THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF YOUNG ADULTS AFTER TERMINATION OF THEIR FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS AND FOSTER CHILD GRANTS

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that “the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants” is my own work and that all the resources that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature Date
Nyiko Given Ngoveni

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my children, Unahina Vuswikoti Ngoveni and Ompha Dyondzo Ngoveni. Their unfailing support and encouragement gave me the strength to face the challenges during the entire period of conducting this study.

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ABSTRACT

The absence of clear policy and practice guidelines aimed at supporting young adults after termination of foster care placements and foster child grants has implications to their psychosocial wellbeing and adjustment to life's demands. After termination of foster care placements and foster child grants, young adults are reported to be struggling financially, indulging in early and unprotected sex resulting in teenage pregnancy, performing poorly at school, dropping out of school, displaying adverse behaviour, and continuing dependence on family members for basic needs. Exploring the social functioning of young adults after termination of foster care placement and foster child grants is of paramount importance in developing an in-depth understanding of the social work services available to these young adults and in informing social work practice.

This qualitative study was conducted with young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants had been terminated, and with social workers who work in the field of child care and protection in the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Metro Region. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed in terms of Tesch's eight steps as cited in Creswell (2009:186). The following themes emerged from the analysis: experiences that life is "hard" after termination of foster child grants; young adults not coping independently after termination of grants; emotional and relationships consequences due to financial dependency; troubled expectations from social workers; and expectations from the Department of Social Development. Conclusions were drawn from the findings and recommendations were presented.

Key terms: Social functioning, young adults, termination, foster care placement, foster child grant, foster child, social worker, foster parent.

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

FCG	:	Foster Child Grant
DSD	:	Department of Social Development
SASSA	:	South African Social Security Agency
CETV	:	Chafee Education Training Vouchers
FUP	:	Family Unification Programme
FCHP	:	Foster Care Health Programme
STATS SA	:	Statistics South Africa
SOCPEN	:	Social Pension Fund Grant System
USA	:	United States of America
CHH	:	Child Headed Households
FSW	:	Framework for Social Welfare
IDP	:	Individual Development Plan
NDP	:	National Development Plan
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children Fund
ICAYCN	:	International Child and Youth Care Network
CBAFC	:	Child Bureau of Adoption and Foster Care

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

This chapter provides an overview of the topic of the study, namely the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. The research methodology that guided the study is outlined and the ethical considerations have all been taken into account.

1.1 Introduction, problem formulation, and motivation for the study

In this section the researcher will introduce the area of concern, formulate the problem, and provide a motivation for the study.

1.1.1 Introduction

The protection of the rights of children and youth is recognised as an important responsibility within any society, worldwide. Therefore, many countries have policies, programmes, and legislation to protect their children and youth, especially the most vulnerable. Similarly, South Africa has the well-structured Children's Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2006) that provides for the rights and protection of children up to the age of 18, which is recognised as the age of majority (Proudlock & Jamieson, 2008:2). However, the protective provision of the Children's Act is extended to the age of 21 only if the youth is still attending school. One of the child protection mechanisms in the Children's Act for children who require family-based alternative care is foster care, which is also terminated when the child reaches the age of 18 or 21 (Children's Act 38 of 2005,section 180) (South Africa, 2006).

According to Baugh (2008:1), the termination of alternative care, when children reach the age of majority, is referred to as aging out of care. Therefore, many of the young adults whose foster care is terminated are forced into independence, with little or no resources to help them assume their responsibilities as adults. Some of these young adults are reunited with their families; others remain in the

care of their caregivers and former foster parents; while the rest are expected to fend for themselves (Jones, 2013:227).

In South Africa, foster care is the placement of a child, by means of an order of the Children's Court, with a person who is not a biological parent or guardian of the child, but such a person should be "fit and proper to be entrusted with the foster care of the child and have the capacity to provide an environment that is conducive to the child's growth and development" (Children's Act 38 of 2005,section 180-182) (South Africa, 2006,). Furthermore, foster care is defined by Herbst and Muller (2001:1) "as a statutory substitute care within a family environment for children who cannot be cared for by their own parents in the short, medium or long term, while services to the parents are continued in order to return the children to their care within a specific period." According to the White Paper for Social Welfare, (1997:63), foster care is a child-centred service. It further refers to foster care as "a cost-effective, family-centred and community-based way of caring for children whose parents are unable to do so adequately" (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997:63). When caring for a foster child there is a payment of a social grant namely, the foster child grant which is administered by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) (Social Assistance Act, 2004, Section 5). However, before a foster child grant can be processed by SASSA, a designated social worker must, in accordance with the Children's Act, investigate the circumstances of the child concerned and that of the prospective foster parent, and thereafter compile a report for a children's court inquiry. If the court has authorised the placement of the child in the care of the prospective foster parents, a court order will be issued to them to legalise the placement. Depending on the financial circumstances of the child, the court may also provide the prospective foster parents with a court order which they have to present to SASSA in order to apply for a foster child grant (The Children's Act 38 of 2005) (South Africa, 2006:95).

The aim of the foster child grant is to compensate the foster parent for the costs incurred in caring for the child. According to Hall & Proudlock (2011:1), any person can qualify to receive a foster child grant without considering his or her financial

status, provided that the child concerned is placed in his or her care by a court. If the biological parent or parents of the foster child concerned are able to contribute towards the maintenance of the child, a children's court can issue an order instructing the parent/s to contribute financially towards the maintenance, treatment, or other special needs of a child placed in alternative care or temporarily removed by order of the court (Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 161) (South Africa, 2006).

The following are the rights and responsibilities of foster parents, in terms of Section 188 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, read together with Regulations 65 and 66:

"(a) The responsibility of providing the day-to-day needs of a foster child placed in his or her care, which includes the responsibility to ensure that any social assistance or financial contribution from the child's biological parents is used towards the upbringing of the child's in his or her best interest.

(b) To ensure that the child attends school regularly.

(c) To respect the views of the child, and generally promote his or her wellbeing, best interest, and physical, emotional and social development.

(d) To guide the behaviour of the child in a humane manner, and not impose any form of physical violence, punishment, humiliating or degrading discipline."

When foster care placements and the foster child grants are terminated, the rights and responsibilities of foster parents, articulated above, can no longer be enforced by social workers, and the foster child grant may be terminated by the Children's Court and SASSA. In terms of Section 189 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, foster care placements and grants may be terminated by a children's court if it is in the best interest of the child. However, before terminating foster child placements "the court must take into account all relevant factors, including the bond that exists between the child and the child's biological parent if the biological parent reclaims

care of the child, the bond that developed between the child and the foster parent and the family of the foster parent." According to the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA, 2013:4) and the Social Assistance 13 of 2004, section 5 (South Africa 2004) the foster child grant is discontinued on the death of the foster child or of the foster parent. It is also terminated when the child is no longer in the care of the foster parent and when the child turns 18, or leaves school at age 21.

Therefore, the intention of this research study was to understand the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and the foster child grants.

A young adult is a person between the ages of 18 and 25 (Bergh, 2011:95). The main characteristics of young people in this phase are firstly, individualism which refers to developing an autonomous identity and which involves accepting responsibility for consequences of their own actions and deciding on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences. Secondly, the establishment of a relationship with parents not as a child but an equal adult. Thirdly, being financially independent; this translates into keeping a job and having one's own abode or even being capable of establishing, keeping, and supporting one's own nuclear family. Fourthly, having a career and making life-long commitments. Fifthly, being compliant and socially responsible by adhering to the norms of society through developing self-regulation, for example by avoiding anti-social behaviour such as drunk driving, drug and alcohol abuse, irresponsible sexual activities, and unruly and aggressive behaviour (Arnett, 2001:2).

