THE EFFECT OF ASSETS MANAGEMENT ON SOCIAL WORK SERVICES DELIVERY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: CAPRICORN DISTRICT IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

by

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RESEARCH

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my sweet late younger sister, Mahlatse Ledile Rachel Raseboea, whose beautiful spirit kept on encouraging me to continue with the study as I know for sure that she would have loved for this study to come to life. I love you Ses' Hlatse and May your soul continues to rest in eternal peace. It is further dedicated to my awesome husband, Dr Ṋengovhela Rofhiwa Emmanuel for his support and encouragement. This study could not have come to fruition without his enthusiastic support. Thank you love (Muthu wanga).

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the study on the effect of asset management on social work services delivery in the Department of Social Development: District hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, TGSL for the degree of Master of Development Planning and Management has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Nengovhela M.B.   Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of asset management on social work services delivery in the Department of Social Development (DSD), Capricorn District. The aim of the study was to explore factors that lead to the mismanagement of assets in the department. For social workers to deliver services or to operate, the Department of Social Development (DSD) as the employer must ensure that infrastructure (office space and facilities), information management and technology equipment must be provided to social welfare practitioners (employees). For their effective functioning, certain basic infrastructure and equipment are needed by social welfare service practitioners, particularly social workers who are legally obliged to provide services in a particular manner. The problem of lack of resources has been also observed and that service providers who are social workers end up using their own resources in an attempt to provide service delivery and administration of their duties as social workers. The objectives of this study were to examine the state of asset management in the department; to assess the effect of asset management on service delivery; and to propose strategies that may enable the department to deal with emerging issues. The study was guided by questions such as the following: What is the current state of asset management as it relates to service delivery? How does asset management affect service delivery? What strategies may enable the department to deal with emerging issues?

The study adopted the qualitative research approach to collect primary data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. It further used thematic content analysis to analyse data. Through the use of this approach, it was noted that asset problems have a negative impact on social work service delivery. From the data collected, the study revealed that there are numerous problems that social workers come across in the process of providing services and mainly because of lack of adequate assets. These problems affect service delivery negatively, and include lack of transport; insufficient office space; and lack of furniture, computers, printers and landline or cellular phones. Social work services cannot be properly, effectively and efficiently provided without adequate asset management. The study recommends that the DSD should provide social workers with assets in order to render better service. It is important for one to know that social work services and asset management are two related entities.

Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Asset management brings more efficient operation, and allows an organisation to understand the capabilities of its assets, and how they can be operated in the most effective manner. It further allows the implementation of a risk management plan, and includes the management of risks connected with the use and ownership of assets (Vick, 2016). Proper assessment of assets can help to identify the risks involved, and to come up with a solution to avoid them. It can help optimise operations, including planning, resources use, and implementation of the management programme.

Yusof, cited Burns (1999) indicates that there has been good asset management conducted in Austria. The main features of its approach were the development of lifecycle management strategies, risk management, optimisation of refurbishment and replacement expenditure and development of a user-friendly assessment and prioritisation tools. Good management has principles which may guide asset managers in improving service delivery by employees/public servants.

Bewry and Kenley (1998) explain that a decentralised management approach is proposed in order to maximise service delivery through the role of asset management, which is traditionally a client side task and a responsibility seen widely as not appropriate to devolve to contractors.

For social workers to deliver services or to operate, the Department of Social Development (DSD) as the employer, must ensure that infrastructure (office space and facilities), information management and technology equipment must be provided to social welfare practitioners (employees). For their effective functioning, certain basic infrastructure and equipment are needed by social welfare service practitioners, particularly social workers who are legally obliged to provide services in a particular manner. Failure to do so renders them liable to disciplinary action. Infrastructure required include, among others, office accommodation that is accessible, that allows for confidentiality, and protects the safety of practitioners; transport to conduct visits to service beneficiaries and to attend to other tasks; furniture that is suitable for interviews with service beneficiaries; communication media such as telephones and

facsimile machines; and computers, photocopiers and filing cabinets for the safekeeping of records (DSD, Social Work Framework, 2013).

Mashamba (2014:31) argues that the continuing shared support services between the Departments of Health and Social Development continues to impact negatively on service provision, particularly on office accommodation, its infrastructure, security, telephone, municipal services and other key functions. Capricorn District in Limpopo Province does not become an exception to be affected by asset management challenge towards rendering services. Good management practices in the organisation often lead to improved productivity and better service delivery by employees. Thus it is imperative for social workers to have good managers, especially of resources in order for them to be able to render services of good quality effectively as well as efficiently. Studies have shown consistently that a disturbingly high number of non-management employees are disengaged and not working at full productive capacity due to lack of resources (Lipman, 2013). This study focuses on the identification and exploration of the effects of asset management towards social work service delivery in Capricorn District.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In many organisations, it is believed that physical assets are the foundation of success and future growth. The effective management of these assets is important to the overall success of such organisations, which acknowledge such factors as significant to their operations, and are therefore looking to continually improve their asset management practices. In turn, this has led to an increase in research on asset management in both academic and practitioner arenas. Asset management is a systematic, structured process covering the whole life of physical assets, whereby the underlying assumption is that assets exist to support the organisation's delivery strategies, and requires a certain level of management insight and expertise from diverse organisational disciplines. However, it is quite challenging to find that there are some departments (such as Department of Social Development (DSD) that are expected to fulfil expectations with compromised assets provision.

The responsibilities of a social worker include a set of responsibilities such as direct counselling of patients, families and groups. Social workers often serve as liaisons between different institutions to assist patients and to collaborate with other health

professionals to ensure patient wellness. Social workers address legal issues, such as assisting with hearings and providing testimony relating to their patients. They also engage in research, policy development and advocacy for services. And of course, social workers must maintain case history records and prepare reports. Social work can be the kind of job that requires a great deal of overtime, and separating the emotional aspects of the job from the duties required can be a difficult undertaking. Social workers help people function better in their environment, improve their relationshipts with others and solve personal and family problems, through individual, social, and psychological counselling. (volland et al, 2000).

To execute the above mentioned responsibilities, asset management is important. The execution requires one to move from one place to the other (this requires transportation) and caption of the data and keeping records (this requires equipment such as computers). This, on its own, is evidence that without good asset management, the duties of a social worker can be compromised. When the social worker fails to do his/her duties, the community suffers. It is for these reasons that the researcher found it worth it to conduct a study on asset management. So the purpose of the study is to assist and improve the department in improving the service delivery to the community. Through its findings and recommendations, the proposed study is expected to assist the Department of Social Development, Capricorn District in its management of assets, and to prioritise and implement the departmental asset policy, especially for social workers as it is a noble profession requiring necessary resources to deliver services effectively and efficiently within Capricorn District.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to Thomas (2006), employers, including the NHS and Local government authorities, have a legal duty to look after the safety and welfare of their workforce as set out in the Health and Safety of Work Act 1974. Professional carers expect that they will themselves be cared for when they work in a caring environment. This is not always so, and is often cited as a cause of dissatisfaction when carers consult support agencies.

Social work services are by far beyond siting in the office and address issues pertaining social crises. It involves traveling from one place to the other which requires transportation, data capturing and keeping records which requires assets such as

computers and printers as well as communication devices to keep in touch with clients. The above required assets are just a drop in the ocean as compared to what is actually needed in order to optimise the social services.

The social workers are currently unable to fully execute their tasks due to the limited or lack of the most needed assets which might be the results of poor asset management. More than nine (9) people are currently expected to share one car to conduct home visits and all required trips. This puts other social workers on hold until their turn to use a car which affect the timeframes on solving cases. Furthermore, more than five (5) people share one office which automatically brake the confidentiality code. One computer is shared among seven (7) social workers and that result in taking turns on capturing data and keeping records.It is for the reasons such as the above mentioned that the researcher saw the necessity to undergo this study.

1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate and explore the status of assets management in relation to social work services and strive to find possible solutions in the DSD, Capricorn District, Limpopo. In order to achieve this aim, the study will endeavour to answer the following research questions:

• What is the current state of asset management as it relates to service delivery?

• How does asset management affect the social worker's service delivery?

• What strategies may enable the department to deal with any emerging issues?

1.5. OBJECTIVES

De Vos (2002b:107) defines objectives as being "more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable". The objectives of this study are:

• To examine the state of asset management within the department.

The current state of service delivery seems to be ineffective and hinders the social workers to function as expected. This objective will assist the researcher to indulge in examining the current state of assets and assets management with hope to identity hiccups and establish the practice that might assist in seeing the social worker's services being optimised.

- To assess the effect of asset management on social worker's service delivery.

The researcher's observation on the social workers' job description brought to attention that the only way to social worker's best service delivery is through proper provision of the most needed assets in social worker practices. This objective will fuel the researcher enquiry on to what extent can asset management effect the social worker's service delivery.

- To propose strategies that may enable the department to deal with any emerging issues.

From the above mentioned objectives, the researcher will be able to establish the burning issues that possibly hinders the rendering of social worker services to its full potential. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the researcher to propose the strategies that can be used to deal with the emerging issues. For this reason, this objective is relevant to this study.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As the study focuses on the effects of asset management in social work service delivery in Capricorn District, the findings may therefore assist the Department of Social Development to understand the need to prioritise and provide better and safe working environment and situation for social workers to render quality services effectively and efficiently to the communities. The study may assist in rearranging asset management strategies for advancing service delivery of social workers. The study 's significance is to improve asset management in enhancing service delivery of social workers. This study may also contribute to the body of knowledge in development studies by improving social worker's service delivery post receiving the necessary assets in Capricorn District.

1.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the current state of asset management as it relates to service delivery?

- How does asset management affect service delivery?

- What strategies may enable the department to deal with any emerging issues?

1.8. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The following concepts are seen as key in the study which is the reason why they should be defined.

1.8.1. Assets

The term 'asset' can be used to describe many different types of assets, including financial assets, infrastructure assets, plants and machinery, equipment and property. Ang (2014) cites Fernhold and Fernhold (2006) and Howarth (2006) indicating that they have pointed out that the term asset can be both tangible and intangible assets which include financial assets such as money, intellectual assets such as knowledge and physical assets such as buildings. A broader interpretation of assets was employed by Lyons (2004) as not only land and buildings, but also intangibles assets such as intellectual property, the radio spectrum and government shareholdings. In this study, the focus is on the following types of assets because they were identified as the problem: vehicles, office space, office furniture, landlines/cellular phones computers and printers.

1.8.2. Asset management

Mardiasmo and Liyanage (2013) aver that asset management practices within a country or a region are under continuous reform, particularly with the introduction of new 'hard control' rules, laws, regulations and policies in various sectors. Lemer (2012) argues that asset management refers to applying performance management principles to the management of transportation physical assets and provides a strategic approach for the preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of these assets. Asset management is one of the most advanced examples of the application of performance management principles in the transportation industry. In fact, much of the initial work on defining the core principles of what now is called performance management grew out of AASHTO and FHWA efforts to promote a strategic approach to asset management.

1.8.3. Social welfare services

Social welfare services are services and programmes that are provided to meet social needs and to create opportunities for people to realise their potential. In this document, such services include prevention and promotion; social assistance and social relief;

protection; statutory social support; restorative, rehabilitative and therapeutic continuing care and reintegration; and aftercare services (DSD, Social welfare framework, 2013). According to Motala (2010), social welfare services are still poorly understood but provide support to reduce poverty, vulnerability and the impact of HIV and AIDS through sustainable development programmes in partnership with implementing agents such as state-funded institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs).

1.8.4. Service delivery

Chen et al (2014) define service delivery as a common phrase in South Africa used to describe the distribution of basic resources that citizens depend on. On the other hand, Fogli (2005) indicates that services are to be delivered to clients with the aim of meeting the needs and expectations of the client, as defined by the client as the service encounter.

1.9. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The researcher, a professional social worker in the Department of Social Development, based in Aganang Municipality under Capricorn District, has observed that social workers find it difficult to render services, which leads them to work under stressful conditions due to lack of basic office resources, specifically both movable and immovable assets. While using the little assets that are available, some services end up being rendered in an ineffective and efficient way, which also hampers the quality of service to clients. Although the researcher acknowledges some of the assets provided to the department, there is still a gap or a need to address asset managers for service delivery which will be effective. This problem has resulted in some social workers utilising their own personal resources to deliver services, which really shows the impact of poor resource management. This has motivated the researcher to embark on this study in Capricorn District.

1.10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitations of the study are limited time and financial resources. This implies that while the qualitative approach will be implemented with the rigour that is required,

a very small sample is the basis of the analysis. This limits the generalisability of the findings.

As the meeting with the participants will be expected to be organised at a mutually convenient time, this poses a significant challenge since it will interfere with the lunch time of the participants**.**

1.11. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The topic of this study is to identify the effect of asset management towards social work service delivery in the Department of Social Development, Capricorn District. Therefore, the study comprises five chapters which are as follow:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

The chapter orients the reader about the research problem. It introduces the topic, the problem statement, motivation of the study, significance of the study, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research question/ hypothesis and a conceptual review study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

The review presents the conceptual framework of the study. It also summarises different theoretical approaches which attempt to explain the relationship between asset management and service delivery. Evidence from existing studies is summarised and analysed in order to identify knowledge gaps.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

The chapter explains the research paradigm in which the study is anchored. It then describes and provides the rationale of the qualitative research design that is applied. The target population is described and the sampling method is explained. Finally, the methods used to collect and analyse data are articulated.

Chapter Four: Presentation and interpretation of findings

The chapter presents and discusses the study findings.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and recommendations

The chapter summarises the findings, concludes the study and makes recommendations. It also identifies areas for future research.

1.12. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This chapter provides the background to the study of the work that the Department of Social Development is doing and highlighted that there is a problem with regard to assets that social workers need in order to render their services. Those assets include specifically the office space, office furniture, vehicles, landlines and computers. The chapter also articulated the research problem which is that social workers are not working at their optimum level because of lack of access to assets. It further discusses the aim of the study which is to investigate and explore the status of assets management in relation to social work services and strive to find possible solutions in the DSD, Capricorn District, Limpopo. The objectives of the study, research questions as well as the significance and the rationale of the study are also highlighted. The important concepts used in the study are assets, assets management, social welfare services and service delivery and were defined.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the literature review of the study. The chapter looks at asset management and the delivery of social services, the theoretical framework, review of other studies on asset management towards service delivery and emerging issues. This study builds on the body of existing knowledge on the impact of asset management and the delivery of social services. Literature in this field is limited though. However, the purpose of reviewing it is precisely to find out how much has been done in regard to, for example, theoretical approaches to the relationship, the findings from such studies and their implications for policy. A review of the literature is also important in order to identify gaps in knowledge. This will assist the researcher to orient the study towards filling some of those gaps.

