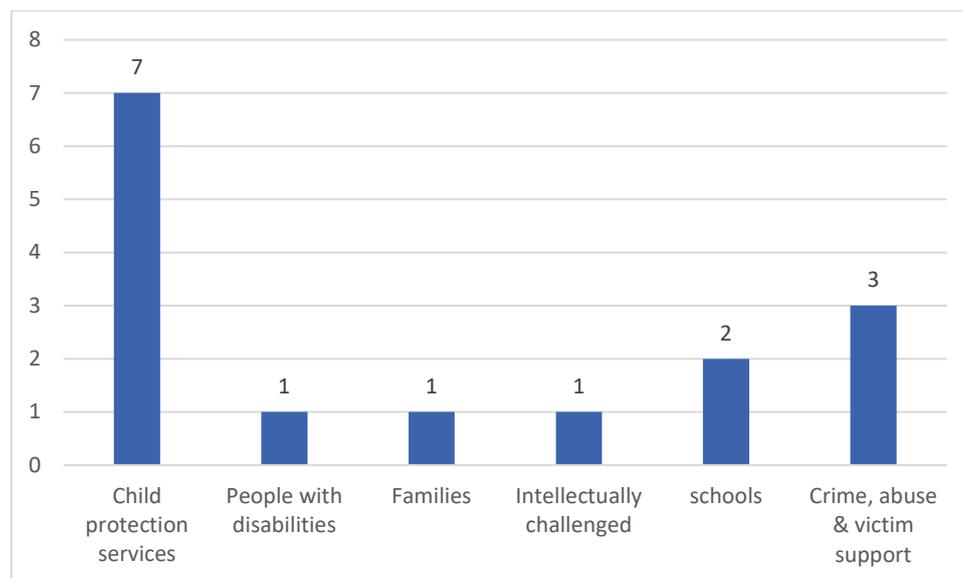
As demonstrated in Figure 6, from the remaining participants (n=1; 6,67%), one worked in an organisation that focused on families in general; one (n=1; 6,67%) in an organisation that worked with people with disabilities; and one (n=1; 6,67%) in an organisation whose target group was the intellectually challenged. Two (n=2; 13,33%) of the participants were school-based social workers (13.33%) and three participants came from organisations (n=3; 20%) that can be classified under the crime, abuse, and victim support, with one organisation serving victims of crime and abuse, the other crime prevention and diversion, and the other focusing on victim-offender mediation.

4.3. THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND CATEGORIES

The **themes** utilised in this chapter are management *tasks* identified in the literature review (Chapter Three) and explored during the semi-structured interviews with NQSW participants. These themes are concurrent with the combined management tasks as identified by various social work scholars (see Coulshed, 1990; Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; da Silva, Damain & de Pádua, 2012; Patti, 2013; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019; Mashale, 2017; Muinjangue, 2020; Weinbach, 2003). They are:

> Workload Management; Time Management; Information Management; Risk Management; Change Management; Human Resource Management; Programme Management; Financial Management.

Each theme contains four **sub-themes**, aligned with the management *functions* as identified by Engelbrecht (2019) and discussed in Chapter Three. Below is a summary of the four functions discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter Three), which form the sub-themes of the empirical study. These were taken from the conceptual framework of management skills, functions, and tasks (Engelbrecht, 2019: 51, 57, 59, 67).

- *Planning:* Planning forms the basis of all management functions because it gives direction to an organisation and defines actions or interventions;
- *Organising:* Organising is the process of arranging and allocating work, authority, and resources among employees of an organisation so that they can achieve the goals of the organisation;
- *Leading:* Leadership sets activities in motion and keeps the activities moving until the goals have been accomplished;
- *Controlling:* Control involves narrowing the gap between the planning and the actual achievements of the social service organisation.

These functions will be used throughout the analysis of each theme due to their importance in the execution of management tasks (empirical themes) by NQSWs.

The **categories** were derived from identifying recurring patterns in participant discourses through thematic analysis. These categories are elements of each function and were utilised to provide a frame in which each theme (management task) can be operationalised from the participants' narratives. As a result, emerging patterns of required *skills* within each sub-theme were deemed categories; the themes, sub-themes and categories are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Themes, sub-themes, and categories of empirical data

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
1. **Workload Management**	Planning	Strategic planning
		Administration
		Maintenance
	Organising	Delegation
		Group employees into sections, teams, or units
	Leading	Contingency and situational approaches
	Controlling	Quality control and performance
2. **Time Management**	Planning	Strategic planning
		Personal time
	Organising	Prioritisation of tasks
	Leading	Contingency and situational approaches
	Controlling	Quality assurance
3. **Information Management**	Planning	Strategic planning
	Organising	Organisational structure
	Leading	Expert power
	Controlling	Setting quality standards
4. **Risk Management**	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Group employees into sections, teams, or unit
	Leading	Legitimate power
		Emotional wellbeing
	Controlling	Quality assurance in managing new risks
5. **Change Management**	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Grouping employees into sections, teams, or unit
	Leading	Contemporary theory's facilitative leadership

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
	Controlling	Empowerment of employees
6. **Human Resources Management**	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Networking
		Social auxiliary workers
	Leading	Referent power
	Controlling	Reporting standards
7. **Programme Management**	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Intervention classification
		Delegation
	Leading	Expert power
	Controlling	Comparing outcome(s) with set quality standards and taking corrective measures
8. **Financial Management**	Planning	Strategic planning
		Programme planning and design
	Organising	Delegation
	Leading	Behavioural theory
		Empowerment versus financial survival
	Controlling	Comparing outcome(s) with set quality standards and taking corrective measures

The themes, sub-themes and categories are explored in more detail below, as the researcher presents their analysis of qualitative data, substantiated with select narrative excerpts that offer deepened participant insight and reviewed against the literature backdrop of Chapter's Two and Three.

4.3.1. Theme 1: Workload Management

Under the theme of workload management, the following sub-themes will be explored namely, planning; organising; leading and controlling together with identified categories according to Table 4 below.

Table 4. Theme 1: Workload Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
1. **Workload Management**	Planning	Strategic planning
		Administration
		Maintenance
	Organising	Delegation
		Group employees into sections, teams, or units
	Leading	Contingency or situational approach
	Controlling	Quality control and performance

4.3.1.1.Planning

Planning is regarded as a basic management function, and as a starting point for all management processes (Nel, 2019). Within this sub-theme, three recurring skills were identified in the empirical analysis: strategic planning, which was prominent during discourse with NQSWs as well as administration and maintenance which were identified as part of workload management for NQSWs.

a. Strategic planning

There are different types of planning processes that can be adopted to achieve set goals within an organisation. Strategic planning as a necessary skill for workload management was identified as an emerging category under the planning function. There exist numerous definitions of strategic planning. However, simply put, strategic planning is a long-term activity intended to achieve the organisation's mission and vision through setting specific objectives and outcomes that can be measured with set targets, and specification of financial, human, and other resources that would be essential (Nel, 2019). Strategic planning was identified by most participants as their primary approach to workload management. This is evident in the following narratives:

"…I would have a plan in place of what I am going to do." (Participant A)

"…so, in order to manage my workload, I do plan. I do a have a weekly plan that I submit to my supervisor every Friday, for the next week. I will do that on a Friday for the next week, all appointments, follow up calls or the monitoring of clients. With my weekly plan, I have a to do list for each day and then I check completion of what I had planned to achieve every day." (Participant E)

"…planning is very crucial for me there because without it, I will drown under all my cases. I currently have 20 cases completed 6 already, I have a monthly plan which I go through weekly, to achieve the monthly targets." (Participant H)

From the above narratives, it is evident that NQSWs are required to have a strategic plan for workload management in order to reach their monthly targets, achieved through setting short-term as well as long-term targets. This is concurrent with what has been discussed in Chapter Two, whereby under the influence of neoliberalism, successful social work practice is measured against managerial targets as a result of organisational management's preoccupation with quantitative productivity measurement in response to the changing context of social work practice (Harlow, 2008b; Hyslop, 2018; Rogowski, 2011). In this instance, NQSWs utilise checklists to ensure that quantifiable targets are met.

Workload management for NQSWs in the study was strongly skewed towards the management of caseloads. While the majority noted typically having high caseloads, many have been experiencing a reduction in new cases as a result of COVID-19. Due to the variety of NGOs in which study participants were employed, it becomes difficult to determine what is considered to be a reasonable workload as no single caseload number can be generally applicable to all organisations given the diversity of the nature of services rendered.

More often workload continues to be measured by the number of cases each social worker has (Office of the Chief Social Worker, 2014; Social Work Policy Institute, 2010). Although this has been the case in this study, where most participants described their workload in terms of their caseload (which varied from 20 cases a week, that is 80 a month for those in the school context to 200 cases for those working with people living with disability and child protection), it remains of utmost importance to stress that workload is in fact much more than just the headcount of cases. Hence, NQSWs during the discourses were asked to identify other management skills that form part of their workload management and planning function. A further two skills were identified.

b. <u>Administration</u>

Although workload management and planning has been discussed in terms of caseload, NQSWs saw the need to identify administration as a separate skill that requires appropriate knowledge and is necessary for ensuring effective workload management:

"…We start with work at 07h00 obviously before school starts, I divide my time between learners and teachers then an hour will go into administration like planning the day…Normally 3 to 4 hours of the day I do administration to make sure that it is up to date." (Participant J)

"…I will indicate when things need to be finished so that I can plan ahead for them, like setting out when I be will seeing my clients and when I will be doing admin. So, I actually set time for everything. For example, if I see clients Monday to Wednesday then I might use the Thursday for administration and Friday for phone calls depending on what is happening on that week." (Participant M)

A study by Spolander, Pullen-Sansfacon, Brown and Engelbrecht (2019) which compared undergraduate social work programmes in three countries, including South Africa, identified social work training as being influenced by neoliberal and economic ideas of improving efficiency. As discussed in the previous literature chapters, the South African social welfare context is being impacted by neoliberal and business ideology, which stresses management solutions and increased administration efficiency within the welfare context. The empirical data appears to confirm this increased role of administrative skills for NQSWs in social work practice and require specific attention.

c. <u>Maintenance</u>

Some social workers, over and above their responsibility to manage their workload in terms of high caseloads, set targets and administration, further identified being charged with the responsibility of overall maintenance. They are required to address maintenance related issues as discussed in the narrative below:

"When we are visiting clients, we have a watch that has a panic button that you can press and you will get a call to the phone you have with you at the time and then you can explain the risk you find yourself into, that is the protocol in place. But it does not work because sometimes you find that the phone that comes with watch does not have battery life on it or it does not have signal…" (Participant H)

"Maintenance management… for example we need to be in contact with the owner for fixing things that are broken such as doors or reporting Microsoft that needs update to the manager of our organisation and other things like that. So, we do not only focus on social work-related

intervention. This is not within our job description, but we find ourselves having to make effort to have things fixed in the organisation." (Participant K)

The above activities constitute additional responsibility for NQSWs and consequent planning in order to ensure effective workload management. Therefore, it is evident that term workload refers to all activities performed by NQSWs in an organisation of employment to ensure that good quality service is rendered timely and appropriately, per established targets. The qualitative data demonstrates that workload management includes planning for time spent on providing direct services to clients, as well as time spent performing other administrative and maintenance activities that support the intervention programmes, whether directly or indirectly.

The management of these activities and the undertaking of such responsibilities can therefore be understood as workload management; however, this is a task which continues beyond planning.

2.3.1.2. Organising

Following the development of effective planning for intervention, NQSWs as managers of their workload are required to translate their plans into action. According to Freeman and Gilbert (1995) and Nel (2019), organising as a function refers to the process followed to arrange and allocate work, authority, and resources amongst employees within the organisation in order to achieve the organisational goal(s). Reyneke (2019) further adds that without organising, the successful implementation of plans is not possible. Thus, leading and control functions as the next two sub-themes in the process of workload management will not exist if sufficient organising does not take place. This sub-theme will be explored under the categories of delegation, and the grouping of employees into teams, sections, or units as necessary skills in the execution of the organising function.

a. <u>Delegation</u>

Delegation is discussed as a category for organising workload (main theme). According to Du Toit et al. (2007), delegation is a process of assigning authority and responsibility for achieving organisational goals. NQSWs reflected on whether, and how, they undertake delegation in order to organise the efficient management of their workload. This is demonstrated in some of the narrative excerpts below:

"…I do have my own auxiliary worker and admin like the minutes of the meeting I can do that through her… so she helps a lot. I have about… 283 cases at the moment… I am responsible for foster care, reunification and all the related admin. I manage my workload by delegating

74

some of the work to the social auxiliary worker. I know what I have to do, and she knows what she has to do as well." (Participant G)

"Fortunately, in our organisation the auxiliary workers are responsible for group work and community work. So, social workers are responsible for casework we do behavioural and parenting group…" (Participant F)

"The best thing is, our intervention is split, the social auxiliary worker handles groups and community work, and social workers do casework and awareness programmes…" (Participant I)

"In terms of our individual caseload, the workload is a lot... I have a social auxiliary worker that I have to manage, I am at the office twice a week and at court once a week." (Participant O)

"…there is a social auxiliary worker who works with me that I need to supervise and manage and then we have other organisations in the community that we work in collaboration with…" (Participant M)

The above demonstrates that delegation of workload does take place between social workers and supporting staff such as social auxiliary workers. The identification of group and community work as being primarily the responsibility of social auxiliary workers confirms concerns raised in literature regarding the increasing shift of social work tasks to paraprofessionals who may be cheaper to employ (Ornellas, 2018). This delegation of responsibility, however, enables social workers to manage their tasks more effectively and efficiently as required by neoliberal demands. From the above narratives, it is clear that NQSWs understand the implementation of delegation to organise and manage their workload. This process of delegation can be implemented with individuals within the organisation or with other organisations to ensure collaborative workload management as indicated by participant M. However, reviewing this delegation category within a neoliberal context, there are concerns that such hierarchical delegation perpetuates the ranking of competencies amongst employees in the social welfare organisation, including NQSWs, where each competency is open to observation and measurement (Harlow, 2008b; Ornellas, 2018).

b. Group employees into teams, sections, or units

The emergence of this category as a skill within the organising function correlates with Nel (2019), who states that organisations, including NGOs, group employees into teams, sections, or units in order to facilitate more effective workload management. Although such an activity is often a decision from the organisation's top-level management, NQSWs were able to

demonstrate their understanding of how this is implemented in their respective organisations and how it contributes to the process of organising their workload, and subsequently affects management thereof. The NQSWs discourse shows how employees are often grouped into various departments within their respective organisations based on the type of work/intervention they undertake. Furthermore, participants demonstrated how they apply this very same skill in their daily activities with the attempt to organise and manage their personal workload. Excerpt examples are provided below:

> "…We have the health and wellbeing WhatsApp group and then each management team has their own WhatsApp group but most importantly we use emails to communicate and we work in the same premises." (Participant D)

> "…for example, I was at court today so I only look at court referrals, then when I am at the office, I will look at the things relating supervision or admin files that I need to do, as well as individual counselling and our groups and staff like that. So, I put it into boxes and I only manage the one where I would be at then I manage the other one the next day.