Young adults are generally considered a group entering a stage of adulthood with a higher level of risk behaviour such as smoking, drinking and drug use because they move further away from home and family in search of connections with peers and exposure" (Mathews, Jamieson, Lake & Smith, 2014:73). In order to facilitate youth's ability to function competently when they leave alternative care, they need to be fully prepared in achieving this transition stage and related developmental tasks. This is critical because the transition period to adulthood and a time of preparation for life which, if not successfully completed, could mean failure in adult

life; conversely, successful completion could mean success and happiness as an adult (Salahu-Din & Bollman, 1994:123). Furthermore, their developmental needs such as physical, financial, and emotional needs must be considered after the termination of foster care placement and foster child grant.

According to Shulman and Ben-Artzi (2003:1) a sound transition from adolescence to young adulthood and building a strong personal authority are depended upon the quality of the relationship the young person has with his or her parents, especially the father. This happens in instances where there is a close and supportive relationship with parents, when parents give their blessing and support to their offspring in becoming "separate" adults who function well in society.

Social functioning is defined in the New Dictionary for Social Work (1995:58, s.v. "social functioning") as "an individual's role in its entirety at all levels of existence in interaction with other individuals, families, and groups." In addition, Morales and Sheafor (2004:29) define social functioning as "the manner in which individuals interact with other people and social institutions." Similarly, Mkhize (2009:11) describes social functioning as the "interaction between people and their environments; this includes the individual's ability to cope with life tasks and problems. Moreover, social functioning is enhanced when individuals feel basically satisfied with themselves, their roles in life, and their relationships with others."

According to Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter (2007:1), social functioning of young adults is characterised by three major themes, namely positive youth development, collaboration, and permanent connection. Positive youth development is a process by which young adults are engaged in supportive relationships which enable them to develop life skills and knowledge to maintain the emotional health needed to function on their own. Collaboration is also essential for the successful transition to adulthood because it identifies the type of life skills young adults can practise in the home in collaboration with significant others. Permanence is a state of mind; it is about positive relationships and lifelong connections. Young adults need permanent connections, whether formal or

informal, to ground them in the community and provide the support often lacking in traumatised youth.

Taking into consideration the developmental needs of a person between ages 18 and 25, described above, young adults out of the foster care system are particularly at risk because of their vulnerability which is associated with having been in care, and this may be exacerbated by the abrupt termination of such placements during a critical developmental stage in their lives. Therefore, the management of their transition from care to independent living is crucial to their social functioning beyond care (Jones, 2013:226).

The reality in most instances is that the foster child grant and the foster care system do not fully address the underlying contributory factors such as, amongst others, family violence, child abuse, neglect, and drug and alcohol abuse that led to children being placed in foster care in the first place and eventually out of foster care. Therefore, some children are discharged from care without having had proper therapeutic care and this can have a long-lasting impact on their lives. In certain cases, there is very little contact between children in foster care and social workers, and even less contact after the children have moved out of foster care (Department of Social Development Report 2009:14).

The situation of young adults who age out of the foster care system in South Africa is compounded by the high number of children who are in foster care. The total population in South Africa is estimated at 57,136,474, 19.61 million of whom are children under the age of 18. The mid-year population of the age group 18 to 21 in South Africa was estimated at 5, 302, 246 (Stats SA, 2018), The figures in Table 1 below show that in October 2017, there were 478, 158 (4,1%) children of all ages in foster care.

Table 1: Children receiving foster child grants: by province

Province	Children
Eastern Cape	109 287
Free state	36 208
Gauteng	56 699
Kwazulu-Natal	102 880
Limpopo	52 496
Mpumalanga	35 302
North West	37 576
Northern Cape	14 357
Western Cape	33 353
Total	**478 158**

Source: South African Social Security Agency, 2017; SOCPEN database special request. Pretoria: SASSA.

Table 2: The number of persons in foster care: ages 18 to 21 in March 2015

Province	18 years	19 years	20 years	21 years	Total per province
Eastern Cape	12 181	7 657	4 453	1 897	**26 188**
Free State	4 479	2 931	2 036	956	**10 402**
Gauteng	6 108	2 891	1 741	604	**11 344**
KwaZulu-Natal	16 531	5 409	3 233	1 342	**26 515**
Limpopo	7 038	3 822	2 947	1 419	**15 226**
Mpumalanga	4 462	1 904	879	285	**7 530**
Northern Cape	1 388	909	570	263	**3 130**
North West	4 220	2 542	1 536	705	**9 003**
Western Cape	2 200	979	495	156	**3 830**
Total	**58 607**	**29 044**	**17 890**	**7 627**	**113 168**

Source: South African Social Security Agency, 2015; SOCPEN database special request. Pretoria: SASSA.

These figures show that over 113,168 young adults in South Africa were still in the foster care system in 2015. In addition the figures only reflect the number of children whose foster care grants were extended because they were still at school. However, it is not known how young adults who are out of the foster care system are coping as they are no longer at school and most of them no longer receive support from social workers.

The increased number of children in foster care is attributed to the high number of orphans in South Africa due to the deaths of their parents mainly from complications attributed to HIV& AIDS. The estimated number of orphaned children in South Africa is 5.2 million; this includes children without a living biological mother, father, or both (UNICEF, 2018). Most of these orphaned children are placed in foster care because the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa, section 28 (1996:13) prescribes that children should grow up in family care, parental care, or appropriate alternative care when removed from their family environment.

The Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 150 (South Africa, 2006) also stipulates that a child who is an orphan and without visible means of support does not have the ability to support himself or herself, and such inability is readily apparent in a child who is in need of care and protection; therefore, many orphans are placed in foster care until age 18 or 21.

The number of children aging out of care in South Africa would be far less if adoption, which is a permanent placement of a child with non-biological parents, was fully utilised, but foster care continues to escalate while adoption remains low or static. Department of Social Development's Annual Perfomance Report (2016/2017:5) reflects that the total number of 1, 349 adoptions were registered during 2016/2017 financial year which includes 1,200 national adoptions and 149 inter-country adoptions. Moloi (2012:1) points out that in Johannesburg, families would rather apply for foster care placement rather than adopt the child. According to the Department of Social Development's Report on Adoption, adoption is not a preferred choice amongst most South Africans because it is expected that the biological family should provide for the child's financial needs. There is no specific grant provided by government to adoptive parents, with the exception of the child support grant and the care dependency grant (Department of Social Development 2009:14). Therefore, families opt for foster care because it comes with a foster child grant. However, this is not a permanent solution for the affected young adults as compared to adoption.

The transition from placement to an independent life can be a problematic phase not only for young adults but also for foster parents and the social workers who are involved. This is according to a study conducted by Hojer and Sjoblom (2010:118) in Sweden on the young people leaving care. These authors highlight that in Sweden special care and services beyond foster care are virtually non-existent. Similar views are shared by Jones (2014:81) that many young adults leave the foster care system amidst disrupted relationship with their family and others in their social networks. Additionally, Mendes (2014:1) mentions that globally, young adults aging out of the foster care system constitute a vulnerable group who

generally do not receive the ongoing and holistic support that they require to transition successfully into adult life. The management of this transition from foster care system to independent living is crucial to their social functioning beyond foster care (Jones, 2013:226).

Conversely, it is evident that young adults who are able to prepare for adult life are able to adapt successfully early on in adulthood, and are able to cope with the multitude of risks of day-to-day life (Healy, Lundstrom & Sallnas, 2011:416). There are measures that have been proven to assist young adults' adaptation to adulthood after leaving alternative care. Mentoring, for example, has been identified as a potential way to meet the critical need for supportive connections with these young adults (Jones, 2014:89). Mentoring facilitated by adult mentors who cannot meet regularly in person are using alternatives such as online mentoring where mentors and youth communicate electronically through regular emails (Spencer, Collins, Ward & Smashnaya, 2010:225).