The chapter presents the different theoretical perspectives on the relationship between asset management and delivery of social services. It summarises the findings of existing empirical studies on the subject and identifies gaps. This knowledge is used to locate the study within the wider body of knowledge around the subject.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

DSD (2012) highlights that the mission of the Department of Social Development is to enable the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded within South African society to secure a better life for themselves, in partnership with them and with all those who are committed to building a caring society.

The Department has the following primary core functions: management and oversight over social security, encompassing social assistance and social insurance policies, which aim to prevent and alleviate poverty in the event of life cycle risks such as loss of income due to unemployment, disability, old age or death occurring; and developmental social welfare services, which provide support to reduce poverty, vulnerability and the impact of HIV/AIDS through sustainable development programmes, in partnership with implementing agents such as State-Funded Institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Faith-Based Organisations (DSD,2012).

In order for the Department to accomplish all of it mandate, there are certain role players that should be included in the rendering of those services, which are the Generalist social workers. Marlow (2010) The Generalist social work practitioners work with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organisations in a variety of social work and host settings. Generalist practitioners view clients and client systems from strength perspective in order to recognise, support, and build upon the innate capabilities of all human beings. They use a professional problem solving process to engage, asses, brokers services, advocate, counsel, educate and organise with and on behalf of client and client system. In addition, they also engage in community and organisational development. Finally, they evaluate service outcomes in order to continually improve the provision and quality of services most appropriate to the client needs. In rendering the articulated roles there are certain values that the profession is based on. And theses in include fundamental notions about the most desirable relationships between people and their environment. Social work values include respect for the individual's dignity and uniqueness; recognition of the client's right to self-determination; and confidentiality. These values are incorporated in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethical and strongly guide the practice of social work (Marlow,2010). Social workers work in different settings, with different specialities such as school social workers, medical social workers, probations social workers and generic social work being the largest section in the Department of social Development.

From the information quoted above, one can conclude that social work is indeed a noble profession, and with lots on their hand to improve the lives of the citizens. However, from the researcher's observation, the assets status core within the Department hinders the social work practitioners to fully render their service as per their processes, roles, skills, methods, principles and values guided by their code of ethics(NASW).

2.2.1 THE EFFECT OF INADEQUATE ASSET MANAGEMENT ON SERVICE DELIVERY.

There are a number of work related stressors which have been linked to an increased likelihood of an individual experiencing negative stress outcomes. Cooper and Marshall's (1976) original model of work related stress included five sources of stress

at work, each of which are represented in the revised model of stress on which ASSET is based. Cooper and Marshall's five sources of stress, with examples of the components of these sources given for each, are:

- Intrinsic to the job, including factors such as poor physical working condition work overload or time pressures.
- role in the organisation, including role ambiguity and role conflict.
- career development, including lack of job security and under/over promotion.
- relationships at work, including poor relationships with your boss or colleagues, an extreme component of which is bullying in the workplace (Rayner and Hoel, 1997).
- organisational structure and climate, including little involvement decision-making and office politics.

The specific role and influence of emotions in the workplace have been subject to further (and ongoing) research and emotion work has been described as possessing the following characteristics; it is a significant component of jobs that require either face to face or voice to voice interaction with clients; the emotions displayed in these jobs are intended to influence other people's attitudes and behaviours; and the display of emotions has to follow certain rules (Zapf et al., 1999).

In the same vain, Arnaboldi and Lapsley (2010) shed light on the point that asset management activities and responsibilities impact on a wide range of roles within an organisation, that is, they are not confined to a specific department. However, in a large organisation, effective asset management will benefit from the existence of recognised asset management personnel with expertise in specific areas. These may be formed into distinct groups, the title of which will depend on company history and structure.

The purpose of asset management function is to provide resources and expertise to support the acquisition, in-service support and the disposal of physical assets required by the organisation. A central asset management function will be needed at company level, providing inputs to asset planning, taking a role in major acquisitions and developments and providing systems and facilities needed to support assets throughout their life (Arnaboldi and Lapsley, 2010).

On the same note, Scottish Executive (2005), a non-statutory advisory note, alludes to specific problem of asset management. This government guidance makes city asset management an object of discourse within and beyond the local government entities themselves. They acknowledge the increasing pressures on local authorities due to tight budgets, new capital funding regimes and external needs. This suggests a more formal approach to asset management:

> With the introduction of the prudential capital regime, pressure on revenue budgets to fund capital infrastructure investment is a permanent management issue for each authority. Authorities are under direct pressure to improve the school estate, social housing provision and the condition of local roads, and evidence of good asset management may become a condition of discretionary grants. Good asset management can also help the authority contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which is part of its obligations under Best Value (Scottish Executive, 2005).

From the quotation above, it can be deduced that asset management is the heart of every successful institution. Without good asset management, institutions cannot achieve their desired goals. The Scottish Executive (2005) further claims that the appropriate use of assets in the right location can make the difference between good and poor service delivery. The whole point of asset management is to ensure that the front line services provided by the authority are done via the most effective and efficient property portfolio. Efficient asset management will enable an authority to:

- Assess the make-up of the best portfolio required to deliver the given services.
- Minimise occupation costs, and maximise property efficiency.
- Maximise efficiency of service delivery.
- Facilitate long term planning in the context of corporate objectives.
- Develop corporate thinking.
- Develop valuable long term partnerships.
- Free up resources for reinvestment, should the financial policy of the authority allow it, and subject to the Prudential Code.
- Allocate resources effectively to areas of greatest need.
- Account to the public for its use of public assets (Scottish Executive, 2005).

It can be seen that assets in municipalities exist to support service delivery. Accordingly, asset management is seen as central to providing municipal services in a cost effective, efficient and transparent manner. In this regard, Section 152 of the Constitution states that the prime mandate of local government is to provide services in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, section 4(2) (d) of the Municipal Systems Act states that a municipality has a duty to strive to ensure that municipal services are provided to the local community in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner. Hence, good asset management facilitates the provision of services in a financially sustainable manner. In addition, the effective management of assets, especially infrastructure, is vital to municipalities that seek to provide a quality standard of service to its customers, and who want to support economic growth and development by building an environment conducive for business and job creation.

For social workers to deliver services or to operate, the Department of Social Development (DSD) as the employer must ensure that infrastructure (office space and facilities), information management and technology equipment must be provided to social welfare practitioners (employees). For their effective functioning, certain basic infrastructure and equipment are needed by social welfare service practitioners, particularly social workers who are legally obliged to provide services in a particular manner. Failure to do so renders them liable to disciplinary action. Infrastructure required include, among others, office accommodation that is accessible, allows for confidentiality, and protects the safety of practitioners; transport to conduct visits to service beneficiaries and to attend to other tasks; furniture that is suitable for interviews with service beneficiaries; communication media such as telephones and facsimile machines; computers, photocopiers and filing cabinets for the safekeeping of records (DSD, Social Work Framework, 2013).

It seems reasonable to claim that asset management affects the operation in the social work field. The day to day operations requires one to move from one place to the other whilst attending to clients. The movements raise a great need of assets such as transport and communication facilities. Lack of provision of these facilities results in the improper operation of social workers.

Mashamba (2014) alludes to the fact that the continuing shared support services between the Departments of Health and Social Development continues to impact

negatively on service provision, particularly on office accommodation, its infrastructure, security, telephone, municipal services and other key functions. Capricorn District does not become an exception to be affected by asset management challenges towards rendering services.

A conclusion can be drawn that the sharing of facilities between the departments does not only affect social workers as the custodian or service providers, but also affect the community that are beneficiaries from the services provided. There is a great need for the individual entity that manages assets in each and every department for the improvement of the service that is provided to the community.

Good management practices in the organisation often leads to improved productivity and better service delivery by employees. Thus it is imperative for social workers to have good managers, especially of resources in order for them to render services of good quality effectively and efficiently. Studies have shown consistently that a disturbingly high number of non-management employees are disengaged and not working at full productive capacity due to lack of resources (Lipman, 2013).

2.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: LINKING ASSETS TO PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

This subsection discusses the theory that is applicable in this study. Social workers, just like in any profession, can encounter many different obstacles in their line of work. Each obstacle faced represents a different kind of challenge. However, there are a few theories that can benefit social workers to deal with some of the challenges that they are facing, and how they can be utilised to achieve positive solutions. Generally, a theory is a statement backed by evidence gathered through the scientific method intended to explain something. Theoretical approaches for social work are often used to explain human behaviour, and serve as starting points for practice models and treatments. For example, the Psychodynamic Theory explains how internal and external forces interact to influence emotional development (Coady and Lehmann, 2016). Conflict Theory explains how power structures and disparities affect people's lives (Thompson,2003).

Though there are many theories that can be considered for a study such as this, this study has selected systems theory. Barret (2018) alludes that Systems theory revolves

around relationships, that is, the connections between individual pieces, rather than the pieces themselves. An example of a simple system is the way one person does the laundry or cleans the house. A larger, more complex system is the federal tax system. In each example, the individual pieces are important, but the way they work together makes the difference as to whether or not the system succeeds. Systems can also exist within each other, like a department within an organisation. This study uses Systems Theory in order to find how it can be best applied to assist in service delivery.

2.3.1 Systems Theory

Churchman and Nicholas (2008) in indicates that the system's approach to management is a scenario that plays a very important role in creating coordinative relations between all related business systems. Rampur (2018) alludes that If we want different results, we must change the way we do things. The success ratio of any organization depends on the management approach taken. The company should function as a unit to achieve the set goals. One of the important theories related to management is the systems theory. To understand the systems approach to organization, think of your business as the human body. Without the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the digestive system, the nervous system and other human systems working together, the body will not function as designed. Also, the cohesiveness, or ability to stick together, of each system is important for that system to handle its assigned tasks. Systems. You could potentially identify many kinds of systems in your small business. Applying the Systems Approach. The systems approach relates to both the dynamics of problem resolution and stakeholder value over time, as well as to the levels of system relationship, detailed management, and the engineering activities this implies.

Lewis, Lenteren, Phatak, and Tumlinson, (1997) indicate that Systems Theory explains human behaviour as the intersection of the influences of multiple interrelated systems. Individual issues, families, organisations, societies, and other systems are inherently involved and must be considered when attempting to understand and rescue the situation. According to this theory, all systems are interrelated parts constituting an ordered whole and each subsystem influences other parts of the whole. On this note, this theory suits this study because it the study pays attention to asset management as a factor that affects service delivery. If one aspect of the organisation

(asset management as an example) is not functional, it affects the whole operation of social development services. Social workers depend on available facilities to render services. These facilities include transport, offices and office equipment such as stationaries, communication devices, etecetra.

Barret (2018) alludes that there have been dozens of unofficial iterations of Systems Theory over the past few hundred years applied to society, science, and many other areas. In the 20th century, multiple scientists, philosophers, and academics began to outline and define the structure of Systems Theory in their various disciplines. There are now Systems Theories for biology, cybernetics, and for social work. While the applications obviously vary depending on the discipline, all Systems Theories follow the concept of interrelated parts influencing one another as part of an ordered whole. Just like a vehicle, if one tire is flat, it affects the whole car. It seems reasonable to claim that the smooth running of social development services depends on the smooth flow of day to day services that can either be exacerbated or ameliorated through good asset management.

This study concurs with Systems Theory on the point that a problem can be a question looking for an answer, a solution (such as an existing system) that is not working properly and needs improving, or new opportunity or idea that is worth considering. In other words, when one speaks of a problem in system analysis and design, one does not necessarily mean that there is something wrong, one means that there is a situation that needs to be understood and a solution to be determined. It is for this reason that this study adopted Systems Theory because the idea is not sorely to point out problems that arise from asset mismanagement. This study aims to investigate the effects of asset management towards social work service delivery in the Department of Social Development, Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. After the problems have been found, the possible solutions will be recommended.

A system is goal-seeking by definition. When the definition of a system says that its components work together to achieve a common objective, it means that the system seeks to complete a goal. For example, the Department of Social Development can achieve its optimum goal if all stakeholders are well functioning. If the procurement department cannot run smoothly, it affects asset management and that goes to all sections that rely on the asset management department. Once one aspect of the

system in not functional, the whole system cannot fully function. Therefore, the end-users at the grassroots level suffer most. It is important to identify the objectives of any existing or new system to be able to understand it and evaluate its effectiveness.

In this connection, a system operates in an environment with both internal and external components. If some aspect of the internal environment is causing some difficulty for the system, it can be altered. One of the most important concepts in Systems Theory is the notion of interdependence between systems (or subsystems). (Barret,2018). Systems rarely exist in isolation. For example, management can realise that social workers are not able to do the field work because of lack of transport. Therefore, the manager can intervene and appoint someone who can fast-track the process of purchasing the cars for transport.

In the Systems theory, individuals must not be evaluated in isolation, but in the context of the department, as the department operates as a unit. One of the core concepts of this theory is the triangle, whose most common form is that all the involved parties must sit down and discuss the problem as a whole. In this regard, it is easy to find out where the problem emanates and to come up with a common solution without shifting the blame. In a nutshell, this theory recommends that one should strengthen one part of the system to improve the whole.

Issues Addressed by Systems Theory

Barret 2018) indicates that Systems Theory is used to develop a holistic view of individuals within an environment, and is best applied to situations where several systems inseparably connect and influence one another. It can be employed in cases where contextual understandings of behaviour will lead to the most appropriate practice interventions. There are many practice interventions available to social workers, and their applications vary greatly depending on the context, but the following are a few common interventions used as part of Systems Theory.

Networking and referrals

Barret 2018) alludes that this is an important stage in an organisation wherein an individual or group of people are referred to external people or organisation. It is often used to acquire a skill that will bring a solution in the organisation. This often means

referring a person or group to specialists, or connecting them with resources or organisations that can be of assistance in their situations.

Ecomaps

An ecomap is a flow diagram that helps someone understand an organisation's interrelated progression over time. It allows the practitioner to capture and organise the complexity of a system. For a problem to be easily solved, there should be a common understanding of the organisational operations by all involved members. (Barret,2018).

Genograms

(Barret,2018) indicates that a genogram is a graphic representation of a family tree, constructed with symbols that describe relationships and connections between an extended family. In an organisation, it is important to construct the genogram along with staff members in order to better understand relationships and the interdependence of the department.

Understanding and applying the Systems Theory is a critical part of this study. One of the most important functions of the researcher is to navigate the various systems that affect service delivery, which requires a deep understanding of how subsystems are interrelated and influence one another.