According to Stevens (2008), this method has been used as the most common workload management system, where allocation of work is done at a team level. However, the organisation of employees into different teams does not necessarily mean that the necessary workload will be effectively undertaken. This activity is, rather, part of a broader management system that is put in place to enable the work to be done effectively and efficiently in order to meet target demand.

When translated into practice by NQSWs, the above narratives assert that management tasks at the top level of management are universal and can be transferable to all levels including at the level of frontline practice by social workers. According to Weinbach (2003), however, while the latter is true, the difference in task execution amongst those occupying different levels of management, including NQSWs at the very least, is the driving goal and intensity required for executing these tasks. It is evident that when top level managers arrange efficient and effective workflow around the overall operation of the organisation, NQSWs implement the grouping skill when undertaking their workload management.

2.3.1.3. Leading

Leading is the third function identified in literature and is necessary for the execution of management tasks. This sub-theme is concerned with setting activities in motion to ensure the achievement of a set goal. Two of the leadership theories, namely contingency and situational approaches, were identified as emerging patterns in exploring how NQSWs deploy the function

of leading in their ongoing workload management; these have been grouped together under the category below.

a. Contingency and situational approaches

The contingency theory is a leadership approach which is concerned with determining the best leadership style for a situation at hand and is dependent on variables such as the structure of the task. Thus, a leader adopting this approach is either task or relationship orientated (Nel, 2019). Coupled with contingency leadership is the situational approach, which suggests the possibility to see the work maturity of an employee through the employee's effort to achieve goals amongst other qualities. The following narratives explicitly show how NQSWs demonstrate leadership maturity in ensuring that they accomplish the goals of a given situation, such as high caseloads:

> "I do prioritise my workload and what needs to be done first, tick them off as she goes along the week to ensure that what had to be done is completed." (Participant A)

> "...I have a lot of cases I have 120 cases, so I try to prioritise court cases and really severe cases... It is very difficult to manage it because it is a lot of files that you have and every week there is cases coming for example, every week 5 new cases could come in…" (Participant F)

> "We basically handle our own workload…we are managing it ourselves as no one is telling you that you need to attend to this or that, how you do this and what you need to do is entirely up to you. I would say my workload management is well, personally I like to schedule things beforehand. I would have a plan in place of what I am going to do." (Participant B).

From the above narratives, it becomes clear that NQSWs take on the task-orientated leadership approach as opposed to one which focuses on relationship when executing workload management. NQSWs mentioned the necessary measures taken to accomplish this, such as prioritising workload types to ensure that the desired end with regards to target-driven workload management is accomplished. The prioritisation of task-orientated leadership, as opposed to one of client-worker relationship, however, demonstrates neoliberal influence which places greater emphasis on quantity over and above the quality of working relationship (Ornellas, 2018).

2.3.1.4. Controlling

Controlling is the final function in management task execution and is concerned with the quality assurance processes undertaken within workload management. The setting of quality standards was the emerging category from which the control sub-theme will be explored.

a. Quality control and performance

This category is concerned with the role of quality control in the task of workload management as performed by NQSWs, where the focus is on what needs to be achieved and how this should best be done. Per literature, targets for performance standards must always be in line with the purpose or the desired end of the executor where there is a clear indication of what needs to be accomplished, at what level of performance and with what measurement of outcome (Coulshed & Muller, 2001; Nel, 2019).

> "… I will schedule my appointments in order to manage my workload… I cannot do my work without my to do list for every day. I just can't go to work and start working I need structure of what am I going to every week and what I will do each day." (Participant E)

> "…I only did quarterly reports for DSD, but I worked independently, and I had a caseload of 200 people. So, what I did was to set a target for each week or each month. When I see that I did not reach my target for the week I would reschedule my planning to reach my target… Sometimes I could not keep up with the time because if there was a crisis, I had to go sort out the crisis even when at the time I had planned to go for home visit." (Participant C)

NQSWs can only progress to different appointments once they meet their target for the current month. How they ensure quality control as far as targets are concerned for workload management is through rescheduling appointments when necessary. Although NQSWs identified quality control as part of their response to workload management, Ornellas (2018) and Spolander et al. (2014) note that such an approach seeks to exert control over workload and target performance through reducing service users into customers, diminishing the social work process to one of standardised production process with measurable outcomes.

4.3.2. Theme 2: Time Management

As with the Work Management theme above, Time Management is explored through the four-fold functions of planning, organising, leading and control. Emerging categories as identified skills necessary for the four functions of effective time management are presented in the table below.

Table 5. Theme 2: Time Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
Time Management	Planning	Strategic planning
		Personal time
	Organising	Prioritisation of tasks
	Leading	Contingency and situational approaches
	Controlling	Quality assurance

4.3.2.1.Planning

Planning as discussed in the previous theme forms the basis for all management *functions* necessary for executing management *tasks*. According to Du Toit, Erasmus and Strydom (2007), there are three dimensions captured by the planning process. The first dimension is determination, which focuses on what the service user (clients) and the service provider (in this case NQSWs) are determining as the goal, and the future date by which the set goal should be achieved. Second, is decision-making which focuses on actions deemed necessary and the way in which they will be achieved. Third and last is the future dimension, which is embedded in planning, as planning provides a link between activities that will be carried out and the future goals that would be achieved. The categories which emerged in thematic analysis were strategic planning, and personal time.

   a. <u>Strategic planning</u>

Strategic planning helps organisations to adopt a future-orientated approach as well as enabling adaptation to environmental changes (Nel, 2019). As explained the previous chapters, the social welfare context is changing as a result of neoliberalism and strategic planning is necessary to adapt to such changes while maintaining the long-term goals of the organisation. The implementation of strategic planning will be interpreted from the perspective of NQSWs with regards to future-orientated planning of the desired practice outcome. The study revealed that NQSWs are aware of the link between time management and the attainment of the planned outcome:

"So, I give a monthly plan before hand, then I work towards the monthly plan but as I said it does not always resonate each day I spend in practice because as I said there are crisis that may come up then I will have to change the plan. …" (Participant C)

"Time management is also tricky when it comes to practice because I am working with intellectually challenged adult, you get a group that understands… and then get another group that does not understand we have to explain a number of times before they understand and that can be time consuming…Generally, it is difficult but I am trying to plan how much time I will spend on my work… but it does not always turn out to be that way because it depend on the severity of the intellectually challenge of the clients that will be attending the session…" (Participant D)

From the above narratives it is clear that without planning the organising function (as the next theme) would be chaotic. NQSWs have shared the challenges that result from their effort to implement this skill, and time management as a whole. Due to the changing context of practice, the bureaucratic management approach within NGOs expects evaluation and monitoring of the performance of NQSWs, their programmes, and targets met (Nefdt, 2003; Carver, 1990). Concurrent to this statement, is the submission of a strategic plan as highlighted in the first narrative, showing the expectation of management for future-orientated planning by social work practitioners.

b. Personal time

NQSWs identified how time management has become ever more critical and challenging in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby social work practitioners are expected to effectively manage their workload and time from home. As indicated by the participant below, this has blurred the lines between working hours and personal time, which can be particularly challenging for NQSWs adapting to employment:

"With COVID-19 I think there is another element of time management where you find people working from home. People think that there are no working hours anymore. People contact us outside of working hours and expect us to give report on work related things…" (Participant O)

NQSWs expressed the need for a time management strategy that allows enough time within their contractual working week to adequately address administration, respond to crises, and general casework, while working from home.

4.3.2.2.Organising

The category that emerged from the data collected for the organising function as it pertains to time management was that of the prioritisation of tasks; an activity by which NQSWs understood the operationalisation of the organising function.

a. Prioritisation of tasks

As previously mentioned, social workers, although not necessarily occupants of a specific management level position, are typically conversant in management activities (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Rankin & Engelbrecht, 2019). This section explored organising as a function with the understanding that NQSWs are ultimately managers of their workload and are prioritising tasks to effectively manage time spent on the delivery of social services. The narratives below demonstrate the prioritisation of tasks in order to execute the organisation function necessary for time management:

> "We have to manage it well; time management is a big task or plays a big role. It is hard to get to everyone with this high caseload, so it is quite important to plan. We have to look at what has to be done now...I also have to do risk management where I assess and attend high risk cases first. I spend most of my time doing that, then I move on to the less important or lower risk clients" (Participant G)

> "…when I get to work every day I prioritise, I make a list and say which is top priority then I put them on a list in the order of their priority, then I manage my time according to those activities and anything else I will attend if I have time otherwise I will attend it on the following day…time management for me is organisation, sticking to a schedule, planning ahead and also creating boundaries with the court, my colleague and my auxiliary worker so that I do not receive unnecessary work that is not on my priorities…" (Participant O)

Form the above narratives it is evident that NQSWs execute the organising function based on the prioritisation of activities per risk; this implies a crisis approach to time management that may go against strategic planning as discussed earlier. This may represent a characteristic of the bureaucratic management approach which draws on business principles of efficiency, minimise the human element of social work practice and demanding the completion of tasks in a manner that is considered the most efficient use of time, resources, and finances (Flynn, 2000).

4.3.2.3.Leading

Leading as a function will be operationalised from the reflections of NQSWs as the third sub-theme for time management. Leading is described as setting activities in motion towards

achieving an identified goal. This will be explored under the contingency and situational approaches, as emerging patterns in NQSW empirical data.

a. Contingency and situational approaches

The contingency theory tries to determine the best leadership style in any given situation (Nel, 2019). The situational leadership theory highlights the fact that the maturity of employees determines the best leadership style for a specific situation. The following narrative shares the ability of NQSWs to take up a leadership role by ensuring their goals are accomplished, while taking into consideration time management.

> "What I usually do, and this is my personal preference, besides the to do list and the weekly and daily plan I like to manage my time in a way that suits me. I know that I am productive in the morning so I will make sure that I spend my time effectively then, I will try see everyone in the morning, I schedule my appointments in the morning when I am at peak of my activity then I sit in the afternoon with admin…With regards to time I look at deadlines or due dates, so I like to schedule my work to make sure it is in line with my due dates. I like to arrange my work from high to lower priority…looking at when I am most productive, I do [work] that is most important like seeing clients, writing a presentation…" (Participant E)

> "I think I am struggling with time management because I am struggling to get to all my caseload done, so I try to see my clients in the morning, either home visits or office visits and then I do admin in the afternoon if I have time. The thing is you have to make peace with the fact that you will not get to every case so to manage your caseload you need to know your cases very well for example what cases are important and severe and what cases you can attend later. I always do every admin as well as quick as possible because if you do not do your work and leave it for the next week you will be behind…" (Participant F)

In terms of leadership characteristics, it is evident in the above narratives that both NQSWs have developed a working plan that best suits their working style and the overall process of maintaining (management character) a workflow that guarantees the attainment of set goals.).

4.3.2.4. Controlling

Following exploring planning, organising, and leading, the last function to complete the process of time management is controlling. This section explores how NQSWs take control of situations around time management. The category that emerged was quality assurance.

a. Quality assurance

In discussing time management, NQSWs highlighted the importance of quality assurance, and the impact this has on time management functions. The criteria from which the quality of

82

intervention can be measured include equity, acceptability, appropriateness, efficiency, and effectiveness (Coulshed & Muller, 2001). The narratives below highlight the concerns of NQSWs regarding the gap between managing one's time and the achievement of quality results from intervention; results that can be measured in both quantity and quality.

> "I think the best thing to do is to find out how long (time) things would take. For example, if you know that you are seeing clients for six hours in a day and then you need half an hour to do admin… and obviously planning around that some people will need more time other would need less. Knowing at what pace you work and not overworking yourself and making sure that you plan your day accordingly." (Participant M)

> "So, I do not like working over the weekend however every month there is a weekend that I will work. Sometimes you just want to get ahead of what you have for the week. That's just a personal thing when I have a lot or have a presentation or submitting portfolio of evidence, I use weekends. I really like to be good at my presentations especially if supervisors are involved in a meeting…" (Participant, L)

Both narratives address the issue of quality with respect to the intended outcome for each of the activities at hand. The first narrative addresses the quality of service in terms of the time allocated for different clients depending on their needs and the best time suitable to achieve quality service. The second narrative explains quality in terms of the NQSWs quest to present quality work to their superiors.