Literature shows that there are measures in other countries and even in some organisations in South Africa which involve the development and implementation of policies and programmes for young adults who have aged out of the foster care system. For example, the United States of America (USA), Australia, the United Kingdom (UK) and other countries provide programmes to help prepare young adults out of foster care for independent living (Gardner, 2008:4). The Independent Living Program was combined with the Social Security Act in the USA; this law was amended by the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (CFCIA), which was introduced in order to address the limitations of the Independent Living Program. The CFCIA offers assistance to ensure self-support between current and former foster care young adults; it also ensures the wellbeing of young adults in respect of access to quality health care services (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006:212).

The findings by Curry and Abrams (2014:146) revealed that The Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program provides a financial resource to young adults out of foster care by offering post-secondary education and training and enrolment in well-known higher educational programmes. This voucher system aids and

financially helps young adults to access educational opportunities. Furthermore, the Foster Care Independence Act in the USA also ensures the wellbeing of young adults in respect of access to quality healthcare services.

The Department of Social Development's Report on a visit to Angola in 2005 indicates how some orphaned children whose parents died in the war in Angola are placed at a centre outside Luanda called *e Reinsercao Social de Adolescentes e Jovens* when they age out of care. The centre provides young adults with accommodation, vocational training, and building/construction skills. It is reported that they are also involved in the construction of four-roomed houses that serve as their accommodation. Therefore, the youth stay at the centre until they have found employment and are able to afford their own accommodation (Department of Social Development, 2005).

In South Africa, the Lungisela Support Programme in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, provides access to continuity of care through transition educational support, career guidance and internship; the focus is on developing a network of support for the youth out of care (Tanur, 2012:330).

The SOS Children's Village which is situated in Mamelodi, Pretoria is a Non-Governmental Organisation which offers psychosocial and socioeconomic support and awareness, and training to young people. The centre also offers prevention services to orphaned, abandoned children and young adults out of the foster care system whose families are unable to care for them. The socioeconomic support which they provide is in a form of accommodation, skills development, and income generation projects. The psychosocial support is in the form of counselling and psychotherapy to physically and sexually abused children. Regarding awareness training and prevention services, they provide health and wellness campaigns and HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. Furthermore, they provide education training and development as well as information on careers, and they refer young adults to relevant departments for further assistance (SOS Children's Village, 2018).

Additionally, St Georges in Kempton park, Gauteng provides support to young adults out of the foster care system to generate income through employment in the formal sector or alternatively through self-employment. They also offer life skills and psychosocial and entrepreneurial skills training in order to facilitate a stimulating and extra-curricular developmental learning environment (St Georges Children's Home Coach Charity Organization, 2018).

Similarly, the Department of Social Development(2009:13-14) recommends the following:

- Programmes that include personal development; for example, self-knowledge, dealing with emotions, building self-esteem, leadership skills, and communication skills to nurture and support them.
- Practical assistance with, e.g., compiling curricula vitae, applications for identity documents, preparation for job interviews, information on job opportunities, and scholarships.
- Assistance with savings (creating a budget, and how to open a bank account).
- Specialised skills (e.g., based on the individual Development Assessment Plan): youth can be advised to pursue certain areas of skills development such as trade skills, in particular carpentry, motor mechanics, hairdressing, cooking, clothing design.

Rosenwald, McGhee & Noftall (2013:149) posit that the expected resources for young adults out of foster care include access to post-secondary education, opportunities such as college or vocational training, economic security, life skills, independent living, training, and transitional housing.

The role of social work services to prepare children in foster care for the eventual termination of the foster placements and the foster child grants is regarded as crucial for the functioning of the young adults who had to leave the out-of-care system (Department of Social Development, 2009:14). According to The

International Federation of Social Workers(2013:1) social work is a practice-based profession that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, problem solving in human relationships, principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing.

A crucial role of social workers in the lives of young adults who have aged out of care takes place during the foster care placement period when the child is still in foster care. This role is clearly spelled out in the norms and standards pertaining to foster care services in the Children's Act 38 & Regulations of 2005 (South Africa, 2006:293) and they include the following.

- A care plan and an individual development plan for the child concerned must be developed. The process of an individual development plan includes preparing young adults for post-foster care life prior to their exit from the foster care system. The involvement of foster parents in the planning and drafting of individual development plans is crucial by explaining to them the entire process and how it contributes positively to the wellbeing of young adults.

- The plan has to be reviewed with all concerned on a regular basis.

- Ensure support and capacity building with regard to the child and his or her foster parents; in most instances, social workers empower children by providing them with the necessary social skills to prepare them to cope with adulthood challenges and problem-solving skills.

- Services should be conducted in a manner that makes the child, his or her family, and the foster parents aware of what is expected from them and their rights and responsibilities which are appropriate to the child's developmental needs. This should be based on respect for the individual child's strengths and dignity. The child and the foster family must be informed and be prepared in every decision concerning the child.

- Ensure the provision of support and strengthening services to foster parents, and the monitoring of their roles to ensure positive outcomes around placement.

In addition, the responsibilities of a social worker should include efficient monitoring, and ensuring that the needs of young adults who have aged out of care system are fully met. For example, they can be tasked with both announced and unannounced visits as part of their monitoring and evaluation activities. They should participate more actively in the lives of young adults who age out of care through the provision of critical information, mentorship programmes, and life skills development (Scannapieco et al., 2007:432).

In South Africa everyone, including the youth, has constitutional rights that are entrenched in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa (1996): the right to human dignity, equality, and non-discrimination. In addition, everyone has a right to access adequate housing, education, healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare, sufficient food, water, social security, and emergency medical treatment. Therefore, young people who have aged out of care should have access to all relevant services that provide for their independent living.

1.1.2 Problem statement and motivation for the study

According to Fitzgerald (2013:1), every year hundreds of young adults age out of the foster care system in South Africa when they officially become adults at or around their, 18th birthday which is in law recognised as the age of majority. However, the protective provisions of the Children's Act can be extended to age 21 if the child is still attending school.

As discussed above, it is evident that the termination of foster care placement and their foster child grant results in the loss of economic, social, and physical support to young adults as they are legally considered sufficiently mature and capable of taking care of themselves (Dixon, 2008:208). The reality is that most of these young adults are not capable of taking care of themselves due to a lack of skills and financial independence.

This statement confirms the realities of the gap between policy and the day-to-day experiences and challenges faced by young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. This is also confirmed by the Department of Social Development (2009:13) which indicates that South Africa, unlike other countries, has neither a policy nor programme that helps to stabilise and support the young adult who has aged out of care to cope with the transition from care to independence.

This lack of policy in South Africa for children who have aged out of care can be attributed to the limited research conducted in this area. Although studies have been conducted elsewhere in the world, their relevance to the South African context may be limited because of the different social and economic conditions; for example, South Africa has high levels of poverty, unemployment, and HIV/AIDS.

Studies done thus far refer to the challenges facing young adults who have aged out of the foster care system, and also indicate that these former foster care young adults are a population at risk. However, besides the study by the Department of Social Development which was undertaken in 2009 which looked at the experiences of youth who aged out of foster child grant in South Africa, there is still a lack of local research on the social functioning of these young adults after their termination of foster care placements and foster child grants. Therefore, the researcher, through this research study, undertook an in-depth investigation of the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and the foster child grants in Tembisa, Gauteng Province. The researcher also investigated services delivered by social worker to these young adults before and after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.

The findings of this study will contribute to the knowledge that will inform policy that should be developed to address this gap in service delivery in South Africa.