The Department of social Development has got different actors and role players who ensures that the mission and vision of the Department are met. Thus there is an ideal organograms/ hierarchy or role players in ensuring that the mandate of providing services is possible and achievable. Those administrators include the following sections, Head of the Department; co-operate service, finance, internal Audit; Internal Control; Risk Management; Strategic Planning, Policy Coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation; Security Management; District Management; municipal managers; social work supervisor, social workers and social auxiliary workers. The structure is not yet fully functional (Limpopo DSD, 2017).

Systems theory explains that if the other part of the organisation is not fully functional, it affects the entire functioning of the system. Same applies to the department, that if the procurement sub-section which is under the finance section, responsible to ensure that enough assets are procured distributed to the social work offices in order for them

to render their services fully. This indicates that the system theory is applicable to the answer the research problem together with the research questions indicated in chapter one. Above all, one can conclude that for an organisation to function well, it needs a well-functioning system. To acquire such proof, the researcher used interview guide to ask relevant officials in order to get thorough information to assist to answer the research questions.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.4.1 FACTORS DETERMINING PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL WORK

Packard (2008) indicates that factors seen to be most important in affecting performance included adequate funding for the program, leaders having a positive attitude, staff being motivated and committed, a facilitative organizational structure, and a budgeting process which ensures effective resource allocation. Because performance measurement is seen as multidimensional and socially constructed, findings also include respondents' opinions on the most relevant measures of performance. These results can provide insights and guidance to researchers and agency managers regarding studying and improving organizational performance.

From the above quote, it is clear that there are certain factors that needs to be taken into account for social workers to perform to their optimum level and effective resource allocation is also one of them.

2.4.2 BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS.

A research study conducted by Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) focuses on the need for positive organizational behavior(POB), defined as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" (Luthans,2002).

Previous studies have consistently shown that job resources such as social support from colleagues and supervisors, performance feedback, skill variety, autonomy, and learning opportunities are positively associated with work engagement are drivers of work engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007).

Job resources refer to those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may:

- Reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs
- Be functional in achieving work goals
- Stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). It was found that employees who had job resources were more engaged and their performance high than those who did not have job resources. In light of the above findings, it indicates that even for social worker to practice well, they need to have job resources practice and to also be well equipped with both movable and immovable assets in order to render services sufficiently.

The study shows evidence that should Department of social Development ensure that there is availability of job resources for employees, there will be efficient and effective social work service delivery. That will also enhance employee engagement to work and benefit the end users even more. It is important for the Department or the employer to ensure that they have job resources. Furthermore, those resources will ensure the smooth running of service delivery by the social workers.

Resources are not only necessary to deal with (high) job demands, but they also are important in their own right. Job resources are assumed to play either an intrinsic motivational role because they foster employees' growth, learning and development, or an extrinsic motivational role because they are instrumental in achieving work goals. In the former case, job Work engagement resources fulfill basic human needs, such as the needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Frederick, 1997). For instance, proper feedback fosters learning, thereby increasing job competence, whereas decision latitude and social support satisfy the need for autonomy and the need to belong, respectively.

This intrinsic motivational potential of job resource. Job resources may also play an extrinsic motivational role, because resourceful work environments foster the willingness to dedicate one's efforts and abilities to the work task (Meijman and Mulder, 1998). In such environments it is likely that the task will be completed

successfully and that the work goal will be attained. In such environments it is likely that the task will be completed successfully and that the work goal will be attained. (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007).

Additionally, Hobfoll (2002) argues that resource gain acquires its saliency in the context of resource loss. This suggests that job resources become more salient and gain their motivational potential when employees are confronted with high job demands (e.g. workload, emotional demands, and mental demands) because they can help goal accomplishment.

On this note, good resource management results in happy clients through best service delivery. Poor asset management affects service delivery negatively (Campbell, 1995). In support of Campbell, the researcher feels that it is crucial to maintain the infrastructure to the best level possible. It was noticed in the recent past that most of the cars that are used in the DSD are not in the good state. Many at times, social workers face car breakdown when going to conduct home visits which makes them skeptical if they will reach their destination in every trip they take.

South Africa is experiencing serious challenges with regards to access to sustainable basic services, facilitating economic growth and development, ensuring and maintaining service quality such as drinking water quality and wastewater management, as well as water use efficiency. All of these relate to ineffective asset management (existing assets), poor planning for new assets, and very importantly, poor infrastructure asset management (life cycle management). Key interventions include, inter alia, the establishment of infrastructure asset management as a dedicated practice in local government with strong sector leadership, drive and regulation, municipal commitment and ownership, financial support and incentives, proper planning, appropriate institutional arrangements, skills development, as well as suitable support systems and tools (Van Zyl, Manus & Pensulo, 2008).

One cannot argue that the services mentioned above are key in the smooth running of any department or organization. Be that as it is, DSD is still faced with challenges that has seen social workers failing to execute their tasks due to lack of these services. Lac of those services affect the rendering of services in a bad way which translate to ill-functioning community.

Van Zyl et al (2008) further argues that government has to intervene by providing remedial work and implementing processes to prevent any further escalation of the problem. New legislation demands that all municipalities and service providers must practise proper asset management to achieve sustainable service delivery. The department must facilitate this through the development and implementation of suited policy, strategies and actions.

In the same vein, scholars such as Broadbent and Laughli (1999), Froud (2003) and Shaoul (2005) share the same views on the management of city assets as a key strategic responsibility of city managers. The location and condition of city assets will shape the nature of services provided by the city, constraining or offering opportunities for service development and redevelopment. The centrality of this task in the fulfilment of city visions is a key focal point for the diverse group of actors interested in city assets in the fulfilment of their particular professional preoccupations. However, the management of city assets is a considerable challenge on a number of dimensions.

The diversity of the asset base may be problematic. This may range from assets with almost indefinite lives (such as roads), if properly maintained, to capital equipment (vehicles, computers, heating systems), which inexorably depreciates as services are delivered. Aside from the problematic issue of asset lives, the scope for significant variation within different categories of assets also exists: assets with very specific service purposes and with limited opportunities for alternative use (such as schools or libraries); assets which are modern concrete structures, or older listed buildings, or even ancient heritage assets. While the vintage of assets may also pose distinctive challenges for local authorities, the nature of financing of asset acquisitions may prove difficult with the increasing use of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the UK. This raises issues over ownership beyond the contractual agreement, with difficulties over the assessment of the division of risk between purchaser and provider, and concerns over the level of operating costs compared to conventional long term finance by borrowing. Also, the purpose of assets recreational, community, or functional as in educational provision or social care may impose constraints on the management of city services (Young, 1994; Pallot, 1997; Bond and Dent, 1998; Donnelly and Shiu, 1999; Fitzgerald and Melvin, 2002). Most important of all, appropriate use of assets in the right location can make the difference between good and poor service delivery.

The whole point of asset management is to ensure that the front line services provided by the authority are done via the most effective and efficient property portfolio (Arnaboldi & Lapsley, 2010).

Deakin (1999) is of the view that the application of strategic asset management in the municipal sector is of growing concern and importance. Increasingly, municipalities are faced with shrinking facility budgets, while at the same time, having to provide the most suitable properties in support of core service delivery requirements. The focus of municipal asset management is to support local decision making related to the acquisition, remediation or disposal of property. In light of the fact that local government is the closest level of government to the public, the framework for strategic asset management must be transparent and beyond reproach.

The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Treasury alludes to the fact that asset management cannot be seen as an isolation function that a single department should take account of; it is a team effort. The success of an organisation\ department needs the commitment and passion of staff that acknowledges and takes on the challenge of asset management. The staff came from Asset Services, Finance, GIS, IT, Human Services, Engineering & Operations, Customer Service and Risk Management to name just a few. They are the custodians in providing the building blocks to embed asset management in the organisation.

In support of Godau (nd), the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Treasury avers that asset managers have to be fully aware of each manager's strategic goals and service delivery needs before being able to guide them with asset management decisions. This will mean that communication between the various managers in the department and the asset manager must be fine-tuned. The assessment of each section's asset needs, strategic goals and service delivery needs may be undertaken by way of personal interviews. Where this is proving difficult an asset management questionnaire concentrating in the main on service delivery and strategic goals questions may be circulated to all responsible managers. This approach will greatly assist asset managers in completing their Strategic Asset Management Plans.

Godau (nd) presents a table that indicates the link or connection between departments in any institution that contributes to good asset management. The table below is an example of how asset management must be considered in the planning, service delivery and provision of asset services. The activities cannot be considered in isolation, as a change in any of them will impact on the other. From a planning perspective, an increase in levels of service may result in the need for greater capacity in service delivery, and in the need for more facilities, and therefore, increase the repair/maintenance requirements on the Council. Every time a new facility is constructed, it comes with a lifetime of 'costs' that the Council will need to fund.

Table 2.1: Asset management is a team work

COUNCIL FUNCTION	ASSET MANAGEMENT ISSUES
Social planning (strategic focus) • Principally designed to support growth • Optimising private sector	What type of service delivery and level of service is needed now and into the future? And by whom? What facilities' options are available to support the various types of service delivery? What are our current and projected service levels?
Service delivery (operational focus) • Principally designed to support existing community services	How well is the existing facility supporting a specific service delivery and level of service? What is the current capability of the facility, and how well does it support future service delivery and level of service options? Is this in line with best value (e.g. have comparative studies or benchmarking been undertaken)?
Asset services (asset/facility focus)	How efficient and effective is the provision of asset services (undertaking capital works, maintenance programmes, emergency response) required to support a specific service delivery and level of service?

	Is this in line with best value?

Adopted from Godau (nd)

The management of assets is dependent on knowledge about the organisation's assets, in terms of current equipment, business role of assets and future prospects. Asset managers need to have a practical working knowledge of major assets at a management level so as to make sound business decisions. They need to be aware of assets which constitute elements in any given capability, that is, the array of subsidiary items which are necessary to support particular prime equipment. There is also a requirement for configuration management, that is, keeping systematic track of changes to equipment configurations, such as technical upgrades and regulatory compatibilities. For major items for which future capital decisions are required, it is advisable to list the date and type of decisions that will be needed (Godau, (nd)).

The best way to define the relationship between asset management and performance management is to recognise that a transportation system's performance, how well the system provides for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods, depends on many factors, including usage and demand, capacity, system operations, user behaviour and many other factors in addition to physical condition of facilities. Performance management is a strategic activity that focuses on how policies, resource allocation and other decisions affect all aspects of system performance, including safety, operations, environmental stewardship and infrastructure condition. The basic principles of performance management can be applied to all aspects of transportation system performance, and to the performance of transportation agencies as well (Cambridge Systematics Inc., 2012).

Asset management refers to applying these principles to the physical condition of infrastructure, vehicles, and all other facilities and equipment used to operate and manage the system. The specific application of performance management principles to different aspects of transportation system performance will vary in terms of the appropriate performance measures, short-term versus long-term focus, the appropriate strategies for improving performance and the timeframe of observing performance changes.

Asset management, defined as performance management principles applied to the maintenance and preservation of physical facilities, is an absolutely critical application of performance-based management and decision-making. The bulk of resources in most agencies are spent in this area, and the effective use of these resources is essential not only for the preservation and performance of these assets, but also to minimise the funds needed to achieve objectives in this area given the level of funding available. An effective asset management strategy must be long term. The focus is not worst-first but least life-cycle cost to achieve facility condition targets over the long term where the desired condition levels and appropriate strategies must reflect the funding available. However, the need for asset management to have a long-term focus is not in conflict with a broader application of performance management principles.

A broader application of performance management has to distinguish where short-versus long-term performance goals are the appropriate objective. For the physical preservation of assets, the focus should be on the long-term even where asset management is part of a broader application of performance management principles. In contrast, some system operational performance goals may be short-term oriented. Business managers responsible for process manufacturing, operations, asset management. That implies that the effective utilisation of all assets within their operations to meet business objectives, optimising plant assets to meet business objectives requires a holistic approach to asset management that goes well beyond the traditional focus of asset management software applications (Fitzgerald, 2005:34). Asset management influences the success of any organisation either positively or negatively. If assets are maintained well, they will provide reliable and safe operation; the lack of maintenance will result in breakages, meaning that equipment will not be available for operations. The latter will add costs for repairs and replacement and result in a loss of revenue.

2.5. EMERGING ISSUES AND GAPS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several aspects that need improvement in order for the Department of Social Development towards service delivery. Those aspects include transport as an asset and its impact on workers' performance, working environment and office space as a contributing factor to employee performance. From the literature review it was observed that

2.5.1 Transport as an asset and its impact on workers' performance

The best way to define the relationship between asset management and performance management is to recognise that a transportation system's performance, how well the system provides for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods, depends on many factors, including usage and demand, capacity, system operations, user behaviour and many other factors in addition to the physical condition of facilities. Performance management is a strategic activity that focuses on how policies, resource allocation and other decisions affect all aspects of system performance, including safety, operations, environmental stewardship and infrastructure condition. The basic principles of performance management can be applied to all aspects of transportation system performance and to the performance of transportation agencies as well (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials 2012).

Asset management refers to applying performance management principles in the management of transportation of physical assets, and the provision of a strategic approach for the preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of these assets. Asset management is one of the most advanced examples of the application of performance management principles in the transportation industry.

The workplaces of public servants, especially at service delivery points must be improved. In some of these points, there are no functioning toilets. It cannot be expected of public servants to embody Batho Pele principles when they work in inhuman environments. Often all that is required is a little imagination and a small budget to brighten the working environment, or to make it more efficient through queue management. Managers have a critical role to play in proactively making improvements.

Recently a perception survey on the impact of the public service strike of June 2007 was undertaken. The qualitative studies revealed a level of frustration, and a very high percentage of "uncommitted" (committed neither to their job nor their employer) employees were discerned at levels below the global norm. Based on the study, various factors were found to encourage greater commitment: "recognition for hard work and efforts", including a good salary and benefits and opportunities for promotion; "providing them with the support they need to do their job", including sufficient

resources, efficiency in getting repairs done, a sound working environment and safe working conditions; "placing competent people in senior positions" was felt to be important; and enabling employees "to take pride in being a public servant".

Senior managers cite many ad hoc and scheduled meetings and unscheduled travel second only to staff and other resource shortages as the key impediments to their achievement of performance targets. The capacity of departments is coming under ever-increasing strain as the workload increases every year without commensurate increase in resources, especially personnel.