4.3.3. Theme 3: Information Management

Our understanding of how the task of information management is executed, per literature, is through the four sub-theme functions: planning, organising, leading, and controlling. Emerging skills are presented below as categories.

Table 6. Theme 3: Information Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
Information Management	Planning	Strategic planning
	Organising	Organisational structure
	Leading	Expert power
	Controlling	Setting quality standards

4.3.3.1.Planning

Planning as the first sub-theme will be explored with the intention of gaining an understanding of the execution of this function by NQSWs in managing information at their respective NGO's of employment. The primary emerging skill/activity for this function was strategic planning, a common category emerging in several of the management themes as discussed above.

a. Strategic planning

As previously indicated, strategic planning involves setting objectives of the organisation and mobilising available resources, including the integrated and coordinated activity of staff, to achieve the objectives (Coulshed & Muller, 2001). Within the theme of information management, NQSWs reflected on how strategic planning is undertaken to better execute this task, in terms of technology and human resources:

> "…I am a junior social worker and I have a senior social worker and supervisor; we also have the OTs and psychologist we form the wellness department, there are other department like the financial department we discuss our plans separately then we will discuss it together for example we discuss our programmes with the financial department to see what the budget can cater for in terms of the programmes. The board member is informed then the CEO is informed as well…" (Participant D)

> "…I like paper trail. So, I tell people to please email me because it covers me. We use Microsoft team to share information that is required from us, you can also record the meeting with head office when you do not understand something, or you are not sure about something you can go back to the recording. I do take note during then meeting but it is better to have a recording... But if it is communication with other social workers, I make sure that I write down a note because sometimes you also have a phone call and forget half of the conversation… I sit with my diary and write everything down who said what..." (Participant E).

The narratives above indicate that NQSWs are involved in strategic planning in their management and coordination of information towards their daily practice as well as the achievement of the organisation's broader objectives; this is identified as being a collective effort. However, NQSWs have different approaches towards the management of information as far as planning is involved, as depicted in the above narrative extracts. While the one is managing the information within a group (wellness department) for example, the other uses emails for information related planning. According to Hellriegel et, al. (2012), support and commitment of key decision makers such as managers, the governing board and staff members

is a key requirement in the strategic planning process. Collective planning is an element of the empowerment management approach.

4.3.3.2.Organising

Organising, much like planning, is a vital management function in order to translate plans into reality (Nel, 2019). This function will be used to explore the task of managing information by NQSWs through the category of organisational structure and how this influences the execution of this task per reflections of NQSWs.

a. Organisational structure

The organising function involves decisions made about creating a kind of structure that would enable the achievement of the organisational goal (Nel, 2019). In this section organisational structure was identified as an emerging category contributing to both the understanding and execution of information management as a management task of NQSWs:

> "…at the end of the day the file will be kept safe and only the previous social worker who was located the file, myself, my supervisor, her supervisor and only DSD social worker is allowed to look into the file. We also make sure to inform the clients about people who will have access to the information they share." (Participant L)

> "So, in my organisation we store client's files or any other information that is relevant to our work in three different ways, firstly we have the physical file information that we keep in the cabinet in a safe room and secure it with a lock and I am the only person who has access, we also store the information on cloud and again I am the only person with the password for information saved online. It is also saved on a supplementary cloud facility that we are the only ones who know the password. We also make sure to comply with the copy Act and make sure to mention to the client how we will store the information so they know that we have the file, but it will so be stored electronically, and they understand how we will protect the information." (Participant M)

Both narratives suggest there are clear organisational structures within their working environment in terms of information management protocols. They both address the issue of confidentiality, which is an important aspect in information management. What is noteworthy is the inclusion of clients as informed participants in the process of organising and managing their information and ensuring its safety and security. This is a characteristic of the empowerment management approach, a people-driven process which requires the inclusion of different stakeholders in the process of decision-making. Furthermore, the empowerment

approach requires appropriate organisational structures and policies be put in place to promote active participation in decision-making (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019).

4.3.3.3. Leading

There are several aspects associated with leadership and this will be explored with respect to information management as the theme for this section. Power has been identified as one of the components of the leadership function (Nel, 2019). Thus, this function (leading) will be explored under the category of expert power which became apparent through the reflections of NQSWs in terms of how they are expected to execute the management of information in their respective NGOs.

> a. Expert power

Expert power is based on the knowledge and skills underlying the work that someone is doing. Thus, being an expert in a particular skill or field will encourage others to respect one as a leader in that area (Nel, 2019). The expert power in the reflections of the below narratives is clear as both participants have sole access to client's information, have expert power over how this information is managed and ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety of this information:

> "Mostly of our information kept is process notes, so we put then in the client's file, each client's file. No one is supposed to have access to the files except for the social worker, so only me. Then with my office, no one is supposed to be at my office without me." (Participant I)

> "With case files, I make sure that they are up to date on the day so as soon as I have a document to add to the case file like a contact I had or a phone call or email or someone called me about my client as soon as the contact is done, I add it to the case file to ensure that they are up to date. Then all documents and files are kept in a cabinet its locked and only I have the key and it is safe in the office." (participant O)

The narratives give evidence once again to a clear information management protocol in which NQSWs are entrusted, based on their expert power, to lead the system of information management. This includes not only information safety, but also the development and recording of such information based on the expertise of the NQSW.

4.3.3.4. Controlling

The controlling function is linked to all other management functions; management would be incomplete without a plan for control (Nel, 2019). Controlling, as a sub-theme for information

management, was unpacked through the category of setting quality standards, in accordance with the reflections of NQSWs.

a. Setting quality standards

The setting of quality standards in an organisation must include the following: an indication of what has to be achieved, the level of performance required, as well as the way in which the outcome will be measured (Nel, 2019). Setting quality standards should be a collective responsibility whereby the outcome must be understood and preferably approved by all involved. Below are extract examples of the reflections of NQSWs on executing the controlling function with information management through the setting of quality standards:

"For confidentiality of the clients, we each have a cupboard. I file all my things in there. Since we are working from home, I have only accessed the files from the office when I need them. We keep a work spreadsheet with details of the client you contacted, their contact details and the summary of what we spoke about this is beside the process note that I have to complete. The spreadsheet helps in keeping track of how much work I did for the day, this is where I ended with the client, what I still need to do on that case, and it is accessible to my supervisor everyday so she can see what I did as well to see what I did. If I contact a client on WhatsApp, I keep record of that as well." (Participant H)

"…In terms of confidentiality we have a file, and it is placed at a secured place in a locked cardboard. When we submit stats, we do not mention the name and the surname of the clients we only give the number of learners we saw and the nature of the problem that the client had. We have the telephonic sheet which has information of the clients on excel it gives the total number. We print and fill forms as we see the clients and we send electronic information to our organisation." (Participant L)

Both narrative extracts above demonstrate similarity preference for the collective agreement around the controlling of confidentiality in the information management process. While the one participant identifies reporting to the supervisor to keep track of her progress, the other indicates she submits statistical reports to her superiors to demonstrate her intervention activities, following a specific confidential reporting standard.

According to Kettner, Moroney and Martin (2013), NGOs require statistical and/or progress reports as government and funders expect accuracy in matching the needs identified and services rendered; this includes expectations around precision in performance management, the overall cost-effectiveness of the intervention/programme, transparency and reporting of all results. The setting of quality standards, per the bureaucratic management approach, controls

information management and standardisation of reporting through the establishment of quality standards that monitor intervention. This supports managers in quality control of information gathered by practitioners for reporting purposes.

4.3.4. Theme 4: Risk Management

As with previous themes, planning, leading, organising, and controlling are sub-themes from which the theme of risk management can be explored to better understand the execution of this task from the perspective of NQSWs. Dominant skills necessary for these functions are presented as categories below per qualitative analysis of interview data.

Table 7. Risk Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
Risk Management	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Group employees into sections, teams, or unit
	Leading	Legitimate power
		Emotional wellbeing
	Controlling	Quality assurance in managing new risks

4.3.4.1.Planning

Planning is a function that, as with all previous themes, is key to effective risk management. Per NQSW qualitative data, programme planning and design was an emergent skill/activity through which planning as a function of risk management was executed.

a. Programme planning and design

Programme planning and design is the process of conceptualising a service or programme in order to accomplish set outcomes. Thus, included in the process of programme planning and design would be identification of the resources needed for executing the programme, as well as the method/means of service delivery (Lewis, Goodman, Fandt & Michlitsch, 2007). Programme planning and design as it pertains to risk management was particularly pertinent for NQSWs given the recent COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on social work service delivery.

"In terms of COVID-19 our organisation has given a plan of how we have to do intervention in the midst of this pandemic, and it is in relation to the new information or development reports about this disease. We had planned to have an office in front at the reception area where we are going to see our clients so that we do not see them in our offices because they are small. We sanitize before and after they leave. We are not allowed to do home visit at all, we contact our clients telephonically we comply with the safety precautions that our organisation has put in place. We work in more chilled areas; we do not have much risk involved when we went to see our clients before COVID-19, but we rather go in two when we go for home visit. We do not go alone to home visit the social worker can either go with the social auxiliary worker but never alone." (Participant B)

"…I have been providing training to residents, we get a group and go to the houses to explain to the residents what the HR has trained us about the virus (COVID-19). We also make demonstration because some of them explaining would not be enough they would forget but when they see they are more likely to remember. We also had a hand wash awareness project, when we do awareness in each house, we make sure that the group home leaders are there so that they can help the residents when we are not there…Risk management is a team's effort, I get trained, train group home leaders and residents and they (group home leaders) maintain the practice of what was learned from the training by constantly reminding residents in their respective house about what was learned." (Participant D)

As demonstrated above, study participants reflected on risk management experience within the context of the pandemic and compliance with the World Health Organisation's safety precautions. A key aspect of this planning process is the choice of appropriate service delivery methods such as casework, counselling, community, preventative interventions, group and/or statutory work in light of associated health risks and lockdown limitations. In the above narrative, the NQSWs reflected on how practice has been affected and how the nature of service delivery has changed, such as moving from in-person sessions to telephonic sessions. Participants also identified the development of specific COVID-related programmes (e.g., hygiene) designed to address health risks facing the organisation.

In Chapter Two, the researcher highlighted the impact of neoliberal tenets on the relationship element of social work practice, with an increasing emphasis on quantitative targets and technical intervention preoccupations over and above flexible and relationship-based interactions. The risk associated with the COVID-19 pandemic heightened this non-relational approach. It is important to note that face-to-face contact continues, however, to play a critical

role in shaping decision-making and services rendered in the profession (Broadhurts, Hall, Wastell, White & Pithouse 2010).

4.3.4.2.Organising

Organising as a sub-theme for risk management is explored through the category: grouping of employees into sections, teams, or units, per analysis of participant narrative.

a. Grouping employees into sections, teams, or units

Although the grouping of employees is usually based on the type of work, they do and is primarily undertaken by those occupying positions in high levels of management, NQSWs identified risk management needs which have required them to execute this skill:

> "During house visit I go with another social worker or social auxiliary worker and I tell them what to look out for in case I do not notice. The most risk is when we go out for home visits and the only way to protect ourselves is if we go out with a colleague. In case of removal of a child we request the police to accompany us because if the client we are removing a child from could be using drugs then we would be in danger because the removal of child is not easy, and the client is a potential threat as they could be on drugs…" (Participant I)

> "Basically, our risk has a lot to do with our clients being offenders some being offenders of violent crimes. So, we classify our client's as high risk or low risk or extreme risk. So, what we do is if they are high risk or extreme risk, we do not see them at the office, we only see them at court and there would possibly be a guard, so we are not alone with them and there are always people around to ensure that we are not at risk…" (Participant O)

From the narratives above, the participants demonstrate knowledge of a grouping response to identified risk in service delivery. In both narratives, the NQSW forms a team with different workers in response to the nature of risk at hand. Furthermore, the teams are formed in terms of the level of risk identified by the NQSW, ranging from low to high risk. Stakeholders such as police and other security professionals are also involved in response to the risk anticipated by the NQSW. Of interest is the fact that social workers are expected to play the role of guard when a colleague has a home-visit, for instance. This is concurrent with the findings of DSD's (2007) recruitment and retention strategy, whereby they note that social workers are increasingly utilised in non-professional tasks.

4.3.4.3.Leading

Leading is the third function for risk management (as per previous themes) and is described as the function that sets activities in motion (Nel, 2019). Two categories became apparent in discourses with NQSWs: legitimate power and emotional wellbeing.

a.   Legitimate power

Legitimate power, according to Nel (2019), comes with certain positions and is gained regardless of who is the occupant of the position. From the narratives below, NQSWs demonstrated their execution of legitimate power in their ability to minimise risk when using their personal phones to engage with clients:

> "I am using my personal phone but with calls, I make my number private before calling the client, with WhatsApp I have created a business WhatsApp account with a different number that does not receive calls…" (Participant I)

> "I used my phone to send out videos, but I had one incident where the client sent me a message on my personal phone, and I managed that by informing the client that that is not the phone I can be contacted on and informed them as well that I will be blocking them." (Participant J)

In the first narrative, the participant expresses that they have their phone set to private before making a call. The second narrative shows how an NQSW restricts communication with clients via the worker's personal device(s). These responses, though seemingly small, are indications of managing potential risk that could be posed by the client in terms of worker-client boundaries and privacy.