The researcher is one of the practising social workers employed by the Department of Social Development working in the field of child care and protection in Tembisa. Her responsibility involves investigations, Children's Court processes, and

placement of some of the children found in need of care and protection in alternative care such as foster care and child and youth care centres.

What motivated her to undertake this research was her concern regarding the common practice she observed pertaining to the absence of follow-up or supervision services by social workers when a foster care placement is terminated because a young person has reached the age of 18 or 21. As such services are considered essential to ensure that the young adult copes well after the termination of the placement and the grant as well as the transition to adulthood. The absence of clear policy and practice guidelines aimed at guiding social service professionals to support young adults after termination of foster care placements and foster child grants is also a challenge. As a result, social workers usually close their files when a child no longer attends school.

1.2 Research questions, primary goal, and objectives of the study

In this section the research question as well as the primary goal and objectives of the study are discussed as the research questions relate directly to the statement of purpose.

1.2.1 Research question

The research question identifies what the researcher intends to study; in addition it assists the researcher to be specific in terms of details, criteria that must be met, and the appropriate methodology of the study to be followed (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012:18). In other words, the research question is “the beacon that guides the researcher to find answers” (Maree, 2007:3). Furthermore, it is a valuable tool to the researcher because it provides direction to relevant literary resources and provides focus for data collection. It therefore guards against any deviation from the original purpose of the study. Since the study will be using a qualitative research approach the focus will be on qualitative research questions.

Qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving, and non-directional; they restate the purpose of the study in more specific terms, and typically start with a

word such as “what” or “how” rather than “why” in order to explore a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2013:138). However, it may become more concrete, focused, narrowed, and revised as the study progresses, but a research question must be formulated clearly as early as possible in the initial stages of the project (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011:92).

The research questions for this study were aimed at simplifying the purpose of the study and unambiguously stating the focus of the study. These questions were grounded in the experiences of the researcher as a social worker working in the field of child care and protection in the Gauteng Department of Social Development. The following research questions were formulated:

What is the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants?

What types of social services are available to young adults in view of the termination of and after termination of their foster care placements and the foster child grants?

The section below provides the goal and objectives of the study.

1.2.2 Research goal

A research goal assists researchers to determine the reasons for undertaking a particular research study, and what they aim to achieve at the end of the study (Creswell, 2003:87). Additionally, “goal” or “purpose” implies the broader, more abstract concept of “something which you plan to do or achieve” (De Vos et al., 2011:94). It is the research question that motivates the goal of the study. The goal of this study is stated as follows:

- *To develop an in-depth understanding of the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.*

- *To report on the services delivered by social workers to young adults in view of termination of and after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.*

1.2.3 Research objectives

The objectives of a research study are defined by specifying the kind of information to be collected from particular units of analysis (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006:43). Additionally, objective means real, measurable, and quickly attainable purpose which the researcher intends to achieve (De Vos et al., 2011:94). Creswell (2013:134) suggests that the statement provides the major intent or "road map" to the study in an entire qualitative study; the purpose of the statement needs to be carefully constructed and written in clear and concise language.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goal the following research objectives were formulated:

Specific objectives

- To explore and describe the social functioning of young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants in Tembisa, Gauteng Province (Mayibuye area).
- To explore and describe the social work services available to young adults in view of termination of and after the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants.

Task objectives

- To identify and obtain a sample of young adults who have aged out of foster care, and social workers who work in the field of child care and protection.
- To obtain a sample of young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants have terminated, and social workers who have work experience in the field of child care and protection.

- To conduct semi-structured interviews aided by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide.
- To analyse data from young adults who have aged out of foster care and that of social workers according to the eight steps of qualitative data analysis constructed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2003:186).
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations to address the needs of young adults after termination of the foster child grant.

1.3. Theoretical framework

According to Creswell (2013:23), a theoretical framework is a theory that has been employed to reinforce a study. Furthermore, it functions as a theoretical lens in the research studies. Similarly, it helps researchers in ensuring that their research project is consistent and to focus their attention on what the research is trying to accomplish (Green, 2014:35). “The importance of theory is its ability to explain and hence predict the phenomenon, it helps in anticipating outcomes and speculating about unanticipated relationship between variables and also helps us to carry knowledge from one situation to another by helping us to recognise what is similar or different in practice” (Turner, 2011:8-9).

The use of a theoretical framework in this study assisted the researcher to further understand and describe factors that impact the social functioning of young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. The researcher decided on the ecological approach as a theoretical framework because the ecological perspective emphasises the understanding of the interaction and balance between people and their environment. The ecological approach emphasises the co-existence of human beings and their environment; this co-existence is critical to the social functioning of human beings. However, the concept environment is seen in broader terms, encompassing both the social (family social networks, bureaucratic organisations, schools, churches, places of employment) and the physical (space, time, and locality) (Gray & Webb, 2013:179).

According to Paquette and Ryan (2001:2), the ecological approach upholds the concept that human development is influenced by various types of environmental systems. These systems include micro-, macro-, meso-, and exosystems and how they influence individuals' behaviour. Moreover, conflict or changes in one system will impact other layers. These systems were initially introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1979).

Microsystem

"A microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features, and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief" (Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2). This is the level attached to the individual and it comprises structures with which the individual has direct contact. These include the relationships and interactions an individual has with his or her immediate surroundings such as family, school and neighbourhood. Regarding young adults, the immediate environment in which they live comprises the interactions they have with their families, siblings, and peers and these interactions have an influence on their development and functioning.

Mesosystem

This level comprises the linkages, processes, or connections between the structures of the individual's immediate surroundings, for example, the relations between home and school, and school and workplace (Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2). It is the interaction of these different parts of a young adult's microsystem that has an influence on his or her social functioning, and the effect of those closest to them such as their families and peers.

Exosystem

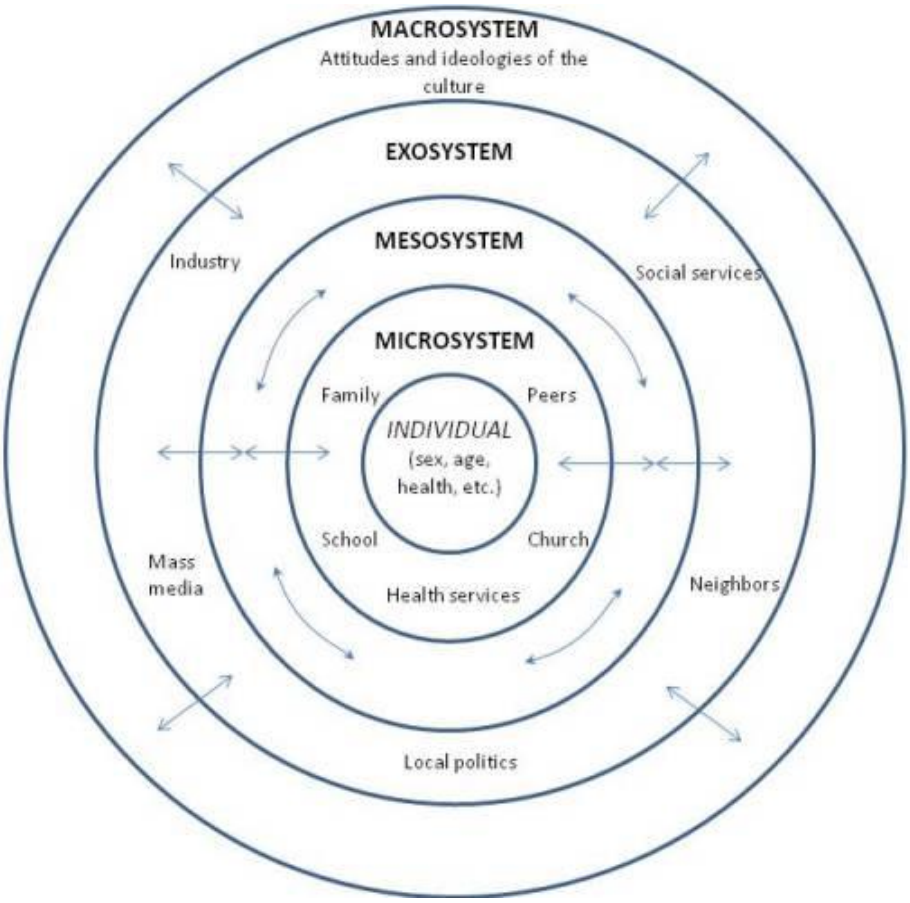
This level describes the larger social system in which individuals do not interact directly with each other, but are nevertheless impacted by others (Paquette &

Ryan, 2001:2). For example, with regard to young adults it refers to a situation where they are not involved as active participants in decision-making processes affecting them. However, the decisions taken on their behalf still impact their social functioning.