2.5.2 Working environment

In the modern era, organisations are facing several challenges due to the dynamic nature of the environment. One of the many challenges for a business is to satisfy its employees in order to cope up with the ever changing and evolving environment, and to achieve success and remain in competition. In order to increase efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and job commitment of employees, the business must satisfy the needs of its employees by providing good working conditions. Many businesses fail to understand the importance of working environment for employee job satisfaction, and thus face a lot of difficulties during their work. Such organisations are internally weak, and therefore unable to introduce innovative products into the market to outshine their competitors (Aiken, Clarke, & Sloane, 2002). Employees are an essential component in the process of achieving the mission and vision of a business. They should meet the performance criteria set by the organisation to ensure the quality of their work. To meet the standards of organisation, employees need a working environment that allows them to work freely without problems that may restrain them from performing to the level of their full potential.

Clark (1997) argues that if employees are not satisfied with the task assigned to them, they are not certain about factors such as their rights, working conditions that are unsafe, co-workers that are not cooperative, supervisors that are not giving them respect, and they are not considered in the decision making process, resulting in them feeling separate from the organisation. Furthermore, It is highlighted that in current times, firms cannot afford dissatisfied employees as they will not perform up to the standards or the expectations of their supervisor; they will be fired, resulting in firms to bear additional costs for recruiting new staff. So, it is beneficial for firms to provide

a flexible working environment to employees where they feel their opinions are valued and they are a part of the organisation. Employee morale should be high as it will be reflected in their performance because with low morale, they will make lesser efforts to improve.

Tariq, Ramzan and Riaz (2013) observed that most businesses ignore the working environment within their organisation, resulting in an adverse effect on the performance of their employees. According to him, the working environment consists of safety to employees, job security, good relations with co-workers, recognition for good performance, motivation for performing well and participation in the decision making process of the firm. He further elaborated that once employees realise that the firm considers them important, they will have high level of commitment and a sense of ownership for their organisation.

2.5.3 Office space as a contributing factor to employee performance

According to LaMar Laney (2010), in light of today's economic landscape, it is more important than ever for companies to have happy and productive employees. When employees are loyal and engaged in the company, profits are higher. Conversely, when people feel unmotivated or undervalued, the company suffers. Additionally, studies show that engaged employees miss less work, perform better, and are more supportive of changes and willing to make them happen.

The environment is man's immediate surrounding, which he manipulates for his existence. Wrongful manipulation introduces hazards that make the environments unsafe and impede the productivity rate of the worker. Therefore, the workplace entails an environment in which the worker performs his work (Chapins, 1995), while an effective workplace is an environment where results can be achieved as expected by management (Mike, 2010; Shikdar, 2002). The physical environment affects how employees in an organisation interact, perform tasks, and are led. As an aspect of the work environment, the physical environment has directly affected the human sense and subtly changed interpersonal interactions, and thus productivity. This is so because the characteristics of a room or a place of meeting for a group have consequences regarding productivity and satisfaction level. The workplace environment is the most critical factor in keeping an employee satisfied in today's business world. Today's workplace is different, diverse, and constantly changing. The

typical employer/employee relationship of old has been turned upside down. Workers are living in a growing economy and have almost limitless job opportunities. This combination of factors has created an environment where the business needs its employees more than the employees need the business (Smith, 2011).

But keeping employees happy in any economy is hard work because happiness is primarily an inside job. In other words, happiness comes from within a person. However, friends, family and employment can add to or detract from someone's happiness level. So if the workplace is stressful and painful, things such as "back-stabbing" and gossiping happen, employees' production goes down.

Happy employees are also satisfied and feel a sense of accomplishment in their work. They like themselves and what they do, and they find satisfaction from their work – a sense that what they do is important and meaningful. Such feelings reduce stress, which is a major factor of productivity.

2.6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to present literature that explains the relationship between asset management systems and delivery of social work services. In this regard, different approaches were presented based on the scholarly literature, including the systems theory. The chapter also reviewed some of the major studies on the subject matter. It was also used to identify knowledge gaps that enable the researcher to locate and contextualise the study. The review showed that there are few studies on asset managers and services delivery in the public sector, including context, of private sectors.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on an overview of the methodology used in the study. The discussion in the chapter is structured around the research approach, research design, data collection, data analysis, research report, ethical consideration and summary.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACHES

"Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation," (Creswell, 2014: 32). There are three types of research approaches namely; qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods." (Ibid, 2014:32). In this study, the qualitative research approach is used.

According to De Vos et al (2002:79), the qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense "refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perception." This means that it produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words. "Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem," (Creswell, 2014: 32). He also states that:

> *The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation. (Ibid, 2014:32)*

Maxwell (1998:100) provides five research purposes for which qualitative studies are particularly useful:

- Understanding the meaning that participants in a study give to the events, situations and actions that they are involved with; and of the accounts they give of their lives and experiences.

- Understanding the particular context within which the participants act, and the influence the context has on their actions.

- Identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating new, grounded theories about them.

- Understanding the process by which events and actions take place; and

- Developing causal explanation.

"Quantitative research is the investigation of phenomena that lend themselves to precise measurement and qualification, often involving a rigorous and controlled design," (Polit & Beck, 2004:729). According to Creswell (2014: 32), "quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures." This means that:

> *The final written report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. Like qualitative researchers, those who engage in this form of inquiry have assumptions about testing theories deductively, building in protections against bias, controlling for alternative explanations, and being able to generalize and replicate the findings.*

The aim of the study is to investigate and explore the status of assets management in relation to social work services and strive to find possible solutions in the DSD, Capricorn District, Limpopo. Therefore, the research approach was a qualitative method since the data was collected using qualitative methods. The researcher arranged semi structured questions wherein the respondents responded based on the knowledge that they had on the topic in hand.

"The selection of a research approach is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences, and the audiences for the study," (Creswell, 2013:31). From the table above, the researcher opted to use the qualitative approach as the data gathering instrument, which means she did not have to rely on other people to assist her. The data collection was unstructured. This gave the researcher a chance to ask almost anything related to the research topic. It also gave the respondents freedom to participate. Another thing is that when it comes to sampling, the selected participants were in small number and

were experienced in the research topic. In the qualitative approach, the researcher becomes subjective in the subject matter.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Trochim (2005:1), "research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project work together to try to address the central research questions. The research design is like a recipe. Just as a recipe provides a list of ingredients and the instructions for preparing a dish, the research design provides the components and the plan for successfully carrying out the study (Trochim, 2005:1)".

A qualitative research paradigm comprises a number of research designs such as case studies, exploratory studies, descriptive studies, and so on (Kothari, 2004). This study uses the descriptive research design. The Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) (nd) defines a descriptive study as "any study that is not truly experimental." In human research, a descriptive study can provide information about the naturally occurring health status, behaviour, attitudes or other characteristics of a particular group. Descriptive studies are also conducted to demonstrate associations or relationships between things in the world around people. Bickman and Rog (1998) suggest that descriptive studies can answer questions such as 'what is' or 'what was'? Descriptive studies are usually some of the methods for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships and describe the world as it exists. Thus, descriptive design is appropriate because it assists the researcher to identify how lack of asset management affect social workers service delivery. It will further assist on determining the current state of the assets in the DSD. It is also useful in formulating strategies that can assist in overcoming the current problems faced by social workers. This is because descriptive studies are aimed at finding out "what is," and is so observational in nature (Borg & Gall, 1989). This is in line with Neumann's (2000:22) suggestion that the descriptive design helps in giving the correct picture associated with the context of the study. It is inquisitive in nature by attempting to find out the causes of a particular action or judgment.

The main task of the researcher in a descriptive research design is to attempt to understand the data from the participants' subjective perspective (Christensen, 2011).

The effect of assets management on social work services delivery in the department of social development is looked at from the perspectives of the respondents. Although there are common challenges faced in DSD, some of the challenges are based on individual's perception which is one of the reason the researched chose descriptive research design. Therefore, it is important to find out how different people interpret the effect of asset management and how they see it hindering service delivery.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Yin (2011:129) argues that "Data can be defined as a collection of organised information or facts through experience, observation, experiment or similar situations external to the researcher." Data can also be classified as primary or secondary data. Primary data are pieces of information that have to be collected for the first time and secondary data exist as information (Nkuna, 2010). Simply stated, primary data are the raw material that have been gathered by the researcher specifically for his/her own research (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Malhotra and Birks (2007:94) consider primary data as "information collected by the researcher in an effort to address or resolve the specific problem they identified for the research project". In the same vein, Williams (2008:18) defines primary data as "a type of information that is obtained directly from first-hand sources by means of surveys, observation or experimentation". Primary data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews". Babbie and Mouton (2010.643) define the interview as "a data-collection encounter in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions to another (a respondent)". Although the study focused on the collection and analysis of primary data, secondary data was also used to validate and support the primary data.

3.5 RESEARCH SAMPLING

According to Creswell (1998:110), "sampling is the process of finding people or place to study; to gain access to study; and to establish a rapport so that participants provide relevant data". "During the process of sampling, the aim is to get a sample that is representative as possible of target population," (Mouton, 1996:110). "The sample is chosen from the study population that is commonly referred to as the target population or accessible population," (Burns and Grove, 2003:233).

According to O'Leary (2004), sampling is a process that is always strategic and sometimes mathematical, which involves using the most practical procedures possible for gathering a sample that best represents a larger population. There are two types of sampling methods namely, probability and non-probability sampling. With probability sampling, every member of the population has a high chance of being selected in the sampling while with non-probability sampling, some population has no chance of being used in the sampling. In this research, probability sampling was used.

Sampling methods are used to select a sample from within the general population. Ideally, sampling methods eliminate bias in the selection process. Commonly used sampling methods include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling and matched random sampling. In very specific circumstances, a sample might be purposively selected. For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected non probability sample, which gives the researcher assurance about selected population. This sample gives a clear explanation about the chances of everyone in the community that is limited, since the study used qualitative method.

In the approaches to sampling, there is no attempt to create a sample that is statistically representative of a population. Rather, people or cases are chosen 'with purpose' to enable the researcher to explore the research questions or develop a theory. The cases are selected on the basis of characteristics or experiences that are directly related to the researcher's area of interest and her research questions, and allowed the researcher to study the research topic in-depth. The cases chosen are those that can reveal and illuminate the most about the research area (Matthews and Ross (2010).

Therefore, the study employed purposive sampling method to select the participants. The purposive sampling method was used in this study to select its participants. Greenfield (2002) defines purpose sampling as the technique where subjective judgments are used to resolutely select groups that the researcher believes will represent the population. Purposive sampling is a non-probability based sample "associated with research designs that are based on the gathering of qualitative data and focuses on the exploration and interpretation of experiences and perceptions,"

(Matthews & Ross, 2010). In purposive or judgmental sampling, the researcher chooses subjects who, in his opinion, are relevant to the research topic.

In this study the respondents were selected purposively because of their experience with the central phenomenon or key concept being explored. The most productive sample that will answer the research question is selected (Marshall, 1996). The researcher selected at least three social workers from each municipality in Capricorn District employed by the Department of Social Development, practising as generic practitioners and serving in the rural areas. The researcher selected participants who had as least one year and above working experience as employees of the department.

3.5 POPULATION

"Population is defined as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications," (Polit and Hungler 2004:290). "The population includes all elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study," (Burns & Grove, 2003:43).

For the purpose of this study, the population included all social workers in Capricorn District. They were regarded as the population since the study is on the problem of asset management and how it impacts on social workers. Clearly, the most informed group on the subject will be the workers themselves because they are the ones who experience the asset challenge. The interview questions were in English since the groups of people selected were able to understand the language wherein they were asked to share knowledge in dealing with the effect of asset management on social work services delivery in the Department of Social Development.

3.6 SAMPLE SIZE

Sample size refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample. This is a major problem before a researcher. The size of sample should neither be excessively large, nor too small, (Kothari, 2004:73). Therefore,

> This means that sample size should be optimum, an optimum sample is one which fulfils the requirements of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility. While deciding the size of sample, researcher must determine the desired precision as also an acceptable confidence level for the estimate (ibid, 2004:73).

In general, sample sizes in qualitative research should not be too large that it is difficult to extract thick, rich data. At the same time, as noted by Sandelowski, the sample should not be too small that it is difficult to achieve data saturation (Flick, 1998; Morse, 1995), theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:136), or informational redundancy (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Quantitative researchers often fail to understand the usefulness of studying small samples. This is related to the misapprehension that generalisability is the ultimate goal of all good research and is the principal reason for some otherwise sound published qualitative studies containing inappropriate sampling techniques.

An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question. For simple questions or very detailed studies, this might be in single figures; for complex questions, large samples and a variety of sampling techniques might be necessary. In practice, the number of required subjects usually becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data (data saturation). Clearly, this requires a flexible research design and an iterative, cyclical approach to sampling, data collection, analysis and interpretation. This contrasts with the stepwise design of quantitative studies and makes accurate prediction of sample size difficult when submitting protocols to funding bodies (Marshal, 1996).

For the purpose of the study, the population sample was drawn from social workers in Capricorn District. The sample was from Capricorn District and specifically from Aganang Municipality where the researcher is employed and based. Since there are 360 social workers in Capricorn District, and 40 social workers at Aganang Municipality, the sample size was therefore be 12 social workers with 6 males and 6 females, and were selected randomly in the selected service points within the municipality. Since it is a purposive sampling method, the researcher selected and included social workers who have been working in the department for some time as participants. This also considered the participants' experience and fair participant selection. This selected sample were grouped and interviewed and the other half filled the questionnaires on the proposed research topic. The research therefore had a total number of 12 participants.