One of the characteristics of legitimate power as a form of risk management is the ability to respond to temporary events and/or circumstances (Nel, 2019). As a result of COVID-19, NQSWs did not have access to the office environment (including telephones) and were unable to undertake in-person contact, thus requiring use of their personal phones. NQSWs in this instance knew when and how to exercise their legitimate power to manage a situation that could potentially put them at risk.

b.   Emotional Wellbeing

This category refers to the management of the NQSW's emotional wellbeing. The following narrative show how NQSWs carried out this activity as a means of effective risk management:

> "…you sometime work under a supervisor and you have to work so hard for yourself. It is so important that the organisation provide a wellbeing councillor for social workers. For example, for that client who griped me, when I brought to their attention, the first thing was "what did

you do about it?" rather than how do feel, are you ok? They see us like machine sometimes they do not see us like a person. And if you make a mistake it's like you shook the whole world. If you come from a family where you salary goes towards the entire households and you cannot buy clothes your hair looks shady, they do not look at you as a person." (Participant L)

The NQSW above had a painful experience with a client as well as with colleagues. However, rather than demonstrating leadership through emotional wellbeing management and support, her supervisor/organisational management expected her to continue with her work without any emotional reaction/response. The identification of a lack of meaningful debrief and supervision has been noted in several other studies with South African social work NGOs (see for example Ornellas, 2018). This relates to the supportive role of supervision which seems to be on the decline within the current context of practice. Risk management requires emotional wellbeing to buffer against burnout, post-traumatic stress and decline in performance of NQSWs.

"Debriefing of social worker, the support. If you deal with something that is traumatic, like something will trigger you during intervention and there is not a lot of options where you can use your benefit to see a councillor, I feel like social worker need that support as well. So that they do not end up experiencing compassion fatigue." (Participant E)

"The linkage between the social worker and the managers themselves and whether or not they provide necessary resource and support in order for the social worker be able to manage all other tasks they entrusted with. I struggled when I got here because our manger comes twice, and I did not get enough training. All that I know is not because I was told but because I had to figure things out by myself." (Participant F)

The above is consistent with the neoliberal managerialism influence that demands social work practitioners (and managers) prioritise system demands over relationship (Hyslop, 2018).

4.3.4.4. Controlling

Controlling is the final function that is required for the successful execution of management tasks. Controlling ensures that resources are allocated in such a way that the goals of the organisation as well as service users are accomplished. The control function for risk management will be analysed under the category of setting quality standards as directed by discourse with NQSWs.

a. Setting quality standards

According to Nel (2019), quality standards should be developed through collective consensus and approval. In this section, NQSWs reflected on collective actions taken to control the spread

of the COVID-19 virus through the establishment of quality standards; COVID-19 has become a primary risk factor for frontline workers, including NQSWs.

> "Risk in terms of COVID-19, we do temperature checks, no one is allowed if they have been in contact with someone who tested positive and also if they display symptoms of the virus. Staff and learners are subjected to the same process. Also, in my office I make sure to have sanitizer and an extra one of cleaning the surfaces after a session with a client. We do wear a mask; it is a little bit difficult to work with a young child tell them they are not allowed to touch anything not allowed to be very close but there has actually been adaptation because we were able to come up with games that do not require them to be closer to each other…" (Participant J)

> "So, we have very, very strict procedure in place regarding risk management especially due to the fact that we do work in a risky field and in a risky community, so we have clear procedures in place from our head-office side, on the secondary level management and in the office. So, where I am working, I make sure that everyone is aware of the procedure when they enter the premises. With regards to COVID-19 I have to ensure that I take all the health and safety procedures that other NGOs are required to implement. We also make sure that we communicate that with our clients, to make sure that we are compliant with all the regulation that the government has set out..." (Participant M)

From the above extracts, social service delivery did not stop as a result of the pandemic. Rather, NQSWs are expected to continue rendering services. However, they are also expected to control levels of exposure to the disease and manage this health risk by following prescribed procedures. NQSWs reported on measures put into place to keep themselves, their colleagues, and clients safe during the service delivery process. In this context, organisations may have been considered to benefit from the bureaucratic management approach, which advocates for set procedures and standards (Rogowski, 2011b). Therefore, the bureaucratic management approach cannot be completely ruled out within social welfare organisations because changes in the internal or external environment of the organisation directly influence the risk an organisation is exposed to and often necessitate effective yet efficient response. The latter concepts are clearly defined within the bureaucratic management approach.

4.3.5. Theme 5: Change Management

Change management as the fifth theme for this study will be explored with the use of the four-management functions identified in literature. Four critical skills emerged as important in effecting the change management task (Table 8).

Table 8. Theme 5: Change Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
Change Management	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Grouping employees into sections, teams, or units
	Leading	Contemporary theory's facilitative leadership
	Controlling	Empowerment of employees

4.3.5.1.Planning

The process of planning is the first step in executing the management of any task. This sub-theme is analysed through the category of programme planning and design as evidence of how NQSWs plan for and manage change.

a. Programme planning and design

Programme planning and design is the process of conceptualising a service or programme to accomplish outcomes identified as a need(s) for the client system. According to the Logic Model, the first step in programme planning as a form of change management is the definition of the problem or the situation that necessitates change, in order to identify the needs and assets required (Lewis et, al. 2007; Nel, 2019; Patel, 2005). This element became apparent in the analysis of the data collected from NQSWs in response to their management of change brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic:

> "With regards to the virus, a lot of people are not allowed to go out, so the abuse problems GBV cases increased, behavioural problems have increased drastically…" (Participant L)

> "With regards to change, I am very used to how things work normally. So, with regards to the whole COVID-19 thing as part of change, we normally just look at what is happening now and see what can do as well and that is the best way to address the situation now." (Participant A)

The pandemic brought change in the nature of cases that were reported, which subsequently informed the intervention/programme plan and design implemented by NQSWs; additionally, the pandemic further necessitated new responses to intervention due to health risks and restrictions. Therefore, the ability to redesign and adapt in response to change is found to be critical for effective and efficient service delivery and is one of the most essential management tasks for all social workers, including NQSWs (Engelbrecht, 2019).

4.3.5.2.Organising

Organising as the second sub-theme for change management will be explored under the category of grouping of employees into sections, teams or units as a skill that became apparent in the narratives of NQSWs; this skill was identified earlier as being important in the execution of risk management organisation.

a. Grouping employees into sections, teams, or units

The grouping of employees is usually based on the type of work that they do. However, in this instance, the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions required grouping of employees in order to better manage changing working conditions; this was in response to the risk management strategy of an organisation. NQSWs identified as working in teams, sections, or unit in order to reduce the risk of contracting or infecting others in their organisation. As illustrated by the narrative below, NQSWs are executing this skill as part of the organising function in response to practice changes:

> "We had to adjust to a whole new norm so the work arrangement is that we may not be at the office at the same time. Sometimes we work from home and other days we are at the office. Even though this is new to all of us I think I am managing it well." (Participant B)

> "Because of COVID-19 everything has changed, before…everything was done face to face, now we do not come into contact with each other even if we are in the office together, we would call each other instead. We have also made a lot of adjustment to our programmes to make sure that our clients are still engaging but not coming to physical contact with anyone who can put them at risk. The change came as a shock, but it is also motivating us to be creative use our initiative and come up with new ideas and to see that there is a lot more ways that we can help the clients than we already thought before COVID-19. We have moved from face-to-face programmes and we developed programmes that can be done through telephone, skype calls…" (Participant O)

From the above narratives social workers are no longer working as they were prior to the changes brought on by COVID-19. However, they have indicated that they are coping and have the ability to manage change through working in teams and grouping themselves accordingly. NQSWs were therefore empowered to adjust services rendered to clients to adapt to the new ways of operation; this demonstrates effective change management at the practitioner level.

4.3.5.3.Leading

Leading is the function that keeps activities in motion towards achieving set goals (Nel,2019). In this section this function will be analysed as it relates to change management. This will be done under the category of facilitative leadership, as identified in contemporary theory.

a. Contemporary theory's facilitative leadership

Contemporary theory acknowledges the shift in focus with leadership as being no longer confined to top managers only but as extending to all managers at all levels who are able to influence others in the organisation (Du Toit et, al., 2007). This kind of change to leadership includes shifts toward facilitative leadership, a leadership style within the contemporary theory which involves using resources and processes to maximise the collective intelligence of individuals in a group to identify the right cause of action in reaching the organisational goal. This became apparent in the reflections of NQSWs towards change management.

> "Personally, I do not struggle with change especially now that we have to adapt to a new normal. But the residents are struggling with change because firstly, it takes time for them to accept change for example, some of them do not want to wear masks because they say the mask is not comfortable and some of them do not want to wash their hands frequently for example… We are taking them one step at time. Another thing is with regarding to change amongst staff members for example the group home leaders they are scared of change… We are now training group home leaders on how they resolve or react in such situations in order to make sure that our clients are safe." (Participant D)

> "Well at this time things have changed very quickly, having to render services with a simple thing such as face masks has made it difficult to read on facial expressions of the clients during intervention. When it comes to change you just have to explain to your clients why the procedures have changed, that it is to protect you and them, then make sure that the clients are comfortable as well. If you understand why change is taking place, it is easier to manage it. Instead of looking at the change that is taking place also look into why it is taking place, every year service deliver will change when you look at the way government would expect you to render services might change job description might change etc. so understanding why change takes place helps in managing the change because you understand the reasoning behind that change." (Participant M)

From the above narratives, it is clear that NQSWs assume a role of facilitative leadership in their attempt to assist clients in adapting to change in their environment as well as that of the organisation. The first narrative's indication of group home leader training correlates with contemporary theory's view of facilitative leadership, in that no leader can singlehandedly

manage change in an organisation successfully; leaders should be able to actively engage people on all levels by means of facilitative skills (Nel, 2019). The collective and inclusive processes in facilitative leadership are elements of the empowerment management approach.

4.3.5.4.Controlling

Controlling is the last function in the process of change management process. In order to successfully implement organisational change management, it is essential to incorporate ways to help employees feel empowered to control change management in a way that best suits them; this results in increased productivity (Saremi, 2015). Empowerment of employees emerged as a category for the controlling function.

a. Empowerment of employees

The narratives below offer insight into the means by which NQSWs managed and controlled change in their practice environment through empowerment toward self-determination in their response to change.

> "So, service delivery has gone completely from in-person to digital, we only speak telephonically or via WhatsApp or video calls... I also find it difficult to connect with the person on the other side of the telephone because it is weird to ask personal thing on the phone such as asking if the client has enough food are you ok and I think that has taken away my personal approach to working with clients, I believe that every social worker, every therapist, or councillor has a specific approach to their clients when they make contact with them in person. I tried to manage that change incorporating more of myself and personality in working with the clients for example sending messages and videos over the phone and just phoning and asking static questions is not going to help to connect with clients. I have to put more personal touch to the process." (Participant J)

> "I take day by day I do online courses on how to work with clients online. It increases my knowledge and skills about how to do things. It is different from when you are in contact with the client, so it is something I still need to adjust to. I am in this meeting because my supervisor sends a link for this online course but it completely a personal thing where I have to speak to myself and adapt to change because at some point the management expects us to adjust to change, they are telling us what to do rather than helping us to adjust to this change." (Participant K)

Per above, participants are empowered to manage change by various means. The first participant draws motivation from connecting with clients and trying to maintain the closest relationship with them through personal interactions, in order to better manage changes to

intervention from in-person to digital connections. The second participant draws motivation form understanding the reasons why change must occur and furthering their knowledge around effective change management actions. Saremi (2015) suggests that an organisational change process that considers the empowerment of employees improves outcomes and services through enabling employees to take ownership of their jobs.

4.3.6. Theme 6: Human Resource Management

The task of human resource management is explored through the established sub-theme functions, in which a dominant category emerged for each as presented in the table below.

Table 9. Human Resource Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
Human Resource Management	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Networking
		Social auxiliary workers
	Leading	Referent power
	Controlling	Reporting standards

4.3.6.1.Planning

The category of exploration for the planning function as it relates to human resource management is again that of programme planning and design.

    a.   <u>Programme planning and design</u>

As discussed in Chapter Three, under bureaucratic management, the human resource departments of organisations have progressed from their traditional role in hiring and firing to a more strategic function within the financial and operational elements of an organisation (Parameswari & Yugandhar, 2015). Human resource management has thus become more concerned with ensuring that organisations view employees as human capital to be effectively (and efficiently) managed. Sometimes such an approach can be beneficial, particularly in times of large-scale change, as indicated in the narrative below:

"With COVID-19 the HR management train all staff members. By training I mean explaining to the staff members what COVID-19 is, the symptoms and how a person gets infected and what to do when a person tests positive…" (Participant D)

The above demonstrates the organisation's effort to create awareness of programme management in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Martin (2000), the human resource department's effort to create awareness of programme management within social welfare is an attempt to control costs and make more efficient use of limited organisational resources. As discussed in Chapter Two of this study, one of the neoliberal influences within the social welfare context was the need for social service professions to adapt to techniques that promote cost-effectiveness (Briggs & McBeath, 2011; Pal & Bansal, 2012; Sridhar, 2008).

The following narrative demonstrates how NQSWs execute programme planning through cross-collaboration and networking efforts with other professions; participants identified this as important for the effective execution of human resource management, particularly during times of change:

"We work closely with the police; we have a clinic, we have a feeding scheme that we know of in the community and refer people to when needed, we also have a resource centre where we can make use of computers with children and then obviously, we have school. Before lockdown we had a meeting with other stakeholders monthly to discuss how we can help each other and discuss the projects that coming and how our clients can get involved. That was the way of keeping in touch." (Participant G)

The Logic Model for programme management identifies inputs in terms of planning and design as including tangible (money, staff, and facilities) and intangible (the programme) resources required for intervention (Lewis et al., 2007; Nel, 2019; Patel, 2005). From the above narrative, NQSWs illustrate how they extend human resources management beyond the boundaries of the organisation into the community to ensure the effective delivery of social services.