Macrosystem

This level represents relative liberties legalised by government or society such as customs, laws, and cultural values. These can impact a person either negatively or positively (Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2). With regard to young adults it could be the culture in which they live as this exercises a significant influence on them. Most often people are unknowingly influenced by cultural practices, values, beliefs, ideas, and their socioeconomic status within their community or society.

The diagram below describes various levels and how they influence individual behaviour and development (Bronfenbrenner 1979, cited in Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2).



(Bronfenbrenner 1979, cited in Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2)

An ecological perspective contributes to social work understanding of the nature of transactions between clients and their environment. Furthermore, ecological perspective serves as a way of understanding "how individuals adapt to environmental demands" (Gray & Webb, 2013:179-181). It focuses on how an individual's needs, capacities, and opportunities for growth and the ability to adapt to changing external demands are met, provided for, and challenged or limited by the environment (Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2).

According to the ecological perspective each individual should have a positive level of fit that will create a sense of adaptation, reduce the level of stress, and promote positive growth and development (Teater, 2010:17). Ecological theory, with its evolutionary, adaptive view, provides the theoretical foundation for life-model practice (Gitterman, cited in Turner, 2011:281). In this instance, human ecology or

ecological theory is about finding a balance between persons and their environment, also known as person-environment fit. This is based on the premise that failure to find such a balance would more likely result in tension or more challenges. Over the course of their lives, people strive to improve the level of fit with their environment (Gitterman, cited in Turner, 2011:281).

Ecological perspective enables social workers to take cognisance of all the systems that have an impact on the young adult's life. In the planning and implementation of intervention, all the systems contribute to and should be taken into account in the resolution of problematic situations (Gray & Webb, 2013:180). Therefore, professionals have innovative ways to conceptualise the relationship between the individual and environmental contexts of human functioning, and how social work practice engages with those dimensions (Gray & Webb, 2013:179).

The ecological perspective varies amongst traditional social work beliefs when defining problems encountered by clients. Most common perspectives focus on the problems that individuals experience, and people are categorised as abnormal and emotionally disturbed. The ecological approach notably does not classify symptoms in a narrow sense, but looks at these as a product of a faulty eco system, which requires intervention through appropriate problem-solving mechanisms. Supporters of the ecological approach are likely to understand emotional disturbances as widespread problems that occur during the process of constant adaptation between organisms and their environments. Individual problems and complications in social functioning are thus perceived to interfere with collaborating, dynamic, and reciprocal sets of forces that operate between individuals and their ecosystem (Wilson, 1999:4-11). This approach allows the social worker to effectively treat problems and diverse needs of clients in a systemic way which includes the individual, family, group, and community to create change that promotes the best possible transactions between people and their environment (Ahmed, Amer & Killawi, 2017:2). However, "the seven important stages in the intervention process comprise of entering the system, mapping the

ecology, assessing the ecology, creating a vision for change, coordinating, communicating, reassessing and evaluation" (Nash, 2005:31-41).

In view of the fact that the challenges faced by young adults after termination of foster care placements and foster child grants impact their social functioning and the interaction with their environment, which includes their foster parents, social workers, their families, peers, communities, resources, and society as a whole with its laws and expectations. In undertaking this research study most of these factors had to be taken into consideration to fully understand the functioning of these young adults.

1.4 Research methodology

A qualitative research approach was deemed more appropriate in this study because of its more expansive nature. Qualitative research is based upon the need to understand human and social interaction from the perspective of insiders and participants (Bryman, 2012:379). It also provides a full understanding of its different aspects in terms of natural and subjective data that will be collected, and the significance which participants attach to their environment (Creswell, 2013:45-46).

Qualitative research "strives to create a coherent story as seen through the eyes of those who are part of the story, to understand and represent their experiences and actions as they encounter them, and to engage with and live through situations" (Wagner et al., 2012:126).

Qualitative research is further described by De Vos et al. (2011:308) as an approach that it is focused on the naturalistic perspective and information based on human experience. Therefore, this approach contributes to an in-depth understanding of the social functioning of young adults after the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants.

A detailed discussion on the practical application of the research methodology, namely the qualitative approach, research design, method of data collection, analysis, and verification of data is provided in Chapter Two.

1.5 Ethical considerations

The following section presents the ethical considerations which guided the study, and the ethical guidelines with regard to informed consent, confidentiality, management of information, compensation, and debriefing of participants.

While conducting a scientific study a researcher needs to be aware of the general agreement relating to that which is appropriate or inappropriate. However, ethical issues need to be taken into account prior to conducting a qualitative research study, at the beginning of the study, during data collection, in data analysis, in reporting the data, and in publishing the study findings (Creswell, 2013:57). Ethics encompass the principles which guide the conduct of social research (De Vos et al., 2011:114). An essential ethical aspect is the issue of confidentiality relating to the results and findings of the study and the protection of participants' identities; this could include obtaining a letter of consent, obtaining permission to be interviewed, and undertaking to destroy audio recordings (Maree, 2007:41-42). Ethical considerations must be adhered to at every step of the research design and implementation process (Wagner et al., 2012:62).

1.5.1 Informed consent

The researcher should provide participants with the following information when requesting their informed consent: the goal of the investigation; the expected duration of participants' involvement; the procedures which will be followed during the investigation; and the possible advantages, disadvantages, and dangers to which respondents may be exposed (Strydom 2011:117). With regard to this study the researcher ensured that participants were psychologically competent to give informed consent, and were informed that they have the right to withdraw from participating at any time. Sufficient information about the study was given to the participants to enable them to make an informed decision whether or not they

would be willing to participate. Consent forms were given to participants (young adults and social workers) who agreed to take part in the study, and they were requested to sign the agreement (Addendum D).

1.5.2 Confidentiality

This involves strict non-disclosure of the identities of the participants, the research location, or any other information that may embarrass or otherwise harm the participants (Wagner et al., 2012:64). In this study the researcher ensured that sensitive information concerning participants was kept private, and she only recorded personal information that was absolutely necessary for the research to achieve its purpose. Audio recordings and transcripts that could reveal the participants' identities were kept secure. The researcher also made sure that the names of the participants did not appear anywhere in the records and that pseudonyms were used in all records and that numericals and alphabets were used in all records.

1.5.3 Management of information

Information gathered from the participants was managed and kept secure at all times. This was locked in a cabinet to which only the researcher and supervisor had access. Before a researcher begins the process of data analysis, he or she has to organise and manage the data collected, and not lose track of the information gathered through the interviews (Flick, 2014:371). In this study, names of participants were not disclosed to the promoter and independent coder who would have access to the information at some point (Wagner et al., 2012:16). However, numericals and alphabets were used to protect their identities.