The study population is decided from the target population, and from this, a sample is drawn. The sampling size diagram can be presented as follows:
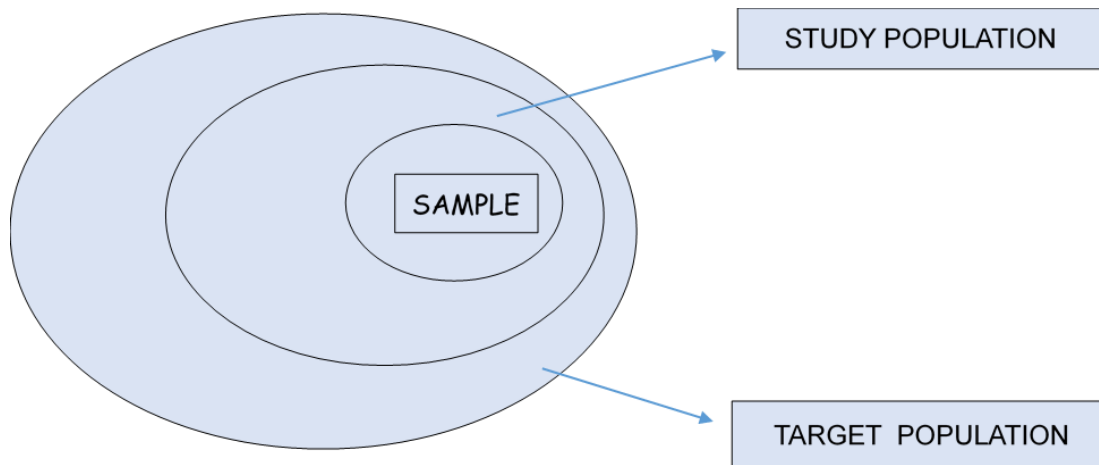
Figure 1: The Sampling Size Diagram Chaturvedi (2014:9)

Random sampling is used in this research. A minimum number of 12 participants were selected from different social work service points. The selected respondents were requested to take part in the completion of the questionnaire and the other half was interviewed.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

"Data analysis is a mechanism for reducing and organising data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher," (Burns and Grove, 2003:479). "Data analysis is a challenging and a creative process characterised by an intimate relationship of the researcher with the participants and the data generated," (De Vos et al, 2002:339). Coffey and Atkinson (1996:189) argue that qualitative data analysis needs to be conducted with rigour and care.

The analysis of the data was carried out by using thematic content analysis; and by looking for patterns and themes as well as raptures in the data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently, it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic, (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). The questions in the interview guide were presented in the form of themes.

In phenomenological research, the analysis begins as soon as the first data have been collected. They may consist of no more than a single interview. When the researchers prepare to attend to the data, their first task is a conceptual one: the clarification of their own preconceptions of the phenomena under study. This is "bracketing" and means "suspending as much as possible the researcher's meanings and interpretations and entering into the world of the individual who was interviewed," (Tesch, 1990:92). The actual data analysis occurs when the researchers read the entire data set. Phenomenology reading is more than casually taking note of the content. "The researchers immerse themselves in the data, read and reread, and dwell with the data, in order to achieve closeness to the data and a sense of the whole. When they are satisfied that the text has become accessible to them, they can delineate all 'meaning units' throughout the entire interview transcription, decide which ones are relevant to the research questions asked, and then bind the meaning units that contain them," (Ibid, 1990:91). Data analysis requires that researchers dwell with or become immersed in the data.

"Data analysis is done to preserve the uniqueness of each participant's lived experience while permitting an understanding of the phenomenon under study. This begins with listening to the participants' descriptions and is followed by reading and rereading the verbatim transcriptions," (Henning, 2004:127). As the researcher became immersed in the data, she identified and extracted significant statements. Braun and Clarke (2006:101)'s 'guide' to the 6 phases of conducting thematic analysis:

- Becoming familiar with data.
- Generating initial codes.
- Searching for themes.
- Reviewing themes.
- Defining and naming themes.
- Producing the report.

The response of social workers or participants was analysed, and this guided the researcher to identify the themes for the data presentation and analysis of chapters. The themes for this study were also be drawn from the interview questions that the researcher asked the participants. Data was interpreted through a descriptive and

explanatory method. "To find answers to research questions, we need to collect appropriate data for analysis. Data can be spoken or written, non-verbal, structured in different ways, produced by individuals or groups, be factual or representing opinions, and it can include the researcher's own reflections, "(Matthews and Ross, 2010:181).

3.8 WRITING THE REPORT

It is important for the researcher to know that writing a report at the end of a study involves making an interpretation or understanding of the data. The research report is the key aspect of the research, and is very critical that the researcher has to present the report. Furthermore, it is necessary that the report stands to the expectations of the researcher. The study was clearly reported by looking into its structure and content. The report comprises the general introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation, interpretation of the results, research findings, conclusion and recommendations.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are commonly understood as rules for distinguishing between right and wrong, a code of professional conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Since the study used the qualitative method, the researcher had to interact deeply with the participants by entering their personal domains of values, weaknesses, beliefs and many more to collect data. Silverman (2000:201) reminds researchers that "they should always remember that while they are doing their research, they are actually fact entering the private spaces of their participants."

Creswell (2003:65) states that "the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants, and also stressed that the ethical code for researchers is to protect the privacy of the participants and to convey this protection to all individuals involved in the study." Miles and Huberman (1994) list several issues that researchers should consider when analysing data. They caution researchers to be aware of these and other issues before, during and after the research has been conducted. Some of the issues involve the following:

- Informed consent (Do participants have full knowledge of what is involved?)

Informed consent is a vital part of the research process, and as such entails more than obtaining a signature on a form. For this reason, it was given the attention it deserved in the study. Creswell (2003) states that "the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants"." Informed consent is based on the understanding that the researcher must provide information to the participants about the purpose of the research, its procedures, potential risks, benefits, and alternatives, so that the individual understands this information and can make a voluntary decision on whether or not to continue with his participation (Liamputtong, 2009:34; Kubayi, 2013:122). The research participants must understand what they are consenting to without prejudice (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The participants were presented with a consent form which they signed to indicate their agreement to participate in the research.

- Harm and risk (Can the study harm participants?)

Wallen and Fraenkel (2013:23) argue that participant protection is perhaps the most important ethical consideration of all. It is a fundamental responsibility of every researcher to do all in his or her power to ensure that the participants of a research study are protected from any physical or psychological harm or danger that may arise from research procedures. The participants may worry about the information provided to land in the wrong hands. However, to minimise any harm to them, the researcher ensure that the information provided stays anonymous and confidential. The researcher obtained formal consent of the participants and disclosed in full the objectives of the study. They should to feel that they can refuse to be in the study (Mitchell and Jolley (2012:59).

- Honesty and trust (Is the research being truthful in presenting data?)

According to Kubayi (2013:122), "informed consent also implies that the participants should not be pressured or deceived in any way to participate in the research. It is therefore crucially important for the researcher to inform them about the nature and goals of the study before they are requested to take part in the research project". The researcher of this study obtained informed consent from the participants before the commencement of the interviews. This entailed making a full disclosure of the nature

of the study subsequent to which the participants were required to read and sign an informed consent form (Creswell, 2009).

- Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity (Will the study intrude too much into group's behaviour?).

Anonymity and confidentiality of participants are important elements of research. The aim of confidentiality is to conceal the true identity and to ensure the privacy and anonymity of the participants (Liamputtong, 2009). Confidentiality is based on the principle of respect for autonomy of individuals in terms of keeping their identity unknown (Christensen et al., 2011). "In view of this principle, the participants have the right to decide who should know about their names or any other form of identification in the research" (Kubayi, 2013:123; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The revelation of the participants' identity may result in serious physical, emotional or social harm not only to the subjects, but also to the community or even the society. In the case of social harm, social problems may emanate from the research. Consequently, the researcher is required to take responsibility to ensure that the subjects' participation in the research does not adversely affect them (Liamputtong, 2009).

- Fair participation selection

Cooper and McNair (2017) reported that equitable selection is about fairly sharing the benefits and burdens (possibility of harm, inconveniences) of research. The benefits of research are the anticipated benefits to subjects as individuals, and the benefit of the knowledge expected to the population affected the results of the research. A fundamental tenet of ethical research is that the selection of subjects must be equitable. The researcher selected or included social workers who were employed by the Depart of Social Development and had been practising with more than three years of experience. The researcher assumed that they had more information relating to the research topic.

Silverman (2000:201) states that the relationship between the researcher and the subject during an interview needs to be considered in terms of the values of the researcher and cultural aspects. This is due to the fact that one unexpected concern relating to ethical issues is cultural sensitivity. The quality and integrity of this study was insured by making sure ethical factors are taken into consideration. This involved

respecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. This means that the participants' names will not be used for any other purposes, nor will the information be shared that reveals their identity in any way.

The participants were not asked any personal information, and the researcher ensured that all participants participated voluntarily and could pull out at any time when they felt uncomfortable. The research was only for academic purposes. The participants were not subjected to any harm, be it emotional or physical. To ensure that the research is independent and partial, the researcher disclosed the main aim of the study to the participants. The researcher strictly adhered to all ethical guidelines. This served as standards about the honesty and trustworthiness of data collected and the accompanying data analysis. Therefore, the researcher requested the participants' consent to conduct the interviews.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the research methodology of the study. It looked at the research methods where they were discussed and their distinctions were clearly tabulated. Between these research methods, the researcher had to choose the model which her study was based on when collecting data. The chapter also focused on the research design and the research approach. These were discussed in detail. A section on research sampling was also discussed looking into the types of sampling and the stages that take place in the selection of a sample as well as the strategies of sampling. Finally, the target population was discussed.

The attention was also given to the data collection, data population and data analysis wherein methods of gathering information from the participants were discussed. Interviews as some of the most important aspects of this study as data collection techniques were divided into unstructured, structured and semi-structured interviews. Amongst these, the researcher has to pick one that would be used in her study as a method for the collection of data. In the data analysis, thematic analysis was chosen. The section on ethical considerations was attended to and discussed in detail as a way of showing the researcher's understanding of the importance of considering the participants' well-being before, during and after the interview.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study and their interpretation thereof. As explained in chapter 3, data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. The interpretation of findings was in relation to the research objectives and questions of the study. The aim of the study is to investigate and explore the status of assets management in relation to social work services and strive to find possible solutions in the DSD, Capricorn District, Limpopo. This study tires to answer what the current state of asset management as it relates to service delivery is, how the management affect the social worker's service delivery and what strategies may enable the department to deal with any emerging issues? Thematic content analysis is used to analyse data. Themes are generated to categorise patterns or trends in order to facilitate the realisation of the aim and the objectives of the study.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

The demographic data of the respondents who participated in this study are presented below. According to Petersen (2000:27), "demographic information refers to socio-economic characteristics of a population expressed statistically, such as age and gender". For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the profession, employment status and location of the respondents. The respondents were from Aganang Local Municipality, Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. There were four from the municipality and two from the District office. The respondents were interviewed individually and data were integrated according to the themes. Table 4.1: Respondents' demographic information

Respondents	Employment designation	Code and highest qualification	Work Experience	Geographical location
5	-Social worker	-A1	3-5 years	Aganang Municipality

	-Social worker	-A2	6-10 years	
	-Social worker	-A3	6-10 years	
	-Social worker	-A4	6-10 years	
	-Social worker	-A5	11-above	
2	Asset managers	-B1	10-above	DSD Limpopo Provincial office
	Assets co-ordinator	-B2	6-10 years	Capricorn District office

The above table indicates the number of the respondents that took part in the study. The respondents are listed according to their employment, profession, as well as location. The codes are used to identify the respondents.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THEMES

This section presents and discusses themes emerging from the participants' responses. For easier analysis and interpretation of the data, this chapter is divided into a number of themes and subthemes. Firstly, the chapter discusses the state of assets in the DSD for social workers and factors that lead to the lack of performance by social workers relating to asset management. Secondly, the chapter looks at the impact of asset management on social work service delivery. Thirdly, major challenges encountered by social workers and asset managers with regard to assets. Fourthly, the chapter explores the impact of asset management on professionals/social workers. In the fifth place, the chapter pays attention to the role of assets on service delivery. Lastly, the strategies that can be recommended to address the challenge of assets are discussed.

4.3.1. THEME 1: THE STATE OF ASSETS WITHIN THE DSD FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

This theme is based on the question which the researcher asked the respondents. The question asked was: What kind of assets do you require or use as a social worker? The responses from the respondents are presented and analysed below.

The purpose of asset management function is to provide resources and expertise to support the acquisition, in-service support and disposal of physical assets required by the organisation. A central asset management function will be needed at company level, providing inputs to asset planning, taking a role in major acquisitions and developments and providing the systems and facilities needed to support assets throughout their life.

Respondents A1 and A2 concur that the current state of assets within the department is poor. This is because the standard of the infrastructure is not satisfactory. There are offices that do not have certain major or basic items/assets that one must have in order to render services. Lack of assets affect negatively the rendering pf services. For instance, it cannot be easy to interact with the client in the office that is overcrowded. The client cannot be at ease to ventilate due to lack of privacy. This indeed has negative effect on service delivery. The above respondents further indicate that some of the buildings where social workers operate are limited to the extent that it forces them to share office spaces and computers. This goes to an extent where four to five social workers share one computer and five to seven share one vehicle.

> *Establishment of a rapport with our client is also affected negatively, and that is the only way to create a conducive environment for the client to open up and feel safe to share his/her deepest problems. This is mostly unachievable by us as social workers because we are always many in one office due to lack of office space (Respondent A2).*

One cannot have blind eye on the fact that the best social work service can be received where there is, amongst the many, conducive environment and privacy. In the same vein, the respondents further aver that the sharing of an office compromises the level of confidentiality which must be assured to the clients by the worker when establishing a professional rapport.

From the above responses, it is evident that indeed there are challenges that need to be addressed in the department. For social workers to best render services, their efforts should be complemented by assets that they need. One cannot be expected to produce the best of his/her ability while the basic needs are not well taken care of.

In the same vein, respondent B1 asserts that:

> *The current state of assets in Limpopo DSD (Capricorn District), I would say is average because we do try our best to provide our services, not only on the province and district office, but also in the local municipalities, but there is still a lot of work to be done as there are still other local offices lacking assets, or they have either lost their lifespan/ thus no longer in good conditions to be used.*

It can be concluded from the above statement that the employees try their best to give services. However, the absence or lack of well serviced assets serves as a barrier to the best service they intend to offer. It is evident that the willingness of social workers alone cannot cater for what is desired. Therefore, assets are key at all levels whether national or local municipalities.

Respondent A2 further indicates that currently it is a sad story with regard to the overview assets because the Department of Social Development does not even have enough buildings. Most social workers are accommodated in former clinics in nursing homes. Some use maternity wards with court beds, curtains and many other things that belong to the Department of Health. The available equipment also has problems such as printers. The assets section procures only toner per year and if it finishes during the year, the officer has to wait for the next financial year to get a toner. This means that one will no longer print any report from their office; he may not have toners. The process of getting a new one is difficult. If the computers contact viruses, there IT specialists to solve the problem locally. When the cars break down, maintenance takes time. There are no cellular phones, and this forces one to end up requesting the staff from the Department of Health to utilise their assets.

If such comments are made by service providers, what more can one expect as far as the actual service delivery. Looking at the above comments, it is clear that the communication in not up to standard. If social workers have to use their own cellular phones to call clients, what happens when one has no airtime? It also shows that the working environment that other social workers operate in are not conducive for both the service provider and well as for the clients.