4.3.6.2. Organising

In this section the organising function serves as the sub-theme from which human resource management theme would be analysed. This sub-theme is explored through networking and multidisciplinary teams as the two emerging categories.

a. Networking

It is not possible to successfully implement plans without adequate organising, which enables efficient allocation of resources and professionals to carry out the initiative. NQSWs primarily

identified organising within the theme of human resource management as being one of networking and cross-collaboration abilities. This includes stakeholders, other departments and professional groups, and paraprofessionals such as social auxiliary workers.

> "…with regards to stakeholders I think of the different departments and how we work together. So, we have a good network, we even have a WhatsApp group where we talk about different programmes that each stakeholder has, and we buy into their programmes. For example, if the police have 16 days of activism then all other stakeholders' step in and we will help them. We have each other's contact details, so we are just a phone call away." (Participant E)

Participants once again demonstrated an understanding of the value of collaborative efforts in service delivery through multi-disciplinary teams:

> "for example, a child who is placed in hospital, before he/she is released there is an interdisciplinary team… each one of them needs to know what they will do and where would the child go once released; basically, an interdisciplinary team that act in the best interest of the child, giving each other a chance to work with the child and going back to confirm who did what." (Participant I)

> "…we make referrals for our clients where they offer services that we cannot or need in depth intervention for problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, child protection statutory work. How we manage that is through informing the client that they would be referred to another organisation, then make a referral letter to the organisation or calling the organisation to inform them about the referral, we also do follow up with service provider after the referral" (Participant K)

Networking of this nature demonstrates elements of future-orientated organising and long-term relationship-building for more effective and collaborative service delivery.

b. <u>Social auxiliary workers</u>

For some participants, the expectation that they manage social auxiliary workers within their organisation, as part of their execution of human resource management, was not necessarily something for which they were prepared or felt adequately equipped:

> "…management of social auxiliary workers, that was something new. That came actually as a shock to me because I am used to being supervised and now, I have to manage the auxiliary worker and when I start working my auxiliary worker had 6 years of experience and I had none and I felt like how I would manage her as she knew more than I do" (Participant G)

Other participants demonstrated a collaborative approach to such management rather than one that was hierarchical in nature:

100

> "When it comes to my auxiliary worker, I plan my week then she sits with me to make sure that we plan her week as well…" (Participant M)

Per above, NQSWs could be argued to be occupants of a specific management position at the bottom of the organisational management hierarchical structure as they manage social auxiliary workers at the lowest NGOs workforces organigram.

4.3.6.3. Leading

The leading function as it pertains to human resource management is explored under the category of referent power as an emerging pattern in participant dialogue.

a. <u>Referent power</u>

Referent power refers to the potential influence that a leader has due to the strength of their relationship with their subordinates (Nel, 2019). Participants demonstrated their understanding of the leadership function as being one that relies on relationship development and maintenance in order to implement holistic interventions:

> "..I have realised that it is important to have a good relationship with the stakeholders at the children's court because they know everything, they are literally your eyes and eyes it has taken me a while to build that relationship and to become confident in the court space because it is obviously an intimidating environment for a new social worker, but having that relationship has helped me in being confident in presenting matters and following up on matters that are appearing in court especially now during the lockdown the if you are unable to complete the matter, the magistrate will give you a new date through email and you need to follow up and hoping that the clerk will provide you with the information as well…" (Participant H)

> "That is actually very important because now you have to interact with the teachers, nurses, and police, it is a matter of making good relationship. With me the organisation has already established the relationship with the other stakeholders for example, when you go to the police station you know who will help you and things become much faster and also at the clinic you know who to contact such as the spokesperson who will make sure that they get the right person to assist you. So, what assisted me is the relationship that was established prior to my appointment in the organisation. Now it is just a matter of maintaining those relationship." (Participant I)

This approach to leadership as a function of human resource management demonstrates principles of the empowerment approach to management that emphasises relationship over hierarchy.

4.3.6.4. Controlling

Controlling is the final function in the execution of this management task. In terms of human resource management, reporting standards was identified as a skill that facilitates control in this area.

a.   <u>Reporting standards</u>

Controlling as a function of human resource management is concerned with the measurement of both quantitative and qualitative elements of service. In social work organisations, quality is measured by the reported satisfaction of the service users. However, neoliberal managerial influences have shifted measuring instruments to ones that report efficiency and quantity as measurement standards of effective service delivery, often at the expense of more complex qualitative considerations (Ornellas, 2018; Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020). This approach has been extended to measurements of collaboration with other organisations and stakeholders as indicated by the participant narrative below:

> "The organisation that I am working for is strict in finding out if the programmes that offer are effective or not. So, during covid-19 I am expected to submit a weekly report to say what I did with other stakeholders." (Participant N)

In this way, collaboration with other stakeholders is controlled (and managed) through reporting standards and requirements.

4.3.7.   Theme 7: Programme Management

As per the themes explored above, programme management is discussed under the sub-themes of planning, leading, organising, and controlling. These sub-themes are management functions that are required to execute the management tasks as identified in literature.

Table 10. Programme Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
Programme Management	Planning	Programme planning and design
	Organising	Intervention classification
		Delegation
	Leading	Expert power
	Controlling	Comparing outcome(s) with set quality standards and taking corrective measures

4.3.7.1.Planning

The planning sub-theme will be explored through the skill of programme planning and design as identified by NQSWs; a common skill emerging as important in several management tasks as presented in earlier themes.

    a. <u>Programme planning and design</u>

Programme planning and design is understood as providing plans of service delivery with the intent to achieve envisioned outcomes for service users (Lewis et, al. 2007). The process of programme planning is characterised by identifying actions necessary to achieve specific objectives within a clearly set timeframe, using the available human resources with the necessary skill set to complete the task (Spolander & Martin, 2012). The following narrative demonstrates how NQSWs execute programme management tasks through programme planning and design:

> "…social workers do casework and awareness programmes during child protection week. The awareness depends on the need, this year we had a corona virus awareness we made masks in the organisation and went out. Social workers identify projects that they find as a need then they would… finish and then focus only on case work. DSD as well has projects that they require us to do so we do those programmes according to their prescribed format and time frame to reach the stipulated target once it is done then we only focus on casework again." (Participant I)

NQSWs are faced with the responsibility to uphold the mission of their respective organisation in the provision of services while considering the influence of other external determinants in their planning process. Further, NQSWs need to render planned programmes/projects that are responsive to specific directives. For example, this directive includes appropriate considerations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, an external factor that has an impact on the nature of service delivery and overall programme management. Hence, NQSWs employed programme planning and design as a means of responding to, and managing, this impact while still working toward the broader objectives of the organisation.

4.3.7.2.Organising

This management function was identified by NQSWs as being operationalised through the skills of delegation and intervention classification.

a. Intervention classification

Intervention classification as one of the determined categories within the organising function for programme management and includes a clear separation between different intervention methods, such as casework, group work and community development. These intervention methods can be classified further whereby casework may refer to counselling or case management; community development can include awareness campaigns or activism, and so forth. Consider the following narrative to gain an understanding of how NQSWs utilise intervention classification to affect programme management and organising:

> "We have individual counselling and that we now do telephonically and then we have group programmes for anger management, substance abuse, and life skills. We have manuals and workbooks we sent them via email. Then they sent it back to us and we make sure on weekly basis that they are completing their work. If they need further assistance that is when we can call and do telephonic counselling. In terms of our community service, we put the clients in groups they would benefit from...Our new programme is for those who contravened with the new disaster management Act. We also have activities for them in order to raise awareness about COVID-19 and also how to act appropriately under the new disaster management Act." (Participant O)

NQSWs demonstrate the ability to effectively organise work outputs through identifying the nature of intervention required; this contributes to the ability to effectively undertake broader programme management with the understanding that such programmes can often be broken into separate parts.

However, the development of intervention programmes in response to risks is concurrent with literature concerns over neoliberal impact on social wok discretion (Ornellas, 2018). In descriptions from participants, NQSW activities seemed predominantly focused on general assessment of needs, identifying risks, and discussing the rights and responsibilities of service users (Spolander et al., 2014); little reference was given to engaging a theoretically informed social work intervention (Engelbrecht, 2015).

b. Delegation

Delegation means giving employees new task which may form part of their responsibility or may be once off (Reyneke, 2019). This category will be explored in relation to programme management with organising as the sub-theme to analyse how NQSWs are best involved with the function. Thus, project management in a social welfare organisation often tasks both seasoned and NQSWs with the responsibility to improve performance with limited resources

in a dynamic and changing internal and external policy and social environment (Spolander & Martin, 2012). For instance, the Covid-19 has been discussed as the aspect of change that challenge social work practitioners to find ways to continue rendering services despite the change in the context associated with the disease.

> "I only have casework for foster care cases, so even before the lockdown it had already became a norm to plan for the whole week, so that we can plan on who is doing home visits on which day so that we can plan around the use of a vehicle. What is more difficult now is that you can only do a home visit after you were unable to get hold of a client via a phone call and that you cannot include the whole caseload, you have to prioritise. Aside from the plan and struggle of seeing client's you have to provide proof that you are working from home. It adds to the stress and the workload…" (Participant H)

> "Well, I will say that supervision is taken a lot more seriously, because we are not really available at the office then when you have this supervision contact every call to a client and every single person you spoke to you will be asked about. So, in that way they are more on your case about it because they want to be able to write information to DSD that our social workers are working very hard. It is also difficult to do home visits because we cannot use our personal cars and we only have one car. It is difficult." (Participant L)

Considering that leading is the act of keeping things in motion until the end goal is achieved, NQSWs with regards to delegation as category for leading find themselves under the pressure of reporting to supervisors as part of their responsibility because their supervisors have to report on their work to DSD, however the challenge is they do not see what NQSWs do, as they are no longer working from the office due to COVID-19.

However, prior to the pandemic the activity of delegation in order to keep activity in motion (leading) has been existent. This was between the NQSWs and social auxiliary workers. Refer to the narrative bellow.

> "Our community work and group work are our auxiliary workers responsibility we just follow up to see what is the plan? When is it taking place? Whether everything is up to date? That is how we manage community services and group work. We do our staff meetings over zoom because we cannot all be at the office. I manage only casework telephonically" (Participant E)

From the narrative above, it is clear that NQSWs have been familiar with the concept delegation as a way of leading programme management. However, it was evident that there are challenges with how they are expected to manage work from home which could necessitate control measures to ensure the standard of service delivery is still maintained.

4.3.7.3.Leading

Leading is the management function that would be explored as a sub-theme derived from the reflections on NQSWs during data collection. This sub-theme is concerned with setting activities in motion until the organisational goal is reached (Nel, 2019). Thus, expert power is a component of leadership and will be utilised as a category of reference in analysing the participants narratives.

a. <u>Expert power</u>

According to Nel, (2019), expert power is based on the skill and knowledge related to the work that one is doing, where practical experience is still considered a great way to further acquire expert power. This theme became applicable to taking on a leadership role in the management of programmes, given that intervention by NQSWs is a practical activity from which this skill can be acquired and executed. Refer to the narratives below:

> "I also have to look where I will be before a I schedule an intervention with the client. If I call the client, I will do it from home but if I have to see the client then I will schedule the appointment at the day I am going to the office since we cannot do home visits. We also do not gather in groups so what we do is that we still do our programmes, but we give information sheets for our clients to complete." (Participant B)

> "We actually have around three projects, we have projects focusing on…enabling them (teachers) to identify symptoms of abuse or mental illness things like that. We manage that by breaking our teachers into smaller groups like foundation phase, senior phase, adolescent phase or whichever the case may be…We divide parents into grades like grade 1 parents, grade 2 and so forth. The other one is support where we focus on the learners where one can set out a programme that addresses the problem of 20 clients per week as I mentioned earlier about the weekly target so that the rest of the week you focus on the same problem to see if things change or more intervention is required." (Participant J)

The narrative above reflect how NQSWs are taking a leadership role in ensuring that services directed to their clients are effectively carried out in order to reach intended goals, while at the same time the mission, vision and objectives of the organisation are accomplished.

4.3.7.4.Controlling

Finally, the controlling function is concerned with the linking of the three previous functions (planning, organising and leading) in order to bring about effective programme management. The emerging category for this sub-theme was a skill pertaining to quality assurance; comparing outcomes with set quality standards and taking corrective measures where needed.

a. <u>Comparing outcome(s) with set quality standards and taking corrective measures</u>

Against a neoliberal backdrop that quantifies social services to enable efficiency and quantity, social workers are increasingly expected to review the outcomes of programmes against established quality standards and to take correct measures to improve efficacy. In some instances, such review can be beneficial, particularly when working in multidisciplinary teams, such as expressed by the participant below:

> "The project may be initiated by social workers or by OTs so as the health and wellbeing team we sit down and discuss and identify the needed project in the organisation. For example, develop the personal hygiene... After identifying the problem, we sit down as a team and develop a project... We work together as a team so that we do not repeat one project as different professionals in the organisation." (Participant D)

Other participants, however, indicated programme review as being one which allows for the standardisation of intervention in order to reach more clients and maximise programme impact:

> "…We check how effective our interventions are by sending out evaluation forms. We do the same with parents... where one can set out a programme that addresses the problem of 20 clients per week…" (Participant J)

In the narratives above, NQSWs strive for meeting quality standards of intervention and implementing processes that can allow taking corrective measures where necessary. The use of programme management as a means of standardising intervention does allow for wider reach of limited resources and professional capacity, as well as some form of quality assurance. However, this also represents a shift away from the relationship-based approach that considers the ecosystems of individual service-users and designs interventions accordingly.