1.5.4 Compensation

It is not necessarily wrong or unethical to compensate participants financially, particularly if the study is spread over several years, in order to cover their expenses and keep them involved in follow-up interaction. However, financial compensation should not be offered as an incentive to persuade individuals to

participate in a study (De Vos et al., 2011:121). Furthermore, to unnecessarily compensate respondents for their participation will compromise the aim of the study. The researcher did not at any time compensate participants because this study was of limited duration and the researcher visited the young adult participants at their residence and the social workers in their working environment.

1.5.5 Debriefing of participants

Debriefing refers to discussing the feelings of participants about the project immediately after the interview sessions or to send newsletters informing them of the results of the study. The researcher ensured that after the interviews, participants received sufficient time to talk about their experiences. Those who needed counselling were referred to a counsellor (Strydom 2011:122). The researcher referred two young adults to Ms Nkuna for debriefing or counselling because the information shared left them feeling emotionally upset and perturbed (Addendum G).

1.6 Clarification of key concepts

In the following sections, the researcher defines and clarifies key concepts important to the study. For the purpose and in the context of this study, the following definitions were used:

1.6.1 Foster child

Foster child is the child placed with an order of a children's court in the care of a person who is not the biological parent or guardian of the child (Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 180) (South Africa, 2006). In this study foster child means a child under the age of 18 who is need of care and protection.

1.6.2 Foster child Grant

The foster child grant is intended to provide for the basic needs of children who have been placed in the care of foster parents by a children's court (SASSA, 2015:1). Similarly, foster child grants are intended for the maintenance of children

who are placed in the care of a caregiver due to, for example, the death of their biological parents, or because their biological parents are not able to provide them with a safe and stable home (Govender, 2011:232). In this study, a foster child grant is regarded as a resource that provides for the basic needs of children who have been placed in the care of a foster parent by a children's court (SASSA, 2015:1).

1.6.3 Foster care placement

Foster care is a statutory substitute care within a family environment for children who cannot be cared for by their own parents in the short, medium or long term, while services to the parents are continued in order to return the children to their care within a specific period (Herbst & Muller, 2001:1). This is the way of providing a family environment for children whose biological parents have died or are unable to provide proper care for them. It is often used to provide temporary care when parents are receiving assistance in order to cope with their life challenges (International Child and Youth Care Network, 2018).

Foster care in the context of this study refers to the placement of children found in need of care and protection in accordance with the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2006).

1.6.4 Foster parent

A foster parent is someone who offers a secure environment and support to children who cannot live with their biological parents due to family problems such as neglect and abuse (Children's Bureau of Adoption and Foster Care, 2018). In this study the term foster parent is understood within the context of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2006:161), which defines a foster parent as a person who is not the biological parent or guardian of a child, but who should be fit and proper to be entrusted with the foster care of the child, and who has the capacity to provide an environment that is conducive to the child's growth and development.

1.6.5 Social functioning

Social functioning is the interaction between people and environments. This includes the individual's ability to cope with life tasks and problems; social functioning is enhanced when individuals feel basically satisfied with themselves, their roles in life, and their relationships with others (Mkhize, 2009:11). According to Morales and Sheafor (2004:29), social functioning relates to the manner in which individuals interact with other people and social institutions. The concept social functioning in this study refers to young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants have been terminated, and how this has impacted their social functioning in the manner in which they interact with their environment and are able to cope socially, economically, and emotionally.

1.6.6 Social worker

A social worker is a professional who assists people to resolve their problems, acquire resources, and who provides support and facilitates change to individuals, families, and communities in need (Du Bois & Miley, 2011:3). "Social work is a practice-based profession that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, problem solving in human relationships, principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing" (International Federation of Social Workers, 2013:1). In this study a social worker is a person employed by the DSD who renders social services to children who are placed in foster care by a children's court in accordance with Children's Act 38 of 2005.

1.6.7 Termination

This denotes the discontinuation of foster care placements and foster child grants; these may be terminated by the children's court in the best interest of the child (Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 189) (South Africa, 2006). The foster child grant lapses on the death of the foster child, on the death of the foster parent, if the child is no longer in the custody of a foster parent, at the end of the calendar year in which the foster child turns 18, or when the child leaves school at the age of 21

(SASSA, 2013:4). Termination in this study refers to the withdrawal of foster care placements and foster child grants in accordance with the Children's Act 38 of 2005 when the young adult who is in foster care placement reaches the age of 18 or 21.

1.6.8 Young adult

A young adult is a person between the ages of 21 and 25 (Bergh, 2011:95). A young adult is also a human being in the transition period between adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2001:2; Shulman & Ben-Artzi, 2003:1). In this study the young adult refers to a person between the ages of 18 to 21 whose foster care placement and grant have been terminated in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

1.7 Structure of the report

The research report is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter One: General orientation of the study

This chapter provides an introduction and general orientation to the research report with specific focus on the following: introduction and problem formulation, problem statement, rationale for the study, research question, goal and objectives, research approach and design, ethical considerations, clarification of key concepts, and the content plan of the research report.

Chapter Two: Application of the qualitative research

In this chapter the researcher's practical application of the qualitative research process will be presented.

Chapter Three: Presentation and discussion of the findings

In this chapter the research findings are presented and subjected to literature control.

Chapter Four: Summary, conclusions, and recommendations

The chapter summarises the research findings with an outline of the overall conclusions and recommendations.

This dissertation does not include a chapter on literature review because of the extensive literature control application in Chapter Three.

1.8 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter the reader was provided with an introduction and general orientation to the study which focused on introduction, problem formulation, motivation for the study, research questions, goal and the objectives of the study. A brief outline of the methodology was included as well as ethical consideration and description of key concepts related to this study.

In the following chapter the researcher will describe how the research methodology was applied in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

APPLICATION OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROCESS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the practical description of how the qualitative research approach and the research methodology process were applied in this study is provided. The focus is on the research approach and research design, population and sampling, preparing participants for data collection, data collection, pilot test, data analysis, and data verification.

2.2 Research methodology

Methodology refers to a general approach to conducting a study on a research topic and making a choice on what and how to conduct a study (Silverman, 2010:109). Therefore, methodology includes sampling methods, data collection, data analysis, and verification methods (Creswell, 2013). The manner in which a research process is conducted in accordance with a specific technique is referred to as research methodology (De Vos et al., 2011:323).

2.3 The research approach

The qualitative research approach was employed to guide this study. Qualitative research “strives to create a coherent story as seen through the eyes of those who are part of the story, to understand and represent their experiences and actions as they encounter them, and to engage with and live through situations” (Wagner et al., 2012:126).

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2013:45), is conducted in a natural setting where the participants experience the problem being researched. He further describes qualitative research as an approach that is interested in understanding the meaning people have created and how people make sense of the experiences they have in the world.

The qualitative research is characterised by the following descriptions, as highlighted by Creswell (2013:45, 46):

It focuses on a natural setting: The ability of a researcher to visit the participants in their residences or workplace to conduct the study, which is an integral characteristic of qualitative research. The researcher physically visited the residences of young adults and offices of social workers to gain an in-depth understanding of their actual experiences.

The researcher is the key instrument: In this study the researcher collected information independently through interviews and observations as to how the participants experience the problem under study rather than relying on instruments and other surveys created by others. The researcher collected information directly from participants through semi-structured interviews to gain a clear understanding of the impact of the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants.

Use of multiple sources of information: The researcher used voice recordings and observation to collect data from young adults and social workers.

The meaning participants attach to the phenomenon: Information collected in this study captured the lived and actual experiences of young adults and those of social workers.