Social services are key in the community to deal with social ills, and when such services suffer, the community gets victimised and vulnerable. Looking at the responses from the respondents, one cannot argue that there are plenty of challenges faced by social workers when it comes to assets; they need to render services. To start with, social workers deal with confidential issues. However, when they share the office space, the confidentiality is compromised, and this, on its own, is a bridge of one important aspect in this profession, the code of ethics and social work principles.

In this theme, the responses from the respondents answered the question that was asked. The responses align well with the objective of the study. The objective that is alight to this theme is the first objective which is to examine the state of asset management within the department. In a nutshell, the view of the respondents is that the state of asset management in the DSD is not satisfactory. There is a lot to be done for the service to be acceptable.

THEME 2: THE EFFECT OF ASSET MANAGEMENT ON SOCIAL WORK SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE DSD

This theme looks at the effect of asset management on social work service delivery in the DSD. It is based on the question that the researcher asked the respondents. The question asked was: Does the current asset management system affect your service delivery? The respondents' views are discussed below, and are incorporated with other scholars' views.

Without good asset management, institutions cannot achieve their desired goals. The Scottish Executive (2005) claims that the appropriate use of assets in the right location can make the difference between good and poor service delivery. The whole point of asset management is to ensure that front line services provided by the authority are done via the most effective and efficient property portfolio. In the same vein, Lipman (2013) echoes that studies have shown consistently that a disturbingly high number of non-management employees are disengaged and not working at full productive capacity due to lack of resources.

Respondents A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1 and B2 concur that asset management has an effect on social work service delivery. Their views echo the Scottish Executive's (2005) claim, who aver that the effect is so severe that it compromises the quality level of

services because lack or unavailable and inaccessible asset affects them negatively. Thus, they end up rendering services of poor quality. It is also found that lack of transport also affects them in terms of attending emergency cases such as domestic violence, or child neglect cases, which require an officer to attend to such cases within 24 hours. Respondent C emphasised that "lack of resource is slowly killing our morale and profession, as some clients would even be fearful to open up and end up saying things which they were really not intending to report due to overcrowded office space".

> *Yes, asset management do affect service delivery of social worker, because we use things such as stationeries, equipment's, furniture, most offices with computers do not have printers, and are in available in the office forces you to drive too far just to print documents. Cars: there are urgent cases such as that requires you to go outside the office such as in school, crèches or any NGOs, courts etc. It is a challenge when you have to or more social workers stationed in one office it becomes a challenge when you have cases that requires joint interview and it becomes a challenge as you become overcrowded and that hinders some clients to not open up enough with some of the information detrimental to finalise the case. This day we use certain computer softwares but most of the available PCs or laptops provided were not installed such softwares and really it is a challenge to the service delivery as a social worker (respondent A4).*

One would expect departments such as DSD to be a fully-fledged structure that has all the required assets. Nevertheless, the above quotation outlines the challenges faced by those who have the responsibility of delivering services to the most vulnerable people at grassroots level. It cannot be argued that most of the problems found in DSD emanated from lack of assets or the skeletal operation due to insufficient infrastructures. The situation where a social worker has to use the laptop that does not have the required software is evident to the mountain that is yet to be climbed.

> *Yes of course, I say so because a social worker does not operate in the farm yards to cultivate or saw plants. That is even in farm yard, the person who is cultivating should have a hand hoe and other tools to perform his/her duties. Same applies to social workers they also need to have assets suitable for them to render services, therefore mismanagement or unavailability of such as assets could really affect their level of service delivery negatively (Respondent A4)*

The above citation puts emphasis on the point that without the required assets, social workers cannot give their utmost best service. As much as one is willing and passionate about helping the nation, this willingness alone cannot bear fruits unless it

is complemented by the required assets to do the work. The social worker is expected to travel to do home visits, record information, and communicate with co-workers and clients. However, the above mentioned can only be achieved if the necessary assets are provided.

Respondent A6 further indicates that the unavailability of required assets is killing his morale of working, because he ends up having a lot of cases awaiting follow-ups, which requires a car or a phone call. This becomes a challenge. My colleagues and I would sometimes resolve the matter of requesting to utilise the landline from the Department of Health since we are stationed in their building. We sometimes utilise our own personal cellular phones to make follow up calls on clients. It is from our passion that we end up using our own cellular phones. However, it is painful knowing that we should be provided with the equipment because our personal airtime will not be reimbursed. With regard to contacting the supervisor, we even engage her using social media such as WhatsApp group for her to send us important messages. Even though the group may cost us mobile data, we have agreed to utilise that option until we get internet access in our office. We do all of this because we want to give our communities better services. Be that as it is, the WhatsApp messages can somehow not be received immediately due to the fact that one might be out of data by the time the message is sent, which requires urgent attention.

Respondent A1 reports that "we are expected to share some assets such as computers, wherein you find 5 social workers sharing one computer whereas the motto says one "computer, one social worker". The overall status is either good or average, there is still a lot of lacking of assets". Truly speaking, the computer assigned to one individual will conform the privacy of the service rendered as required. Now that people are sharing computers, privacy is compromised. One can accidentally forget to delete the document from the shared computers, and this gives access to other users to know things that they should not know. In their turns, respondent B1 and B2 argue that to some extent, yes it may affect the morale of social workers, but it depends on the individual social worker, because some are creative to an extent of liaising with other service providers and integrate with them.

Respondent A4 alludes to the fact that it affects him bad, because at times it even breaks the confidentiality principle which is against ethics. "For example, when I do

not have a car to conduct home visits, I will end up sending someone who might be from that same place as the client to come to the office which may make the other client uncomfortable". On the other hand, respondent B1 reports that those who were not yet provided with resources may indeed "performance be affected, but on the other hand, we must not forget those social workers who do not like to perform their duties or even reach their targets and use the issue of assets as their scapegoats. They should use whatever that is provided so far, and let the people they serve receive services". To some extent, yes it may affect the morale social workers, it depends on the individual social worker, because some are creative to an extent of liaising with other service providers and integrate with them.

From the above responses, one can draw a conclusion that indeed assets mismanagement do affect the service delivery of social workers in the DSD. It is therefore important for people responsible for assets to ensure that the mission and vision of the department is achieved by providing the tools of trade. The researcher also realised form the above responses that service providers seemed stuck with the situation. On the other hand, the managers encourage creativity to render services using the available assets.

The extent to which asset management is important to the social work profession shows that its mismanagement also affects the profession as well. The reason is that finding professional people using social media such as WhatsApp really shows the level of desperation for service providers to work. On the other hand, one can also argue that it shows the level of creativity, but knowing the profession of social work as a noble one makes it harder to believe this. The issue of assets could affect and dent it to that level.

This theme has provoked the feelings of most of the respondents. The responses answered the question which probes how effective asset management is in the social work services. The theme is also in line with the objective of the study, which is to assess the effect of asset management on service delivery. It is found from this theme that asset management has a great effect on the delivery of services from DSD. The overall impression of the respondents is that there is more that needs to be done in order for the DSD to run smoothly. Lack of basic equipment such as computers and

phones is hindering social workers from doing their utmost best. However, they are doing their best under the situation to ameliorate the standards of service delivery.

THEME 3: CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS WITH REGARD TO ASSET MANAGEMENT

Poor asset management affects service delivery negatively (Campbell, 1995). The success of an organisation\ department needs the commitment and passion of staff that acknowledge and take on the challenge of asset management (Godau, nd).

Efficient asset management will enable an authority to:

• Maximise efficiency of service delivery.

• Allocate resources effectively to areas of greatest need.

• Account to the public for its use of public assets (Scottish Executive, 2005).

Respondent B1 alludes to the fact that assets that I think social workers should have to provide services are both movable and immovable assets. We have a challenge with regard to buildings currently as we are also leasing or renting our offices. Transport is provided but is insufficient to conduct home visit. We also have cell-phones to contact clients and their superiors, office furniture such as chairs and tables to compose the work station, computers/laptops to compile reports.

From the theme above, the following subthemes emerged:

i.   Transport
ii.   Accommodation/Office space
iii. Computers and printers
iv.   Landline/ cellular phones
v.   Furniture

Transport

Respondent A3 and A4 indicate that there was a time when only one vehicle was assigned to be shared by 9 officials from three different offices. Respondent A3 and Respondent A4 further said that the parts were stolen from the very same vehicle by the criminals. That really affected the service delivery for months, as there was no car to either conduct home visits or arrange community awareness campaigns. On the

other hand, respondent A4 argued that she once had her car stuck while conducting home visits, and it was scary, shameful, embarrassing and de-meaning because I had to stay with the car and waited for the transport officers to arrive and help me with the vehicle.

> *We once had a case where the car was not available and had gone for service, so we had to liaise with other stakeholders such as the police to help us to attend such case because luckily it was a domestic violence case (Respondent A5).*

Using other stakeholders was helpful because it is actually called multidisciplinary intervention. From the above responses, one can argue that there seems to be many challenges with regard to government vehicles in the DSD, because social workers feel prone to harm when they drive some of them. It sounds like their safety at times is compromised. Responded A3 shared her experience stating that she once experienced a breakdown when going to conduct home visits. The breakdown occurred at a place known for high crime rate. She further alluded that the incident made her fear for her life in a way that she is not comfortable whenever driving the same car. One could argue that the transport issue in the DSD puts the lives of the service providers in danger.

Accommodation/Office space

Respondent A4 is of the view that office space is currently poor but we are hoping for the better as time goes by. An ideal situation of an office of the social worker should firstly be accessible to everyone, including those living with disabilities. But we still have such offices wherein a person using a wheelchair cannot access such services, an office that would make a client feel comfortable that their issues will remain confidential.

The challenge of office space alluded to by respondent A4 is a case that one cannot turn a blind eye on. The point to take home is that cases reported to social workers require total privacy. Nevertheless, the situation in most offices is compromised. Respondent A4 indicates that it becomes a challenge to run a joint session due to overcrowding in offices. The respondent further enlightens us on the point that it is a challenge to have a joint session under the situation as you become overcrowded in the office, and this hinders some clients from opening up, with some of the information

detrimental to finalise cases no matter how hard you try to establish a rapport and assure them confidentiality.

Computers and printers

Respondent A1 responded that the challenge is that there is a printer brought to the office without computers, or even to train the officer on how it operates. So I felt like I need to be trained so that I could use it with my own laptop. The chairs available are no longer in good condition. Respondent A3 indicates that they are not sufficient and does not tally with the DSD assets ideal policies that says one computer should be assigned to one social worker. But currently five social workers share two computers in the office.

Landline/ cellular phones

Respondents A1, A2, A4 and A5 report that they neither have office landlines or cellular phones to contact clients with. They have got to travel from their offices to other offices to make phone calls, which is really time consuming. On the other hand, respondents A3, A6, B1 and B2 do have office landlines and this makes it easier for them to perform their work.

Furniture

Respondent A2 alludes to the fact that the challenges with regard to assets in the office is that the furniture and the buildings look old and dilapidated and do not look professional, and therefore put our lives at risk.

In contrast to the above views, respondent A5 alludes to the fact that "he has never encountered any problem with assets he has in the office. All are in good condition".

Respondent B1 and B2 assert that the challenge that we encounter as managers/ or responsible persons in office to provide adequate assets is always inadequate finances from the provincial treasury. The annual budgets allocated for assets is mostly our number one challenge which leaves us to work with what we have even if it is insufficient.

It seems reasonable to say that decent furniture such as chairs and tables are primary assets for any office worker who has to sit down and write. Even though this might be

the case, from the above responses it looks like a dream for DSD social workers still in the process of coming true.

This theme has outlined the challenges DSD employees are faced with. Most of these challenges affect their day to day functioning. It appears that there is more that they can offer to their clients but their maximum potentials are hindered by lack of the above outlined problems that they are facing. This theme aligns with the aim of this study, which is to assess asset management in the DSD in Capricorn District.

THEME 4: FACTORS LEADING TO ASSET MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS IN THE DSD

Scottish Executive (2005), a non-statutory advisory note, alludes to specific problems of asset management. This government guidance makes city asset management an object of discourse within and beyond the local government entities themselves. They acknowledge the increasing pressures on local authorities due to tight budgets, new capital funding regimes and external needs, suggests a more formal approach to asset management:

With the introduction of the prudential capital regime, pressure on revenue budgets to fund capital infrastructure investment is a permanent management issue for each authority. Authorities are under direct pressure to improve the school estate, social housing provision and the condition of local roads, and evidence of good asset management may become a condition of discretionary grants. Good asset management can also help the authorities to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which is part of its obligations under Best Value (Scottish Executive, 2005).

Poor asset management affects service delivery negatively (Campbell, 1995). This view concurs well with respondent B1, who argues that poor asset management or failure in the provision of the required assets negatively affects the running of the institution. The challenge that we encounter as managers or responsible persons in assets office responsible for the provision of inadequate assets is always inadequate finances from the provincial treasury. The annual budgets allocated for assets is mostly our number one challenge, which leaves us to work with what we have even if it is insufficient. This confession confirms what the respondents alluded to on the nature of asserts in the department. With this response from the manager, one cannot

deny that the situation needs serious intervention so that the running of services should be restored to ensure that it runs smoothly.

Respondents A1, A2 and A3 mentioned the same factor of lack of well empowered and knowledgeable asset managers within assets section in the department, leading to poor asset management. They support the statement that good asset management can also help the authorities to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which is part of its obligations under Best Value (Scottish Executive, 2005).

Respondent A2 further alluded to the fact that poor management could also lead to poor performance in terms of procurement and biddings. What is drawn from the statement above is that poor management even affect the strength of their decision making. This goes down to lack of communication skills between managers and services providers, which indicates that there was no proper planning by managers. One cannot argue that planning is one of the most crucial principles of managers in every organisation, and therefore, the researcher agrees with the respondent to mention the fact that poor planning is a factor of poor management.

Respondent B2 further argued that they sometimes are failed by data inaccuracy and inconsistency. That is, they would still have captured and have the available and old information of assets that are expected to live for a certain period, but are already tarnished and in a condition of no use. Based on the statement above, it is arguable that some service providers also do not respect and protect assets provided to them. Their aspired lifespan comes to an end before the actual time.

Respondent A5 is of the view that sometimes it could be that there is an increased service level of demand which put a burden on the department in terms of being unable to handle the pressure. The respondent further acknowledged that there is a rise in demand of social workers, but the clientele could also be rising day by day. The rising population encompasses a wider and growing social problems that also stretch throughout the century. It could be drawn from the above statement that increase in demand of social work services is also a factor leading to challenges of managing assets.