Thus, this category can be said to be characterised by both elements of an empowerment approach to programme management whereby collaborative programme review and design is apparent; and the bureaucratic management approach which calls for the efficient designing, resourcing, executing, monitoring, and evaluating of a comprehensive social service that can be replicated (Herbst, 2019).

4.3.8. Theme 8: Financial Management

Exploring the final theme, financial management, is done through the same four functions as used in previous themes, with emerging categories of strategic planning, programme planning and design, delegation, behavioural theory, and monitoring and evaluation.

Table 11. Financial Management

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
Financial Management	Planning	Strategic planning
		Programme planning and design
	Organising	Delegation
	Leading	Behavioural theory
		Empowerment versus financial survival
	Controlling	Comparing outcome(s) with set quality standards and taking corrective measures

4.3.8.1.Planning

The planning sub-theme yielded two primary skill categories in participant discourse: strategic planning, and programme planning and design.

a. Strategic planning

The financial state of NGOs has been explored in Chapter Three, where it became apparent that the South African NGO is experiencing a "starvation-cycle", whereby NGOs are only able to cover programme-related costs and not the indirect costs associated with delivering an intervention or programme, due to limited funding (Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020:1). As depicted in earlier themes, strategic planning encourages future orientation thinking within an organisation and ensuring plans are in place to adapt to change in the environment (Reyneke, 2019).

Neoliberal expectations are increasingly emphasising the financial responsibility of NGOs (Ornellas, 2018), which translates into the organisations ability to adequately fund its planned operations for several years (De V Smit, 2019). Studies show that fundraising responsibility has been extended to social workers as part of their workload, whether directly through managerial expectation, or indirectly due to inadequate funding for the organisation's operationalisation (see for example Ornellas & Engelbrecht, 2020).

> "So, I am involved in a project where we sell a specific thing, by selling that we are getting funds and that actually help with generating funds for our organisations." (Participant F)

b. Programme planning and design

While NGOs rely heavily on outside funding as indicated above, government subsidies are available for organisations that met the service delivery objectives of the state. NGOs are expected, however, to comply with government targets, programme preferences and reporting standards to secure a funding contract (Engelbrecht & Strydom, 2015; Radebe & Nkonyeni, 2020).

As a result, programme planning and design is often heavily influenced by funding expectations. Request for funds need to be validated per target performance.

> "…I am not personally part of the financial department but as part of management of a project, we get a specific budget that we have to apply for. For example, we have a teachers and parents project, we make sure they get a meal should they attend when stay after school because teachers would be at work for extra hours. In applying for this fund, you have to say how many people will be there, why would they be there and for how long would they be there, we just have to motivate why we need the funds, and we will receive it…" (Participant J)

> "…We do not receive any money for rendering service for the client. We receive our salary for rendering our day-to-day service for the client. We have budget meetings every year where we get informed about how much money is budgeted for printing and paper and other important things like that, but nothing is designated to a specific project. We work with other organisation and find space that is free if we need to render a service for our client, but we do not get money to pay for venue to have programmes or for anything in rendering service." (Participant O)

The narratives above reflect the financial state of various organisations. While Participant J's organisation allows NQSWs to make claims for their programmes, with approval permitted in terms of targets, Participant O's organisation highlights significant financial constraints for NQSWs. However, the participant notes that their response to budgetary limitations is to collaborate with other organisations. This reflects the attitude of Patti (2013) who asserts that despite changes within the welfare context, it remains the responsibility of both managers and social work practitioners to translate any neoliberal directives into programmes and services that still address the needs of the intended client system.

4.3.8.2. Organising

Organising as a process of arranging and allocating work, authority, and resources toward financial management will be explored under the category of delegation.

a. <u>Delegation</u>

Financial resource management within NGOs is primarily concerned with the development of strategies to acquire funds and decisions about the allocation and management of financial resources. Although planning of the organisation in terms of funding acquisition involves NQSWs to a certain extent as discussed above, many participants mentioned how financial management is ultimately the responsibility of administrative personnel in the organisation. This aligns with the bureaucratic management approach which emphasises a clear and central hierarchy of authority and responsibility, and a high degree of specialisation (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019; Gerth & Mills, 1958).

> "I do not do any financial management, that is handled by management…" (Participant A)

> "As social workers in the organisation we do not really deal with finances, the admin lady is the one who is responsible for anything that involves money…" (Participant B)

> "I do not really manage money. If there is something that I need I fill in the necessary form then send it to the financial person then they will sign off the form as well and make the purchase of what was requested" (Participant C)

As discussed in the previous chapter, neoliberalism influences organisational management which subsequently has an impact on what and how NQSWs are expected to execute their work-related tasks. Several influential characteristics apply particularly to the task of financial management, including the neoliberal emphasis on the division of labour through functional specialisation; a set of rules covering the rights and duties of employees; a system of procedures for dealing with work situations; and promotion and selection of employees based on technical competence (Payne, 2009; Rogowski, 2011b; Sridhar, 2008).

However, not all participants indicated the same degree of separation from financial management. One participant, of the fifteen NQSWs interviewed, reported a direct role in the management of funding received from their head office and reflected on the process of ensuring accountability in how the funds are allocated and spent:

> "So as the main social worker in my office I am responsible for our finances. So, we get certain amount for our office from head office, it is funds that we can use for client support, it can be transport money to go to court, it can be things like basic needs, and we can also use it for our auxiliary workers group. All of those things we write them down if we give a client money they need to sign if we buy something, we keep the slip and send them to head office." (Participant M)

In the researcher's opinion, the above management approach allows for a process whereby individual employees understand the relationship between their goals (effort) and a sense of how to achieve them (outcome), (Mechanic, 1991).

Although most NQSWs viewed financial management as a delegated responsibility, it is explicit in their narratives that they are aware of the processes followed to ensure that their financial requests are attended to. This reflects a bureaucratic environment characterised by prescribed systems or rules and procedures (Engelbrecht & Terblanche, 2019; Gerth and Mills, 1958). That said, where the management of finances is clearly delegated, the procurement of, and responsibility for, organisation funding is blurred and often falls disproportionately on the social worker (Ornellas, 2018).

4.3.8.3.Leading

Leading is defined as keeping activities in motion until the set goal is achieved (Reyneke, 2019). The behavioural theory emerged as a category in this sub-theme.

a. Behavioural theory

Behaviourist theorists assert that leading characteristics can be developed based on observing the behaviour of leaders and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a leader's execution of motivating, communicating, decision making and delegating tasks (Reyneke, 2019). The below narratives illuminate how organisational spending by senior management coupled with ineffective communication and decision-making has the potential to result in mirrored behaviour in the use of organisational finances or resources by employees.

> "We do not have a lot to spend so you have to be very careful around how you spend money. I am thinking of you have to make sure that you do not the use organisations phone for personal call or drive the organisations car for personal trips, which I do because I do not have a car. I go to the shops before I come home but you must not do those things…" (Participant E)

> "…We have 2 cars as a unit of 9 people then you have a unit of 4 people that has 5 cars. Now one of the cars we have you need to kick start it whenever you want to drive. For example, let's say I am in court then there is gang violence there I cannot use the car I had to use the taxi. I really do not feel well managed and protected this is just my personal view..." (Participant L)

b. Empowerment versus financial survival

The second category to emerge in the leading function, as it pertains to financial management, was again the debate between the empowerment managerial approach versus the ability for NGOs to survive financially in an increasing business-orientated environment.

An empowerment approach to management calls for partnership, whereby staff, management and the organisation's board members are equal participants in the running of the organisation; this approach encourages proactive measures are put in place to create balance for inclusion in decision-making as well as psychological empowerment and motivation of workers (Hardina et al., 2007). This is evident in the narratives below:

> "But for our project, we submit a budget and if we get a go ahead, we get the money to buy things then send back the slip..." (Participant G)

> "…like if there is a cheaper way of doing things then we all agree and finalise the budget…" (Participant A)

The above narrative from Participant A, while demonstrating collaboration, also highlights the neoliberal emphasis on cost-efficiency. Though the bureaucratic management approach may better ensure the survival of the welfare organisations in a neoliberal environment, it was developed with a strong focus on productivity and is concerned with maximising profit (Wilkinson, 1998); managing these organisations requires increased entrepreneurial skills and innovation for financial sustainability. This is often in contradiction with traditional social work principles and values.

The empowerment management approach, on the other hand, conserves the traditional nature of social work and ensures social workers are better equipped to render quality and qualitative services. Therefore, evidence once again points to the necessity for a complimentary management style in NGOs that uses strengths from both the empowerment and bureaucratic models.

4.3.8.4.Controlling

The exploration of this sub-theme gave way to the category that seeks to compare outcomes with set quality standards and take corrective actions to exert control where necessary for improved financial management.

a. Comparing outcome(s) with set quality standards and taking corrective measures.

Through the operationalisation of the control management function as a sub-theme for the financial management task, the reflections of NQSWs share the sentiment of corrective action in budgeting and following set quality standards and procedures with respect to the request and utilisation of organisational funds. The following narratives reflect on control processes involved in financial management procedures which are ultimately intended to ensure the

achievement of set quality standards in terms of intervention objectives and cost-effective performance.

> "Specifically, with regards to COVID-19 we have been allowed to claim back our data and airtime provided that the amount of data and airtime you used was spent on client..." (Participant H)

> "Now that we are working from home and we need airtime, so I buy the airtime with my own money and send the evidence slip of the airtime so that we can get paid back…" (Participant G)

> "…if you are doing a late birth registration and that would cost R50, then you fill a requisition form stating exactly what is it that you need assistance with, what you need the money for from head office. Then the money is given to the social auxiliary worker to pay for the registration then she will give the slip to the social worker who requested the money to scan the slip back to head office…" (Participant I)

> "With regards to stationary we place an order…, then we will get the stationery we ordered. We have to send invoices and claims, in terms of claiming, we travel to court with our money and claim in back at the end of the month… we can claim for anything that we buy for office use. We need to attach slips in every claim for any purchase… with regards to events that we attend on behalf of the organisation, if there were subscription fees, then the organisation will pay for us, otherwise should we pay with our money we just need to submit proof then we will be reimbursed." (Participant K)

> "... The money use is very structured, in order for me to manage things I buy, I use the app… developed by the organisation. I record what I need to purchase on the tracking sheet then submit the slip. We also have petty cash of R300 we can buy anything from and send the slip. For other things I use the organisational card. You speak with the area manager; arrange how you will get the card… keep the slip and record in the track sheet what you bought and where or which." (Participant N)

> "…What happen is as a social worker I also deal with application forms…before we accept residents to stay with us, we find out whether the applicant is on a disability grant or is the family going to pay then we inform the financial personnel. The responsibility I have with regards to money is to assess the financial status of the client before they become accepted to stay..." (Participant D)

The above narratives highlight the involvement of NQSWs in standardised procedures around financial management, which includes financial assessments of clients, processing of claims and reimbursement for personal funds used, as well as financial control processes.

NQSWs further acknowledged the need to effectively budget as a required skill in controlling funding allocation and use. Reporting standards were also noted. The use of a budget can be seen as a technique for monitoring and reducing costs and indicates business influence on the financial operationalisation of NGOs.

> "…We have a shop in the village and every Friday the residents get pocket money from DSD to use it to buy for themselves, then if the resident need something big for example, clothes then I am able to request the money from the financial manager say for instance its winter the resident does not have winter clothes that would the reason I give to the finance manager. They will give me the money then I go buy the clothes for the resident and then send the slip back…" (Participant D)

> "The management of finances I would say it is very strict because we report everything that has to do with money… We have a financial person that deals with the finances. If you use your personal money for the organisation you need to send her the receipt immediately then you can claim that money…" (Participant E)

Several NQSW participants acknowledged the presence of a financial manager in their organisation. As discussed in the literature, the landscape of practice is changing through the adoption of a bureaucratic management approach as a result of neoliberal infiltration in the social welfare context. This management approach is characterised by a clear hierarchy of authority and responsibility, and a high degree of specialisation as well prescribed systems, rules, and procedures; this is evident in the above narratives.

4.4.   CONCLUSION

This chapter met the third objective of the study, which was to empirically explore what management tasks NQSWs are expected to execute and the skills, knowledge and expertise required to perform these tasks successfully. Eight themes are identified as key management tasks within the social work field, as depicted in literature; additionally, per the literature review, four functions were chosen as being means of task execution. The skills and knowledge required within these functions were the categories of the empirical study and were determined through qualitative analysis of emerging patterns in the narrative data.

Ultimately, this chapter indicated the strengths and concerns of the management styles of organisations, with reflections on the business bureaucratic model and the social work-related empowerment approach. This analysis was informed by examination of the opinions articulated by various scholars in literature and the reflections of NQSWs on the ground, who are

confronted with the complexity of these neoliberal impacts on a daily basis. Hence, this chapter was purposefully saturated with participant narratives in order to highlight the reflections, views, and experiences of NQSWs.

The following chapter presents concluding remarks for each theme, followed by recommendations for NQSWs, social work managers, training institutions, NGOs, and future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the execution of management tasks by NQSWs within NGOs in South Africa. Studies have reflected on the preparation of NQSWs for professional practice, in terms of work-related tasks, identifying those for which the NQSW feels most or less prepared for (De Jager, 2013; Tham & Lynch, 2017; Grant et al., 2017). Mashale (2017) and Muinjangue (2020) present some helpful literature on the changing context of management tasks within the social welfare environment. Although Mashale's (2017) study looked at management tasks executed in South African NGOs, the study focused on the performance of these tasks by volunteers within management committees of non-profit organisations. Muinjangue (2020) went further, by focusing on the tasks as executed by frontline social workers and middle level of management in the Directorate of Developmental Social Welfare Service (DDSWS), Ministry of Health and Science in Namibia.