A researcher is reflective and interpretive (self-awareness): The researcher was aware of her role in conducting qualitative research, and she was sensitive to her personal experiences and values to ensure that they did not influence the interpretation of data which could consequently affect and influence the goal of the study.

Researcher presents a holistic picture: The use of a qualitative research approach provided the researcher with a holistic picture of the impact of the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants on young adults who had aged out of the foster care system.

2.4 Research design

A research design is a plan or structure which is constructed based on the expectations of the study to determine the sampling methods, data collection, and analysis (Maree, 2007:70). Therefore, a research design tells the researcher how the research is to be conducted; for example, the methodology that is appropriate, the method of data collection, and the technique of analysing data (Wagner et al., 2012:21). In order to develop an in-depth understanding of the social functioning of young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants an explorative, descriptive, and contextual research design was adopted.

2.4.1 Exploratory design

According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:44-45), an exploratory research design is relevant and is mainly used when there is little or no information on the subject to be studied. It also outlines how the researcher should plan and organise how, and from where, to gather information relevant to the study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:44). The purpose of exploratory research is not merely to obtain or gather important information, but it also aims to create insight into and an understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Wiid & Diggenis, 2013:56).

Not much is known about the functioning of young adults living in Tembisa after termination of their grants; therefore, by applying an exploratory design the researcher aimed to acquire an in-depth understanding of their situation by gathering information that would explain their circumstances.

2.4.2 Descriptive design

A descriptive design was employed with the aim to develop a comprehensive description of what the researcher has been exploring. According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006:15), correct observation is crucial to descriptive research studies. In descriptive research, the researcher tries to determine the “how” or “why” of the research, while in an explorative research design the researcher answers the “what” questions. (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:43). This study aimed to

describe the experiences and circumstances of young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants, and the social work services available to them post-termination.

2.4.3 Contextual design

Contextual studies seek to understand the social meaning and significance of an event or social action from the social setting in which it occurs (Neuman, 2006:158). The researcher's intention was to gain a thorough understanding of the social, emotional, economic, and physical functioning of young adults in their social environments after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants by interviewing the young adults and the social workers who work in the field of child care and protection. Furthermore, the researcher took into account that the young adults and the social workers should mostly be interviewed in their own settings which would give special meaning to understanding the problem being studied.

2.5 Population, sampling, and sampling methods

Population is a term that denotes the boundaries of the study units and individuals who hold specific characteristics (De Vos et al., 2011:223). It is also a larger group from which a researcher's sampling elements are drawn. Furthermore, it encompasses all the elements that constitute a unit of analysis (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:133). Babbie (2007:111) concurs that a population constitutes a group of people about whom a conclusion is to be drawn.

The researcher was interested in two populations, namely young adults in the database of the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Metro Region (Tembisa - Mayibuye) whose foster care placements and foster child grants have been terminated, and the social workers who work in the field of child care and protection in the Department of Social Development in the same region.

In this study the researcher considered all young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants have been terminated by the DSD and SASSA,

and the social workers who work in the field of child care and protection as representing a possible population, but due to financial and time constraints not everyone in the targeted population formed part of the study. Therefore, sampling was conducted.

2.5.1 Sampling

A sample is a “subset of a population, objects or events chosen to participate in or to be considered in a study” (Grinnell & Unrau, 2011:574). Sampling is defined as “taking a portion or smaller number of units of a population as representative or having particular characteristics of that total population (De Vos et al., 2011:223). Moreover, sampling is described as a selection of research participants from an entire population (Maree, 2007:79). It is further explained by the same author that in qualitative research sampling is flexible and often continues until no new themes emerge from the data-collection process. In this study, only young adults in the database of the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Metro Region, specifically Tembisa (Mayibuye), and social workers who had a minimum of four years’ work experience in the field of child care and protection in the Department of Social Development, were part of the sample. The next section describes how the specific sampling methods were identified and applied.

2.5.2 Sampling methods

In order to draw a sample from the larger population, the researcher used non-probability sampling; specifically purposive sampling, which is used to select participants according to criteria relevant to a particular research question (Maree 2007:79). It is also called judgmental sampling because it is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics representative of typical attributes of the population that serve the purpose of the study best (De Vos et al., 2011:392). The researcher selected individuals and locations because they purposefully provided an informed understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2013:156).

2.5.3 Purposive sampling

The researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to draw a sample of young adults and social workers who fit the criteria stated below. The researcher depended on personal experience and her own ingenuity as well as previous research to find and select the participants who could be considered representative of the population (Wagner et al., 2012:93). For the purposes of this study the researcher selected a small group of young adults from Mayibuye, from a list obtained from the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Metro Region, whose foster care placements and foster child grants had been terminated.

The researcher selected young adults who met the following criteria:

- Young adults who had aged out of the system and whose foster care placements and foster child grants had been terminated.
- Young adults who were available and interested to participate in semi-structured interviews.
- Young adults from ages 18 to 25.
- Young adults who had been placed in foster care by social workers from the Department of Social Development.

After identifying the young adults the researcher contacted them telephonically and arranged appointments to visit them at their residences. Three young adult participants did not wish to be interviewed at home; they reported that their home environments were not conducive to confidentiality. They chose to meet the researcher at the Department of Social Development's offices in Tembisa.

The social workers who participated in the study had a minimum of four years' experience working in the field of child care and protection in Mayibuye and were

also identified from the Johannesburg Metro Region's office, of the Department of Social Development.

Criteria used to select social work participants:

- Social workers who were willing and available to be part of semi-structured interviews.
- Social workers who had knowledge and experience of working with children placed in foster care.
- Social workers who had a minimum of four years' working experience in the Department of Social Development.

During the recruitment process with young adults the researcher also canvassed social workers from the Tembisa office who met the criteria. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate and the researcher selected participants who could provide relevant information based on their own experiences.

In this study a specific sample size was not determined at the outset of the study, but the number of participants was identified as a small group drawn from a population which the researcher deemed suitable. She initially selected a few participants of both young adults and social workers and aimed to add to the number, depending on the need to collect more data until a saturation point was reached (De Vos et al., 2011:224).

2.6 Data collection

The procedure that a researcher follows in collecting material which would form the data base of information of a qualitative study is referred to as data collection (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:286).

In qualitative research most information that represents human experience can be used as data such as reviewing personal files, interview transcripts, documents, diaries, letters, notes taken during focus groups, or visuals such as video and audio-recordings, photographs, drawings, or paintings (Henne, 2010:57).

2.6.1 Preparation for data collection

The purpose of data preparation is to gain access to and establish rapport with the participants so that they will contribute good data (Creswell, 2013:147). The researcher explained the purpose and procedures of the study to the prospective participants and assured them that their participation would be entirely voluntary and that they would not be judged or discriminated against should they decide not to participate in the study. They were given the assurance that their decisions would be respected. The researcher requested those who agreed to participate in the study to sign a consent form as confirmation that they understood and agreed to its contents (Addendum D).

2.6.2 Pilot testing

A pilot test was conducted before the actual data-collection process began. Pilot testing is defined as a process for testing and certifying a procedure by applying it to a small group of participants from the proposed test population; however, the group participating in the pilot test should not be included in the main study (De Vos et al., 2011:237). Pilot testing is also referred to as a process of rehearsal by the researcher to test if the participants understand the questions in the interview guide and whether they understand the purpose of the study (Unlin, Robinson & Tolley 2005:122).

The value of a pilot study is to assess whether the questions from the interview guide render the rich data needed and to test whether the interview questions are in order and correct. It also tests whether there is similarity of language translation. Furthermore, it determines the time spent to complete the data collection and also ensures that the explanation to the participants of the purpose of the research is well-defined and appropriate (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006:491).