This theme talks to aspects that hinder the smooth running of the supply of the needed assets. It appears that the problem is bigger than it seems on the ground. This theme

is in line with the aim of the study, which is to assess the effect of asset management in the DSD. It is in this theme where most of the claims made by the respective respondents were confirmed to be true. Moreover, the managers confirmed that there are problems that are far beyond their control.

THEME 5: ASSETS THAT SHOULD BE USED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE DSD

All respondents (both social workers and managers) agreed that an ideal social worker should have assets to renders services. Assets include telephones, computers, cars, phones, and the internet to share information with other colleagues and to access policies in order to update ourselves with amendments of certain policies related to cases reported, and cars to conduct home visits and do follows-ups.

Respondent A1 responded that social worker are required to compile /write reports. This means that our work is more of administrative work. Sometimes one must compile reports because it is said that if it is not written down and make a proof therefore, it is not done. So we are obliged to write down everything or any contact we have with clients in order to record the information in files. Therefore, assets such as computers are basic needs in our line of work, but surprisingly, we are still sharing them at a ratio of one is to four.

The above information shows that every social worker deservers or needs assets to render efficient services effectively. Failure to be provided with such assets could hamper the quality of services. The ideal social worker's office should firstly be accessible by all clients, even those living with disabilities.

With regard to cars, social workers utilise them to conduct home visits and to attend to other work related meetings, workshops, community awareness campaigns, etc. Therefore, vehicles are also part of the main resources that service providers need in order to render services. It was also found that sufficient office space is also an imperative where clients will be able to feel safe to open up and ventilate without being fearful or intimidated by overcrowded offices.

Social workers further need to have computers to compile their reports and to capture important client data. They also need to have such machines with internet connection to conduct researches on different policies, while planning for intervention measures.

They should also be able to print whatever necessary. Social workers also use multidisciplinary intervention, which sometimes would require them to either fax, email or submit a hard copy of reports. Therefore, to do such they should definitely have the right assets.

The researcher also realised that social workers will hardly operate effectively without resources such as telephones or cellular phones. The availability of these assets will enable them to attend to cases immediately. It was found that most social workers do not have either landlines or cellular phones to utilise for such purposes, hence they utilise theirs when available.

THEME 6: ADAPTATION TO THE SITUATION BY WORKERS AND MANAGERS OF ASSETS

Most respondents appeared to have encountered challenges with assets associated with service delivery. Be that as it is, passion drives them to come up with coping strategies that see them survive every day. To support this, respondent A1 shared his side of the story, alluding that, "I had to use my own means/ personal assets such as my laptop to write the reports and also my cellular phone to do follows ups or advocate on behalf of my clients with my own cellular phones, just to benefit the clients". Social workers are expected to write reports so that they can keep records and have easy access to information that might be important in order to assist clients. However, if one has to use his\her personal laptop, the level of professionalism is compromised because the laptop will not be limited to office use. One might have access to it, and this means that the confidentiality clause is broken.

Of course, the idea of bringing and utilising my own assets was helpful to me because I was now able to compile reports with my own computer and to attend to cases using my own cellular phone (Respondent A2). But the challenge was that if my personal assets could become damaged, I was going to fix it myself as I was doing it out of my own will and to avoid becoming stressed. Respondent A2 responded that in order to be seen by the client as a change agent, and to help them resolve their problems, I would either refer them or utilise my own resources, which sometimes have a burden on my family's finances because I have to use my car filled with my own fuel and purchase data and airtime to perform other work duties, instead of utilising it for the benefit of my own family.

The above respondents show the same sentiments on adapting to the situation of lack of assets. They all agree to use their own resources for the benefit of their clients. They seem to be rooted to their work principles which raise a question on whether or not their solution put pressure on them or their families and who assist them. They seem to try so hard to please and help their clients, and seem vulnerable on what they should do when their resources are unavailable for that day.

> *The solution of bringing my own resources was helpful and has helped me maintain the trust and respect from the community as they never even realised that I have got a problem of lack and insufficient assets to provide them with necessary services as I was able to attend to their cases as quick as possible. I would say I have adapted to the situation of lack of assets because i use my own assets by using the free minutes provided by a certain network service provider. It kills one's morale to worker under such conditions because you end up feeling vulnerable while you have got to help the vulnerable simply because of lack of assets. It is in the heart. when you start this career is in the heart, hence you end up feeling as if your clients are family members, thus you always put yourself in their shoes, empathise with them and while trying to help them resolve their problems. So for their sake sometimes you utilise your own personal assets (Respondent A3).*

From the above responses, it seems reasonable to conclude that most social workers know how to manoeuvre around, and render services with the little resources and assets available for the benefit of their communities. Hence some of them even sacrifice their resources to render services. This shows that the Department of Social Development has dedicated staff whose services are the chore of the department. Most of them seemed to have adapted to the situation by utilising their own assets.

Respondent A4 avers that it is true when they say social work is a calling because you end up doing a lot of work out of the will of your heart and even utilise your own resources just to make a positive impact on the lives of poor people and those that are vulnerable. So it is a matter of either utilising your assets or leasing with the available stakeholders to assist where you run short as a social worker. In short I must just say we, as social workers have the best interest of our clients at heart.

The respondent further alludes to the fact that "I don't have an assigned car for me specifically; we change or rotate while being 10 with one car. The respondent further indicates that they would either utilise their own assets or engage with other stakeholders, while waiting for the report from the supervisor the reported assets that is not available in the office". In the same vein, respondent A5 shares the same

sentiments, stating that "I once had a case where the car was not available and had gone for service, so we had to liaise with other stakeholders such as the police to help us to attend such case because luckily it was a domestic violence case". This is a clear indication that there is a need for the DSD to provide their workers with the needed basic assets. Once the situation goes to a level where social workers ask for transport from the sister departments, it simply means that there is no guarantee that the service will be rendered to satisfactory levels. If the sister department is not available to assist, the job that needs to be done will not happen and this affects the poor community that awaits service delivery.

Using other stakeholders was helpful because it is actually called multidisciplinary intervention, and it is allowed. The fax machine as well as internet access are the only things we do not have in our office, and I wish we had internet access to be able to do research on some of the Acts since most of our knowledge and recommendations/actions are guided by different Acts. So, I cannot only rely on what I have learned at school because there are some amendments. So their unavailability can just hinder your service rendering, unless I use my own internet on my phone (Respondent A5).

Respondent A6 shared the view stating that they would sometimes resolve the matter of requesting to utilise the landline from the Department of Health since we are stationed there. Respondent A6 continued to make a point that they sometimes utilise their own personal cellular phones to make follow up calls on clients. With regard to contacting the supervisor, they even engage her using social media such as WhatsApp group for her to send us important messages. It is further alluded that even though the group may cost mobile data, they have agreed to utilise that option until they get internet access in their offices. They do all of this because they want to serve our communities with better services.

> *The solution of utilising my own resources becomes helpful as I will be able to attend to the case on the table even though, I must be honest that it sometimes opens a whole in our pockets as it exceeds our budgets on certain things. As the president Cyril Ramaphosa said "Thuma mina" I can say we are the perfect thuma mina crew and it is sad because it looks like we are not that fully recognised because of the way resources are managed and the salary level we get.*

The statement deduced from the above paragraph shows that DSD human resources and service providers are willing and able to do anything to accomplish the vision and mission of the department even though it may hamper with other aspects of their lives. For example, the social worker who argued the above statement shows to have a very high morale of working and caring for the wellbeing of service beneficiaries and ends up forgetting or putting aside her finances.

Respondent B1 claims that sometimes "I utilise my personal items on work related issues, and for me it is just to show the level of commitment and dedication on one's work because we want to see things done". Respondent A6 responds that, "Well in my office, we are three and it may sometimes be uncomfortable for some clients but besides that all is fine because we have got an office, a computer, car, printer, stationery as well as landline. So we do share some assets such as transport, and the computer, so it is just a matter of planning on who utilises what and when unless there is an emergency case,, that's when we kind of have a problem because it will ruin the weekly and monthly plans."

Based on the respondents' views on their adaptation to the situation of lack of service, the researcher found that the respondents utilised their own resources or assets. They utilised items such as their cellular phones to contact clients, laptops to compile reports, and even their cars to conduct home visits and or attend training and workshops.

This shows that there are still staff members who are still dedicated, willing and caring for the wellbeing of the communities and individuals that they serve, hence they would compromise their own assets without any compensation. This theme answered most of the questions one would ask after realising that there is a huge problem pertaining to the basic needs of social workers in terms of rendering services.

THEME 7: MANAGERS' VIEWs ON ASSET MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SOCIAL WORK SERVICE DELIVERY

Respondent B1 argues that asset management has a huge impact on the provision of social work services. Actually it is not only on them alone but the whole DSD fraternity, every service provider or administrator would somehow be affected or impacted negatively if he/she does not have assets.

Asset managers also agree that the social work section cannot run on its own; it needs another section which is assets section to perform effectively and efficiently. This concurs with the systems theory, that one system is not fully functional, it may disrupt other systems to function fully as well.

> *The current state of assets in Limpopo DSD (Capricorn District), is average because we do try our best to provide our service providers, not only on the province, nor district office but also in the local municipalities, but there is still a lot of work to be done as there are still other local offices lacking assets, or they a have either lost their lifespan/ thus no longer in good conditions to be used (Respondent b1).*

The researcher as one of social workers also acknowledges the work done by asset management, and that indeed there is a gap that still needs to be closed. This concurs with the above statement where the managers also acknowledged that there is still a lot of outstanding assets to be provided to service providers. They indeed have the duty to procure, provide, monitor and capture assets available and in use.

Respondent B2 also shares the same sentiment with respondent B1, that asset management has an impact on service delivery. However, respondent B2 further posits that it sometimes depended on the level of creativity of an individual social worker. For example, two social workers can lack the same assets, but the other one be more creative in making plans such as engaging with their supervisors or other colleagues.

The statement above indicated that managers expect service providers to make plans to accomplish the vision and mission of the department. They expect social workers to become more creative in bridging the gap where there is lack so that clients do not see. They encourage service providers to really be the face of the department.

THEME 8: STRATEGIES OF ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF ASSET MANAGEMENT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE DSD

Asset management activities are undertaken within an integrated governmental asset management policy framework. This requires assets to be managed meticulously through all phases of asset management. Accountability for the proper use of capital assets continues to be monitored through various government interventions and audits, including the Auditor-General, who audits the asset register and the asset management process (Asset management Framework, 2003).

> *Responded A2 alludes that as a social worker we serve vulnerable people, and for the benefits of the community or for the sake of you end up suppressing that there are problems with respects of assets. And for the sake of keeping the social work values of respect as a social worker, you end up sacrificing with your own personal items and use tour own car, cellular phones, data to access internet ,to connect with the supervisors and sometimes you end up requesting other stakeholders with resources to help you such as cars , cellular phones and it ends up making you as a social Worker to be seen by other stakeholders such as saps from social crime unit, ward councillors, Community Development workers, police forum, ward committees as parasite because, you always rely on them where you lack. For example, requesting SAPS cars or home based carers. Although sometimes they might think you are a parasite because you always need them to accompany you to attend cases.*

This shows that there are social workers who are creative enough to engage with other stakeholders and to intervene using the multi-disciplinary intervention to bridge the gap of lack of resources in the DSD.

Key interventions include, inter alia, the establishment of infrastructure asset management as a dedicated practice in local government with strong sector leadership, drive and regulation, municipal commitment and ownership, financial support and incentives, proper planning, appropriate institutional arrangements, skills development, as well as suitable support systems and tools (Van Zyl, Manus & Pensulo, 2008).

Van Zyl, Manus and Pensulo (2008) further argue that government has to intervene by providing remedial work and by implementing processes to prevent any further escalation of the problem. New legislation demands that all municipalities and service providers must practise proper asset management to achieve sustainable service delivery. The department must facilitate this through the development and implementation of suited policies, strategies and actions.

In light of the fact that local government is the closest level of government to the public, the framework for strategic asset management must be transparent and beyond reproach (Deakin, 1999). This will mean that communication between the various managers in the department and the asset manager must be fine-tuned.

Respondent A1 suggests that there should be engagement between assets office and social workers when it comes to the purchasing of these resources so that we have a say on what tools of trade are needed. This will help and avoid the matter of just saying

we have bought assets whereas there are those that are more of priority than what is provided. There should be collaboration between the office of social workers and that of assets to avoid the issue of purchasing of assets which are not of priority to social workers. Respondent A1 concurs with respondent A2 that the management of assets should really send people down to municipalities, in order to engage social workers on assets that they urgently need and list them based on their priorities so that when they budget for each year, they will be able to see what is required and where. This will also help the situation whereby you find that the assets office has bought a printer without checking whether there is one first, or purchase pen whereas there are no papers or relevant forms to write on.

On the other hand, responded A2 is of the view that since the department knows about the challenges of these assets, in trying to resolve them they should perhaps try the following strategies: With the minimum resources that are available, in terms of cars, they should maintain them regularly and not wait until they need major service, which will require more time and funds.

For the computers, they should appoint personnel for IT on a local level who will attend to the computers and make sure that he/she visits the service centres and update any software needed and write down the offices that need computers. When it comes to procurement or supply and demand of service, they should purchase sufficient assets that was budgeted for. With regard to stationery, they should not purchase stationery once per year, but rather per quarter.

They should also appoint or assign people on the local level who will co-ordinate the issue of assets in general, and submit to the district the service centres in need of assets. With regard to buildings and accommodation, while working on their ideal structures, they should perhaps rent or lease certain buildings to avoid overcrowding.

Respondent A3 suggests that there should be transparency from asset managers in communicating their challenges to social workers, so that they will endure while hoping that in this time, there shall be provision of some sort. Respondent A5 comments that it is just to say that they should provide social workers with outstanding assets. But with what we already have, we are thankful.

Respondent A6 argues that the people responsible for the provision of social work assets should just provide them with tools of trade that are sufficient in order for them

to do their jobs. In our case, since we don't have most of the assets, at least in some service centres whereby there are two cars, they should assign one for us that will stay in our service centres because currently, we should drive our own cars to other centres to get a government car, and this is costly.

According to Respondent B1, the strategies that can be used to address this challenge is to request funds left by other programmes. During the bids, we really analyse the most needed assets by social workers.

It seems reasonable to argue that indeed there is a gap on management with regard to assets in the DSD because most employees reasoned that there is lack of consultation with regard to assets, especially from the management's side to the lower level employees who utilise such resources in order to render services.

4.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has presented the analysis and interpretation of data that were collected through semi-structured interviews. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data as outlined in the methodology. The presentation and analysis of the data was done by means of generated themes to categorise patterns that are in line with the aim and objectives of the study. Furthermore, eight (8) themes that emerged from the informants' responses were discussed. For easier analysis and the interpretation of the data, the chapter was divided into a number of themes and sub-themes.