However, a gap was identified in literature, in that little or no research studies have been conducted on the management tasks executed by NQSWs within the changing context of practice as influenced by neoliberal tenets identified by Ornellas (2018): de-professionalisation, marketisation and managerialism. This raised questions as to the preparedness of NQSWs in the execution of management tasks, the nature of these tasks, and the way in which NQSWs confront them.

This necessitated a study on the execution of management tasks by NQSWs within the NGO practice context which has been most ardently affected by bureaucratic expectations. Literature indicated eight management tasks which were most likely to be part of the daily practice of NQSWs: workload management, time management, information management, risk management, change management, human resource management, programme management and financial management; these formed the themes of the empirical study. Skills related to the execution of these tasks were also identified through existing literature, namely planning, organising, leading, and controlling; these became the sub-themes for the study. Categories which emerged in the empirical data analysis were presented as activities in the execution of these tasks and skills.

The conclusions and recommendations in this chapter are guided by the findings of the empirical study as presented in the preceding chapter, along with integration of the literature and theoretical underpinning from previous chapters.

5.2. MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The researcher presents a concluding summary for each empirical theme below, highlighting key findings and areas for consideration.

5.2.1. Workload Management

The first management task as identified in literature and analysed in the empirical study is workload management. This task entails more than caseload and service delivery of NQSWs. Additionally, it necessitates the identification and management of other resources associated with the social work process necessary to ensure NQSWs flow competently towards the attainment of the desired intervention goal. This task, in the recent context of a neoliberal-influenced practice environment, is characterised by elements of a bureaucratic management approach; high level management in the organisation expect the NQSW to achieve efficient and quantifiable workload outputs in order to fulfil the neoliberal demands for quantifying service delivery. As discussed in Chapter Three, this task has received increasing attention recently, with growing emphasis on the need to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of workload management and measurement in order to quantify work done by social workers for reporting.

The empirical study indicated NQSWs often have set targets for the week (some for the month) that must be achieved with respect to casework; this is a prominent part of their workload. Against this backdrop, planning was identified as main activity in an NQSW's workload management process. NQSWs often prioritise cases in terms of risk, with the scheduling of appointments dependent on crisis. Workplans for the week are formally submitted to the supervisors; some NQSWs indicated the organisation also required formal documentation of workplans for the following week. However, the availability and frequency of structured supervision is lacking in many organisations in terms of feedback and debrief. As indicated in the literature chapters, supervision has been identified as a key learning and support mechanism for NQSWs, particularly in their first year of employment. The lack thereof can be considered a potential stressor for these newly qualified workers.

Emails, WhatsApp, and telephone were the primary mediums of communication that allowed NQSWs working within teams, both inside and outside the organisation, to access and share

information necessary for strategic planning. NQSWs indicated that delegation to paraprofessionals such as social auxiliary workers assisted in improved workload management. Tasks that might previously have been undertaken by social work professionals are being increasingly taken up by paraprofessionals who may be cheaper to employ. Social workers are also increasingly utilised in non-professional tasks. There is some evidence of this in the empirical chapter, whereby social auxiliary workers have taken over group and community work services while social workers oversee maintenance as an added workload management responsibility over and above their responsibility to manage intervention related workload.

5.2.2. Time Management

Time management is the second management task discussed and is considered one of the most important skills to be acquired by a social work practitioner. However, this management task was also identified in literature as requiring further development for NQSWs. Neoliberal influence on organisational management is perhaps most ardent in the insistence that organisations would be more effective if they operate using business principles and managerial norms, procedures, and standards. Time management entails conscious decisions made by the practitioner (NQSWs) regarding how they will use their hours at work, which constitutes their working time, to achieve set targets in the attempt to manage their work effectively and efficiently. This task can be argued to be a contributing factor in managing workloads effectively and efficiently as required by the current context of practice.

Some participants demonstrated a personal preference to work during specific time periods when they consider themselves to be most productive; NQSWs with this work habit have been managing their work this way during their studies. The pressure served as a motivation to have work done. That said, however, time management was noted as a difficult task within the context of social work practice which is filled with much unpredictability; the nature of cases attended are such that many encompass a certain risk which require immediate or delayed responses, and this affects the time management of social workers. Time management within the social work environment cannot be expected to adhere to the rigidity required in the bureaucratic management approach, as service delivery in the social welfare context is complex and requires flexibility in response to specific activities. However, social workers within the current neoliberal context of practice are challenged to perform their duties within a maze of rules and procedures while simultaneously adhering to deadlines and set targets to meet organisational performance indicators.

As a result of COVID-19 and national lockdown, many NQSWs have been working from home. It was noted that for NQSWs who have just entered the practice environment, it can be difficult to say 'no' to additional workload requests from more senior social workers or management; this may also be attributed to unclear working-from-home procedures. This can lead to increased pressure and burnout. As discussed, time management entails making a conscious decision about how one uses their time, therefore employees' time is an essential resource that is under pressure that necessitates being effectively rationed. Thus, a complementary management approach to the bureaucratic approach such as the empowerment approach may unleash the ability of NQSWs to succeed in meeting the time deadlines, while producing quality results even when faced with a difficult working environment.

5.2.3. Information Management

The third management task discussed is information management. This task involves technology advancement and its effect on communication, processing, and the storage of information within the NGO context. Specifically, information management refers to expectations from the organisation regarding appropriate recording, documenting, and storing of practice related information. The appropriate information reporting standard is guided by various factors, most important of which is to ensure compliance. As discussed in Chapter Two of this study, community-based organisations face deregistration because of non-compliance with reporting standards as set by the government. Although this seems like a task with which management would be primarily concerned and/or responsible, non-compliance stems from the information gathered and reports compiled by social work practitioners themselves, including NQSWs, during the process of service delivery.

Participants in this study were well informed about gathering, recording, and storing information acquired from intervention with clients. However, NQSWs indicated challenges with other information management functions such as keeping track of target numbers and performance as per reporting requirements; this results from a neoliberal influence that seeks to quantify social service intervention. Hence, in the empirical study NQSWs found the need to separate caseload information intervention related workload from administration workload. Although information gathered in administration documents result from intervention, these are two distinct processes of gathering information and require different report compilation. One report is information collected directly from the client in order to identify the need, develop a suitable intervention plan and assist the client within the limitation of the practitioners' organisation, and finally making a referral if necessary. On the other hand, information

capturing in an administrative report, while directly linked to intervention, is geared toward the organisation's top-level management, and focuses on practitioner output.

Thus, an effective workload system will offer clear information for managers and reduce inefficiency. However, seeing that social workers manage their work by planning and making decisions about when and how to accomplish their responsibilities, the question is whether it is suitable or feasible to develop a formal systemic and flexible workload management process to prioritise, allocate, monitor, measure, and balance workload effectively and efficiently within the diverse work environment of social workers. The latter is the bureaucratic management desire resulting from the need to respond to neoliberal demands. However, the opposite can be realised through an empowerment approach which will preserve the quality of the relationship-based work environment. As a result, the study proposes finding a balance between the two management approaches in order to sustain social service organisations within the changing context of social work practice.

5.2.4. Risk Management

Risk management is as complex as the nature of services rendered by social welfare practitioners in response to the required interventions for various client systems. It is a process that continuously requires risk identification and analysis, as well as the development and implementation of measures to reduce identified risk. This may include anticipated and/or experienced risk from internal and/or external factors. In this study, a critical risk facing social work NGOs as identified in literature was that of deregistration, which subsequently led to the adoption of a bureaucratic management approach within social service organisations in order to address the developing neoliberal requirements confronting the sector. The risks associated with bureaucratic management demands were most visible in the workload management and information management themes. As far as information and workload is concerned, the emphasis is on quantity and technical procedure, concentrating on identifying the correct forms to fill, how this is executed, as well as being subjected to managerial oversight.

The empirical study identified a second significant risk in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in various changes being made in the organisation; NQSWs reported on risk management in response to lockdown procedures brought about by their respective NGOs. NQSWs explained how they have been able to render services during the lockdown period where face-to-face contact with their clients was prohibited. They further explained how they continued to render services while striving to limit the risk of transmission or contracting the

disease. Furthermore, participants identified changes that occurred as well as rules, procedures and safety protocols introduced to minimise the risk of increasing the number of new infections.

As discussed in Chapter Two, bureaucratic management introduced a prescribed system, rules, and procedures in response to neoliberal demands. In the same vein, through a maze of rules and procedures, NQSWs were able to render services to clients without compromising anyone's health. Thus, changes in the internal or external environment of the organisation directly influence the risk an organisation is exposed to. Therefore, the management of risk as discussed in the Chapter Three, is a continuous process that requires identifying and analysing risk, and consequently developing and implementing risk-reduction measures to control and monitor the risk. In this instance, a bureaucratic approach may be considered most beneficial for ongoing social service delivery.

5.2.5. Change Management

Change management and risk management as discussed above are interrelated. With new risks requiring appropriate planning and response come concerns about change management. The aim of the NGO in the context of a bureaucratic management response to change management is to ultimately ensure the sustainability of organisations. However, change management is increasingly affected by the rise in management positions held by non-social worker professionals in the NGO environment. Although non-social work managers to operate in social welfare NGOs, a boundary is established in that such managers cannot advise social work practitioners about intervention related issues. However, if management continuously reviews and changes reporting standards, templates, and expectations, they are in fact interfering with the intervention rendered by the social work practitioner. Changes made in the reporting standards direct the information acquired during intervention on which social workers have to report.

In addition, change management is particularly taxing for NQSWs as they are still trying to adapt to their transition from students to new employees. This is what necessitates the adoption and implementation of the empowerment management approach with its intent to empower and motivate workers psychologically as well as team building and staff collaboration. This management approach further encourages workers to use their own judgement rather than blindly following instructions as discussed above in the influence of bureaucratic and neoliberalism on the social work profession.

5.2.6. Human Resource Management

All of the tasks presented as themes in the empirical study (eight in total) are ultimately undertaken by the human resources of an organisations, the social worker. Generally, in an organisation environment, human resource management is understood as staffing, which is the ability of higher-level management to appoint relevant professionals who can deliver services outlined by the organisation. Human resource management at the level of practitioners, particularly NQSWs, is primarily concerned with the identification of other human resources capable of delivering and/or supporting services in accordance with the organisation mandate and targets. NQSWs often rely on decisions made by other professionals within their respective organisation and further consider the influence by various external human resources that are contributing to the advancement of the well-being of a specific client system.

NQSWs further referred to delegation to paraprofessionals such as social auxiliary workers in order to better affect workload management; the nature and monitoring of such delegation constitutes human resource management. NQSWs oversee the work of social auxiliary workers as a result of the adopted bureaucratic management approach which requires a clear hierarchy of authority and responsibility, as well as a high degree of specialisation. In the previous chapter NQSWs reflected on how they concentrate on casework when social auxiliary workers focus on group and community work. At the lowest level of a social service organisation's organogram are frontline social workers, including NQSWs, who manage the work of other professional groups.

5.2.7. Programme Management

The seventh management task discussed in literature and further explored empirically is programme management. Programme planning is central to the operational planning of an NGO and the management thereof comes into play when resources are directed and utilised effectively and efficiently in correlation to the organisation's strategy. Child protection organisations for instance, had programmes developed for child protection week and they would allocate and manage resources intended to ensure that this week programme is a success. However, within the programme they will have specific projects to be carried out throughout the week, which is achieved through programme planning.

The development and implementation of these programmes are guided by the risk and changes adaptation plan for the organisation, for instance, those focusing on victim offender mediation developed family-peace making programmes to resolve conflict that may arise during the

COVID-19 lockdown period. A second example is that due to the pandemic, a crime prevention NGO developed a programme intended for individuals who contravened with the Disease Management Act. However, with the latter NGO, the challenge around funding of programmes creates uncertainties regarding continuation of service rendering within the area from which the participant works; this is one amongst several challenges mentioned by NQSWs with regards to programme management. NQSWs have demonstrated their ability to adapt in response to change, which is critical for effective and efficient service delivery and can be considered as one of the most essential management tasks for the new social worker.

5.2.8. Financial Management

The last management task explored in literature and the empirical study is financial management. Financial management within NGOs is mainly concerned with developing strategies to acquire funding, and decisions about the allocation and management of financial resources, rather than focusing on the technical elements of managing money. These strategies were developed to meet the neoliberal demands within the social welfare context which are quantifying social services; outputs are equated to funding targets rather than community need and quality of intervention. NQSWs reflected on the impact of these strategies on relationship-based intervention versus the pursuit of targets. From the analysis of the recent context of practice, NQSWs understand how the financial situation of their respective NGOs is closely linked to their ability to render effective service. Thus, by taking ownership of the current work context and defining the tasks in a way that relates to traditional social work practice, the empowerment of social work practitioners may be better facilitated, leading to improvements in job satisfaction and the recruitment and retention of social work practitioners who can contribute to better NGO compliance, sustained funding, and greater impact of social service organisations.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are presented below for NQSWs, organisations, social work mangers, and training institutions, based on the researcher's analysis of the empirical study in relation to literature. Recommendations for further research are also provided.

5.3.1. Recommendations for NQSWs

In analysing the response of NQSWs with regards to the preparation for executing management tasks, the following recommendations were deduced:

- NQSWs must understand their strengths and weaknesses in order to understand ones' work ethic and the tasks one could potentially excel within, as well as those that one is likely to struggle with. They should plan ahead, prioritise their workload and enter the work environment with an understanding of the challenges faced by social workers in today's neoliberal context.

- NQSWs should not assume that because they are not on higher levels of management, they will not be expected to execute managerial tasks. NQSWs will be required to execute management tasks other than workload, time, and information management that are typically the focus during practice education at university.

- NQSWs should commit themselves to ongoing education and learning, even when entering the practice environment, so that they are able to evolve with changing demands and standards.

- When attending a job interview or starting at a new work placement, NQSWs should ask questions directly pertaining to management task expectations in order to ensure there is clear communication between themselves and the organisation regarding their workload requirements. They should also request and review their contract early in employment in order to see what is expected of them/targets they are required to reach, so that they do not spend needless time on tasks that are outside of their role.

- The empowerment approach suggests the inclusion of service users in the process of decision making so that the proposed intervention plan is relevant and appropriate, with invested buy-in from the client. NGOs may have good intervention plans, however, if the needs and/or challenges experienced by the client are unknown to practitioners (and those occupying management positions) then resources would likely only be directed to an idea and not necessarily a practical programme or project.

5.3.2. Recommendations for Organisations

The researcher presents several recommendations with regards to the role organisations can play to maximise the management performance (and development) of NQSWs:

- Organisations would benefit from creating an environment that allows NQSWs time and sufficient support to adapt to the demands and changes that come with transitioning from the academic to professional environment. For instance, given that NQSWs are

trained to manage a few cases during practice education, the organisation should devote time to training NQSWs in workload management.

- It is the responsibility of the organisation to clearly communicate the expectations of an NQSW prior to their appointment in order to allow NQSWs to make an informed decision based on a concrete understanding of their work-related duties.

- The development of the organisation's workload management system should be undertaken collectively so that the concerns around implementation can be addressed. From the empirical study, there is evidence that several NQSWs are not satisfied with the workload management implemented in their respective organisation. Further, practitioners should be involved in decision-making around templates and reporting standards, to give input on the applicability of the proposed formats and suggestions regarding where possible adjustments could be made.

- Management should take into consideration the impact of any changes in the organisation on the social work practitioners themselves, particularly NQSWs who are newly employed. Change management should be undertaken through inclusive decision-making, follow-up and debrief to address any change-related concerns that may arise/have arisen.

- In that vein, organisations should ensure a clear management plan in place applicable for the work carried out both at the office as well as from home that supports the productivity of NQSWs faced with the challenge of adapting to manage their work environment.

- The preparation of NQSWs to execute management tasks is a collective effort, which should be undertaken by both NGOs and training institutions. It, therefore, becomes the responsibility of NGOs to help adapt to changes that NQSWs were not prepared for such as the COVID-19. NGOs could additionally consider presenting workshops for student social workers in training institutions, whereby management tasks are addressed in terms of the practical expectations of NQSWs when entering the NGO environment. This would complement theoretical learning and could be combined with existing practice education modules.

- The risk section in this study highlighted the efforts of social work organisations in complying with the COVID-19 safety protocols outlined by the World Health

Organisation. However, there were varying levels of satisfaction from NQSWs about the personal protective equipment (PPE) given by their respective organisations. This is again an issue of communication where those in upper-level management do not undertake collective decision-making and/or adequately explain decisions made by management.

- Monthly or quarterly meetings amongst several organisations in a specific area or specific field where NQSWs are encouraged to attend and improve networking and cross-collaboration could greatly improve service delivery impact and human resource management.

5.3.3. Recommendations for Social Work Managers

The researcher presents recommendations for social work managers based on analysis of literature and NQSW insight:

- Management needs to address the issue around poorly structured and available supervision, especially for NQSWs. This will in turn free up the workload of seasoned social workers who are often indirectly tasked with mentoring NQSWs as part of their workload management. Management should critically review their use of the dual management-supervision role and question whether this is more of a cost-saving exercise at the expense of adequate support and training for NQSWs.

- Social work managers should deploy the empowerment management approach as a key framework in their management approach, especially with NQSWs.

5.3.4. Recommendations for Training Institutions

Training institutions have a significant impact on the way NQSWs are prepared for professional practice. The following recommendations are with regards to the role that training institutions can play to ensure that NQSWs are knowledgeable and adequately trained to implement management tasks:

- Training institutions should attempt to better expose social work students (theoretically and practically) to the management requirements of social work practice and include training in the eight management tasks highlighted in this study. This should include teaching students how to engage with stakeholders, management outside of the profession, and funders.

- Training institutions should familiarise themselves with what is happening in the practice work environment so that they can design their practice education reporting requirements in a way that mirrors current trends and expectations in the field.

- The relationship between training institutions and the Department of Social Development should be strengthened, as the Department is a key funder of social work NGOs and often directs the targets and standards organisations are expected to adhere to. These targets and standards should be communicated to training institutions so that the training curriculum can adequately reflect practice expectations.

5.3.5. Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher makes the following recommendations for further research based on the findings of this study:

- In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, further research could be undertaken to document the efforts that social work organisations, including both management and social work practitioners, took to ensure change management, continued service rendering, financial management and safety compliance; such research may highlight critical gaps in the current management approach of NGOs, as well as strengths that could be expanded upon. Further, the experience of how NQSWs manage a global pandemic could be explored.

- In this study, the researcher gives evidence for the empowerment management approach as a complementary framework which can restore the relationship-based element of practice, supervision, and management. Further, research could explore in more detail how the empowerment management approach may be combined with bureaucratic expectations in today's present context for NQSWs and may include reflections and input from social work managers.

5.4. KEY FINDINGS AND MAIN CONCLUSIONS

This study focuses on the reflections of NQSWs with regards to their preparedness in and execution of management tasks in the NGO practice environment. The study is set against the backdrop of increasing neoliberal influence in social services, which prioritises business managerial principles. An empirical study was conducted with the attempt to identify and gain an understanding of what management tasks are executed and/or required by NQSWs within

127

the NGO context, as reflected upon by NQSWs themselves. In exploring this question, the study contextualised the influence of neoliberalism on the management role within South African NGOs (Chapter Two); identified and described management tasks practiced by social workers as presented in literature (Chapter Three); and empirically explored NQSW reflections on the execution of such tasks (Chapter Four). This chapter (Five) achieves the final objective of the study in presenting conclusions and recommendations to higher education institutions and NGOs regarding management tasks executed by NQSWs within an NGO context and the developments which may be necessary at the curricula level.

The study themes constituted eight management tasks identified in literature as being relevant within social work practice: work management, time management, information management, programme management, risk management, change management, human resource management and financial management. Various functions within each task were also identified through the literature review and served as sub-themes for this study. Key activities as executed by NQSWs were identified through thematic analysis of the interview data and presented as categories. The study found that NQSW participants were already executing these tasks but were not aware that these were identified as management tasks. Several tasks were found to be more common for NQSWs than others: workload, time, information, and programme management are the most applied management tasks compared to financial, human resource, risk and change management.

Therefore, the majority of participants acknowledged that the management tasks discussed in the study represent a wide range of activities which they are expected to execute during practice. Challenges were identified in terms of high workloads over and above case management, poor communication, and support from management in terms of task expectations, prioritisation of cases based on risk, lack of meaningful and frequent supervision, and emphasis on targets, standards, funding and reporting as being key functions for a newly qualified social worker.

Although this study recognises the need for a bureaucratic management approach as adopted by many organisations in order to ensure compliance with recent neoliberal expectations, the researcher proposes that the application of this approach be coupled with provisions from other management approaches, such as the empowerment approach in the execution of management tasks by NQSWs. The application of the bureaucratic management may achieve certain goals such as meeting the reporting standards and securing funding; however, this is often at the expense of the satisfaction of NQSWs and social work practitioners in general and the

communities they serve. Management principles from the business sector need to be incorporated into social work frameworks to ensure the quality-of-service delivery is maintained. This will enable NGOs, management and even funders to capitalise on the valuable contribution of social work practitioners upon graduation.

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ANNEXURE A: INFORMED CONSENT

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

REFLECTIONS OF NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS ON THE EXECUTION OF THEIR MANAGEMENT TASKS IN NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS.

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Tirelo Esther Mtombeni, from the Department of Social Work at Stellenbosch University. You were approached as a possible participant because you fit the description of a newly qualified social worker (NQSW). According to the study, a NQSW is a social work practitioner who has been practising for a period of less than two years. Taking part in this research would be completely in your professional personal capacity therefore you are not representing your organisation.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to identify management tasks performed by social workers trough the reflection of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) employed in non-governmental welfare organisations (NGOs). This results from the acknowledgement of the changing context of social work practice as a result of neoliberalism. An economic political framework which advocates for adoption of market principles within social work practice for accountability purposes, amongst other tenets.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Be available for a semi-structured interview which will be utilised to gather information confidentially. As at no point during the interview you would be required to indicate your name or any identifying particulars.

- Be available for an estimated time of 45 minutes for a once-off interview.

- Be available at a convenient time and location determined and agreed upon by you and the researcher.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

No harm is foreseen with regards to participation in this research study considering that this research is not highly personal and is considered low risk in terms of ethical considerations. However, the participant can voice any uncertainties on either aspect of the interview schedule experienced in the interview. As they can be discussed and clarified at any time during or after the interview process.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY

This information will allow the development of insight regarding specific management tasks applicable to social work practice through reflections of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs). This study will uncover the underlying influences which demands the execution of management tasks and the impact thereof on the profession in general. Furthermore, this information could be useful in higher learning institution towards their preparation process of NQSWs for employment environment.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, therefore, there will be no form of payment awarded any participant.

6. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information you share with me during this study and that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected for confidentiality purposes. This will be done by storing data in two computers, with one being accessible at a personal space and the other would at campus. Data on a personal computer will be stored in a folder protected by unique password from the one required to unlock the home screen for personal computer. Information stored on campus can only be accessed through a unique Stellenbosch University number with a password only known by the researcher. Furthermore, to ensure anonymity, no personal identifying details of the participants nor their organisation would be recorded. Where coding would be utilised for identification purposes and each questionnaire is assigned an alphabet. will further be used to

However, any information you share with me during this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission or as required by law.

A tape recorder will be used as an instrument for data collection. This can only be carried out with participant's consent. The researcher has exclusive access to the recordings, and they will be deleted immediately after all participant's recording have been transcribed. The transcription documents will therefore be secured with the confidentiality measured discussed above.

During publication the sample, will be referred to as participant for identification. If remarks necessitate specifications, the participants will be referred to using associated alphabets. This would be to ensure maintenance of confidentiality and/or anonymity during in publication.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this study if circumstances warrant doing so. For instance, you portray any form of dishonesty in response to the research questions.

8. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact:

Tirelo Esther Mtombeni (Researcher) through email at 19518714@sun.ac.za, and/or the supervisor Professor LK Engelbrecht through email at lke@sun.ac.za or by telephone 021-808 2070.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.

- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.

- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ (name of participant) agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by_____(name of principal investigator).

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator**, I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition, I would like to select the following option:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this "Consent Form" is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

ANNEXURE B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE DRAFT FOR NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS (NQSWS) IN NGOS

REFLECTIONS OF NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS ON THE EXECUTION OF THEIR MANAGEMENT TASKS IN NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS.

Researcher: T. E. Mtombeni

1. **Identifying details**

   1.1. Gender: _____

   1.2. Age: _____

   1.3. Months of practice: _____

   1.4. Year of completion of Social Work Bachelor's Degree: _____

2. **Research Questions**

   2.1. On WHAT management activities in social work practice do you execute the following management tasks?

   2.1.1. Workload management;

   2.1.2. Information management;

   2.1.3. Human Resource management;

   2.1.4. Financial management;

   2.1.5. Risk management;

   2.1.6. Change management and

   2.1.7. Programme management.

   2.2. In detail, HOW do you execute the above-mentioned management tasks?

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

**UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY**

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

4 August 2020

Project number: 14858

Project Title: Reflections of Newly Qualified Social Workers on the Execution of their management tasks in Non-Government Organisations

Dear Miss Tirelo Mtombeni

Your response to stipulations submitted on 26 May 2020 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
8 May 2020	7 May 2023

SUSPENSION OF PHYSICAL CONTACT RESEARCH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown measures, all research activities requiring physical contact or being in undue physical proximity to human participants has been suspended by Stellenbosch University. Please refer to a formal statement issued by the REC: SBE on 20 March for more information on this.

This suspension will remain in force until such time as the social distancing requirements are relaxed by the national authorities to such an extent that in-person data collection from participants will be allowed. This will be confirmed by a new statement from the REC: SBE on the university's dedicated Covid-19 webpage.

Until such time online or virtual data collection activities, individual or group interviews conducted via online meeting or web conferencing tools, such as Skype or Microsoft Teams are strongly encouraged in all SU research environments.

If you are required to amend your research methods due to this suspension, please submit an amendment to the REC: SBE as soon as possible. The instructions on how to submit an amendment to the REC can be found on this webpage: [instructions], or you can contact the REC Helpdesk for instructions on how to submit an amendment: applyethics@sun.ac.za.

GENERAL REC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS PROJECT:

INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

151

Please use your SU project number (14858) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Data collection tool	Annexure B	20/03/2020	20/03/2020
Default	Mtombeni Post grad DESC approval form	20/03/2020	20/03/2020
Data collection tool	Annexure B	25/05/2020	25/05/2020
Research Protocol/Proposal	3-Research proposal 2020 (f-t)	25/05/2020	3
Default	REC RESPONSE LETTER	25/05/2020	25/05/2020
Informed Consent Form	Annexure A	26/05/2020	26/05/2020

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioral and Education Research

Principal Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

Conducting the Research: The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

Participant Enrolment: The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

Informed Consent: The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

Continuing Review: The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period.** Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is the PI's responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

Amendments and Changes: Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

Adverse or Unanticipated Events: Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the REC within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

Research Record Keeping: The PI must keep the following research-related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence and approvals from the REC.

Provision of Counselling or emergency support: When a dedicated counsellor or a psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

Final reports: When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits: If the researcher is notified that the research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, the PI must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.