This chapter has confirmed what most of the authors such as Campbell (1995), Laughli (1999), Deakin (1999), Van Zyl, Manus and Pensulo (2008), Froud (2003) and Shaoul (2005) on the fact that asset management affects service delivery in the running of the organisation. It also covered the gap left out by other studies on asset management. The critical issues affecting the DSD were discussed in this chapter. These issues formed the foundation on how the department can develop going forward.

This study brought in new sights in terms of prioritising assets provision and management based on social workers' priorities to render services. The study also concurs with the systems theory, which advocates that if the subsystem (asset management section) is not functioning properly, it affects the other subsystems like the social work sections, their service deliver, the clients and many other things within the bigger system (DSD).

There are studies such as Van Zyl, Manus and Pensulo's (2008) on asset management that brought forth the results that concur with this study. Van Zyl, Manus and Pensulo's (2008) study focuses on the government as a whole, but this study specifically pays attention to challenges in the DSD. It provides insights of what is happening in DSD. In the light of the above, this study further opens the doors of further researches on DSD asset management.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the findings of the study together with the recommendations and draws the conclusions. Firstly, the summary of the study is presented. Secondly, the findings are discussed and the recommendations are made. Lastly, the conclusion of the study is presented.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate the effects of asset management towards social work service delivery in the Department of Social Development, Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the literature reveals that there are plenty of problems that social workers come across in the process of delivering their social work services in relation to assets.

The main focus was to find the appropriate strategies that can be used to manage assets in the DSD. The strategies assisted the researcher to seek for detailed descriptions and to attain understanding of how asset management relates and affects the provision of services. The researcher's intention and motivation was to determine better strategies that can be used in dealing with problems encountered by social workers in rendering services in relation to asset management.

5.3 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Asset management plays an important role in either providing or hindering social work services. The unavailability and lack of sufficient resources or assets affects the quality of work and services provided by service provider negatively. It compromises the effectiveness and efficiency of services to be provided. The findings and recommendations that are presented below are based on the themes that were analysed in Chapter 4.

5.3.1. THEME 1: THE STATE OF ASSETS WITHIN THE DSD FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

The study found that the state of asset management is not satisfactory in the DSD. The researcher understood that the available assets are insufficient, and others are

broken and unconducive to work with. That is, there is a big gap or a high need of improvement in the DSD assets section. It is therefore recommended that the government, especially the treasurer, should increase their budget allocation to the DSD for assets procurement.

5.3.2. THEME 2: THE EFFECT OF ASSET MANAGEMENT ON SOCIAL WORK SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE DSD

It was found and observed by the researcher that that asset management has a negative effect on social workers and the service delivery process. This effect goes to the extent of discouraging social workers from looking forward to work. Some feel like they are parasites on other stakeholders, as they are always requesting for help. Others felt helpless and yet needed to help their clients. It also affects their family financials as they end up utilising their own. The study found that the research problem does affect social workers' morale and confidence. It also breaks some of the social work values and principles, such as confidentiality and integrity. The researcher therefore recommends that the government should increase budget allocation for assets purposes. Social work supervisors should also support their supervisees where possible to reduce the burden caused by lack of assets.

5.3.3. THEME 3: CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS WITH REGARD TO ASSET MANAGEMENT

The study found that there is a number of challenges with regard to assets. Secondly, the study observed that some challenges exist in the DSD as a result of lack of communication or engagement, allocation of low budget by the government and poor management skills. Lack of assets such as transport, office space, computers/laptops, printers, fax machines, landlines/cellular phones, internet connection, stationery and furniture is a huge problem that faces social workers. This compels them to come up with strategies /measures that can help them to render services to their service beneficiaries.

It is therefore recommended that personnel in the transport section should monitor the condition of available vehicles, service them on time and bring them back to the service. The district director, together with the transport section unit, should assess and approve employees who are willing to utilise their own vehicles for work purposes and compensate them (scheme B). The department should appoint IT personnel at a

municipal level, who will address and monitor all problems encountered by social workers in the municipality. The government should allocate budget for building structure/ social work offices across Limpopo Province. While waiting for the budget allocation from the Provincial treasurer, DSD directors should lease office spaces which are conducive for both social workers and the clients.

Asset managers, the procurement section and social work supervisors in conjunction with the treasurer for budgetary purposes should ensure that social workers are provided with cellular phones or landlines. The government should consider increasing budgetary allocations to the Department of Social Development so that procurement processes can go smoothly.

5.3.4. THEME 4: FACTORS LEADING TO ASSET MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS IN THE DSD

The study found that some social workers or employees who were provided with resources do not take care of them. This makes the products not to last long. The study further observed that lack competent asset managers with good leadership, communication, planning, coordinating and budgeting skills hinders the success of the department/section to function fully. It is therefore recommended that the government should increase budgetary allocations to DSD.

5.3.5. THEME 5: ASSETS THAT SHOULD BE USED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE DSD

The study found that for every social worker to operate smoothly, effectively and efficiently, they should have certain assets. It was highly noted that a social worker should have assets such as a decent building//office space, which is furnished and electrified so that computers, printers, fax machines, printers, internet and telephones can be installed. The study found that most social workers still dream of having the above mentioned assets, whereas others do have some of them.

From the above finding, it is recommended that the provincial treasury should allocate sufficient budget to the DSD so that managers responsible for assets should ensure that needed assets in the relevant places are provided.

5.3.6. THEME 6: ADAPTATION TO THE SITUATION BY WORKERS AND MANAGERS OF ASSETS

The study found that at some point, almost all social workers and their managers utilise their own personal assets/resources to perform their duties. They do so without any compensation, but for the love of their professions and for the benefit of service beneficiaries. They use their assets as a coping mechanism, but deep down, they are hurting.

From the above finding, it is recommended that DSD management should approve that those employees willing to utilise their own assets should be compensated. This will reduce/ lighten the burden off the shoulders of service providers and ensure effective service provision.

5.3.7. THEME 7: MANAGERS' VIEWS ON ASSET MANAGEMENT TOWARDS SOCIAL WORK SERVICE DELIVERY

The study found that managers do agree that there are challenges in terms of procurement of sufficient assets for social workers. It was found that the main cause to all the problems emanates from the insufficient budget that is allocated to the department. The outdated data is also affecting the running of the procurement division. Although that may be the case, the asset section is reported to be working on updating the data.

It is therefore recommended that asset managers should thoroughly monitor their sub-ordinates frequently to assess and check whether their data has been updated. This will avoid having inconsistent and unreliable data. It is further recommended that the government should allocate sufficient budget, and monitor whether or not it was used adequately by asset managers.

5.3.8. THEME 8: STRATEGIES OF ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF ASSETS MANAGEMENT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE DSD

From this study, it has been realised that there was lack of accountability by asset users. Furthermore, it was noted that there is lack of collaboration and engagements amongst the relevant management or stakeholders responsible for assets process. Lack of constant monitoring was also realised.

The researcher recommends that the auditors should do consistent monitoring and auditing of existing assets, and they be monitored by assets registry. It is further recommended that there should be a once off engagement between asset officers and social workers when it comes to the purchasing of these resources so that we have a say on the tools of trade that are needed.

The accounting officer, in collaboration with the district director, should also encourage accountability for the proper use of capital assets. These assets should be monitored through various government interventions and audits, including auditors who audit the asset register and asset management process.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The study was set out to investigate the importance, and assess the effect, of asset management towards social work service delivery. The study has managed to achieve its objectives as set by the researcher, and that the questions asked were fully answered. The respondents were fully effective in their answers and were relevant to the questions as well as the objective. The researcher can indicate this, the reason being that the effects of asset management on social workers was provided, and the best strategies that could be utilised to improve the state of assets in the DSD were formulated.

The overall findings show that indeed there is a big challenge on service delivery with regard to assets in the Department of Social Development. The findings will help the DSD to improve on their asset management. The research will also open the eyes of asset managers to prioritise the relevant asset provision to service providers in order to accomplish the mission and vision of the department. It is hoped that social workers will also be able to provide better services to their beneficiaries.

The limitations of this study lie in the fact that there were fewer resources relating to the literature that relates to asset management in relation to social workers. This study increases awareness of the importance of assets on social work service delivery. The Department of Social Development should bear in mind that core service providers are social workers who provide special services, which deal with human psychosocial being. Hence, it should consider allocating more resources towards equipment such as pens, papers etc. This study will enable future studies/ researchers to make follow

ups on how the strategies suggested have been implemented in an attempt to develop asset management to better social work service deliveries.

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　　　　Thomson.

Permission letter   Nengovhela M.B

                                                          32 Tshokwane Ave

                                                          Ivy Park

                                                          0699

                                                          07 March 2018

Dear Mrs/Mr/ Dr/ Prof

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Masters Student in the Department of Development planning and management at the University of Limpopo. My supervisor is Prof T. Moyo.

The proposed topic of my research is: The effect of assets management on social

work services delivery in the department of social development: Capricorn district.

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine the state of asset management within the Department.

- To assess the effect of asset management on service delivery.

- To propose strategies that may enable the Department to deal with any emerging issues.

I am hereby seeking your consent to interview the staff members in the department.

To assist you in reaching a decision, attached herewith please find:

(a)   A copy of an ethical clearance certificate issued by the University.

(b)   A copy of the research instruments which I intend using in my research.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

The researcher: Nengovhela M.B   079 033 1999

The Supervisor(s): Prof T. Moyo   015 268 4246

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the thesis.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Nengovhela MB

…………………………..

—————————————————————   ——————————————————

Signature of Manager (Approval)   Date

_____   _____

Print name of researcher   Date

—————————————————————   ——————————————————

Signature of supervisor   Date

PARTICIPANTS CONSENT LETTER

Department of Development planning and management

University of Limpopo

Private X1106

Sovenga

0727

Date: _____

Dear participant

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study which focuses on The effect of assets management on social work services delivery in the department of social development: Capricorn district. The aim of the study is to investigate the effects of assets management of towards social work service delivery in the Department of Social Development: Capricorn district, Limpopo Province.

Kindly answer all questions as honesty as you can. Your responses will remain strictly confidential. You are free to answer any question. Participation is voluntary and you are therefore free to withdraw from this study at any time. Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards

_____   _____

Mrs Ṋengovhela (Masters Student)   Date

_____   _____

Prof Moyo T. (Supervisor)   Date:

PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORM

I _____ hereby agree to participate in a Masters study that focuses on The effect of assets management on social work services delivery in the department of social development: Capricorn district. The purpose of the study was fully explained to me and I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am not forced to participate. Furthermore, I understand that I can withdraw from participating in this study at any time. I also understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.

I insist that this research project is not necessarily going to benefit me personally.

Signature: _____   Date:_____

Title of the research: The effect of assets management on social work services delivery in the Department of Social Development: Capricorn District.
The interview guide.

NB. Interviews are conducted in English because respondents are professional social workers.

1. As a social worker, do you think asset management affect your service delivery? Please Substantiate.
2. What is the overview of assets you use as a social worker? Please substantiate.
3. In terms of your performance agreement, what types of assets do you need as a social worker to render/perform your services?
4. How does unavailability of assets affect your role as a social worker?
5. What are asserts that you don't have that you think should be available?
6. What challenges have you faced with regard to assets?
7. How did you manage to adapt to do your work irrespective of the challenge?
8. How have you resolved the challenge when assets are not available?
9. How responsive was solution of the problem (Were you successful or not)
10. What strategies would you like to recommend with regard to the challenge of assets?

Thank you for your participation

Title of the research: The effect of assets management on social work services delivery in the Department of Social Development: Capricorn District.

The interview guide

1. Does assets management have a role in social workers' service delivery? Please substantiate your answer.
2. How does assets management influence social workers' service delivery? Support your answer.
3. What is the current state of asset management in the department as it relates to service delivery?
4. Is it possible to provide services adequately with the current resources/assets you have in the office? Substantiate your answer.
5. What are major challenges encountered in the provision/delivering of social work services in the department of social development?
6. Do you think asset management affect service delivery? Substantiate.
7. What are the strategies that can be effectively used to enable the department to deal with any emerging issue?
8. Are you satisfied with the movable assets you have to provide service?
9. What is the condition of the immovable assets you operate under?
10. Are you satisfied with the current working conditions? Please substantiate your answer.

University of Limpopo
Faculty of Management and Law

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DEAN Private Bag)(1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa Fax: (015) 268 2873, Email: johannes.tsheola@ul.ac.za

268 2558,

18 October 2016

M.B Nengovhela (200720760)
TURF-LOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
LEADERSHIP MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT

Dear MB Nengovhela,

FACULTY APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I have pleasure in informing you that your Masters proposal served at the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee meeting on 05 October 2016 and your title was approved as follows•

"The effect of Assets Management on Social Work services delivery in the Department of Social Development: Capricorn District, Limpopo'.

Note the following: The study

Ethical Clearance	Tick One
Requires no ethical clearance Proceed with the study	
Requires ethical clearance (Human) (TREC) (apply online) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	
Requires ethical clearance (Animal) (AREC) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	

Yours faithfully

Prof MP Sebola

Chairperson: Faculty Higher Degree Committee

CC: Prof T Moyo, Supervisor, Dr KS Milondzo, Programme Manager, and Prof M.X Lethoko, Director of School.

Finding solutions for Africa

University of Limpopo

Department of Research Administration and Development

Private Bag)(1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa

Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 09 October 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/153/2018: PG

PROJECT:

Title: The Effect of Assets Management On Social Work Services Delivery in the Department of Social Development: Capricorn District, Limpopo.

Researcher: MB Nengovhela

Supervisor: Prof T Moyo

Co-Supervisor/s: N/A

School: Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership

Degree: Master of Development

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:

i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.

ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

University of Limpopo

School of Languages and Communication Studies

Translation Studies and Linguistics

Private Bag x1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa

Tel: (015) 268 3707, Fax: (015) 268 2868, email:joe.kubayi@ul.ac.za

10 October 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

SUBJECT: EDITING OF MASTER'S DISSERTATION

This is to certify that the master's dissertation entitled 'The effect of assets management on socialwork services delivery in the Department of Social Development: Capricorn District in Limpopo Province' by Nengovhela Maite Blantina has been proofread and edited, and that unless further tampered with, I am satisfied that all editorial issues have been dealt with.

Kind regards

Dr SJ Kubayi (DLitt et Phil - Unisa)

Senior Lecturer (Department of Translation Studies and Linguistics – UL)

SATI Membership No. 1002606

Finding solutions for Africa