The researcher conducted a pilot test based on the questions contained in the interview guide shortly after having been formally granted access to research participants from the Head of the Department. Two young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants had been terminated and two social workers

who worked in the field of child care and protection took part in pilot test. Appropriate interviewing techniques were applied to ensure an effective interviewing process (Jarbandhan & Schutte cited in De Vos et al., 2011:343-344).

Several communication techniques were utilised during the interviews; the researcher employed minimal verbal responses, paraphrasing, clarification, refection, listening, probing, encouragement, and reflective summary. The list of questions prepared to guide the interviewer was found to be appropriate and relevant with regard to young adult and social worker participants. The researcher ensured that no offensive language was contained in the interview guide. The researcher also assessed the clarity of questions and administration of time for each participant. The explanation of the purpose of the research was clear and acceptable to participants. The participants were requested to provide input on the nature of the questions contained in the interview guide and the manner in which they were posed. They all expressed their satisfaction with this tool and that no amendment was needed. They found the questions to be clear, unambiguous, and logical.

Through the pilot study, the researcher was able to test the research tools/questions contained in the interview guide. There were no errors in the administration of questions from the interview guide; as a result no amendments were deemed necessary.

2.6.3 Methods used for data collection

Undertaking “a good qualitative sampling strategy, developing means for recording information both digitally and on paper, storing the data, and anticipating ethical issues may all be considered methods of data collection” (Creswell, 2013:145). As mentioned in 2.6, in qualitative research any interview transcripts, documents, diaries, letters, notes taken during focus group sessions, visual recordings, photographs, and drawings that illustrate human experiences can qualify as data (Henne, 2010:57).

Face-to-face interviews were deemed the most appropriate method of data collection. This method facilitates ease of communication between the participant and the interviewer during which the interviewer asks relevant questions in order to collect data about their ideas, experiences, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviour (Wagner et al., 2012:133). It is a valuable source of information, provided that it is used correctly with the aim of obtaining rich descriptive data that will help the researcher see the world through the eyes of the participant. The aim is always to obtain rich descriptive data that will help the researcher to understand the participant's construction of knowledge and social reality (Maree, 2007:87).

Data for this study was collected by means of a semi-structured interview guide, and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to gain a detailed picture of participants' beliefs and their perceptions of their social functioning after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. The semi-structured interview was deemed suitable as the researcher was interested in its extensiveness as it usually requires the participant to answer a set of predetermined questions, and allows for the probing and clarification of answers (Maree, 2007:87). It also defines the line of inquiry, for the researcher to be attentive to the responses of the participants so that new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied, can be identified.

The researcher made arrangements with the young adult participants that their interviews would to take place in their homes. However, three young adults requested the researcher to interview them at the Department of Social Development's offices in Tembisa. Concerning the social work participants, the researcher negotiated to conduct their interviews in their offices to ensure confidentiality.

The researcher began the process of interviewing participants by introducing herself and establishing rapport with them. She created a warm and comfortable environment, and faced the participants while keeping a relaxed posture. During the initial part of the interviews, the researcher asked permission from participants to use an audio recorder and to jot down some notes. The audio recorder allows a

researcher to keep a complete record of the interview without being distracted by detailed note-taking; this also shows the participants that the researcher regards whatever they have to say as important. Field notes served as a form of substitute in case of loss of technical information and allowed the researcher to underline points where more clarity was needed, and to capture or note non-verbal communication such as facial expressions and gestures (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:298). The researcher asked open-ended questions to allow the participants to talk about their experiences and share their thoughts beyond those mentioned in their responses to the original question. This gave the researcher an opportunity to get to know participants quite intimately and to understand how they think and feel about the specific issue discussed (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:298).

The researcher is fluent in Zulu, Pedi, Tswana, and the Sotho languages and these are commonly spoken in Tembisa. The interviews with young adults were therefore conducted in the language that participants understood and felt comfortable with, which was mostly Zulu. The collected data was translated into English at a later stage. An expert in language translation was engaged to check whether the English translation reflected what was said by participants in their language accurately. The interviews schedule included the following questions for young adults (Addendum E).

The following biographical questions were asked:

- Gender.
- What is your current age?
- At what age was your foster care placement and foster child grant terminated?
- What is your highest educational qualification?
- Are you currently employed?

The following questions were used to gather information from young adults to determine their social functioning after the foster care placement and foster child grant were terminated:

- Tell me how life is for you now that your foster care placement and foster child grant has been terminated.
- For how long have you been terminated from foster care services and the grant?
- Share with me the sentiments and emotions you have experienced after the termination of your foster care placement and the foster child grant.
- Can you please explain to me how you have been prepared for the termination of foster care placement and foster child grant?
- Tell me how your living arrangements have changed since your foster care placement and foster child grant have been terminated.
- How has the termination of your foster care placement and the foster child grant affected you economically?
- How has it affected your education?
- Was it difficult for you to get employment?
- How do you experience relationships in your family (foster family or biological family or both) since your foster care placement and foster child grant have been terminated?
- What are the challenges you experience after the termination of your foster care placement and foster child grant?
- Share with me your coping strategies after the termination of foster care placement and the foster child grant.
- Tell me about the financial and social support (if any) that you receive from other people in your biological family, foster family, or community.
- Share with me the kind of professional assistance you require from social workers regarding some of the challenges you have mentioned to me earlier.
- What suggestions and recommendations will you make to the Department of Social Work concerning the termination of foster care placements and the foster child grants?

The following biographical questions for social workers were asked:

- Gender.
- Race
- What is your current age?
- What is your educational qualification?
- How long have you working for the Department of Social Develoment?

The following questions were included in interviews schedule for social workers who work in the field of child care and protection(Addendum F).

- How long have you been rendering foster care servicers?
- Share with me the programmes and services which you render to young adults in preparation of their discharge from foster care after they have reached the age of majority.
- Which programmes and services do you render to young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants?
- Share with me experiences you have had with regard to the social functioning of former foster care young adults.
- Share with me the kind of professional assistance that can be provided to assist former foster care young adults.
- What suggestion and recommendation would you make to the Department of Social Development concerning the termination of foster care placement and the foster child grant?

The interviews with social workers were conducted in English. All interviews were also conducted face to face. As shown above, different interview guides were employed for young adults and social workers to guide the direction of the interviews and maintain focus (De Vos et al., 2011:351-352).

The researcher employed interviewing techniques and tips such as probing, verbal and non-verbal expression, reflecting back, reflective summary, paraphrasing, clarification, and listening to ensure an effective interview, as suggested by Jarbandhan and Schutte (cited in De Vos et al. (2011:343-344).

Probing during the interview process was used to elicit further responses to questions in order to further increase the volume of information being collected. Verbal and non-verbal cues such as an occasional nod, “mm-mm,” “yes,” or “I see” were used by the researcher to demonstrate that she was listening carefully and to show the participants that she was paying close attention. From time to time the researcher repeated key questions throughout the interview. Clarification was always requested on unclear or ambiguous statements, for example: “Could you tell me more about...?”; “You seem to be saying...” (De Vos et al., 2011:344). In every key question the researcher ensured that all important points were clearly understood by using reflective summary. Participants were alerted timeously that the interview was coming to an end, and they were invited to ask any questions they may deem fit and relevant to the study.

The researcher aimed to interview six young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants had been terminated by the DSD and SASSA, and six social workers who worked in the field of child care and protection. However, data saturation was reached when the researcher had interviewed 10 young adults and 10 social workers. At the stage when 20 participants had been interviewed and repetition of information seemed to be taking place, the researcher concluded that saturation had been reached.

The researcher noticed two young adults who showed indications of distress which left them feeling emotionally upset and perturbed due to the information they shared. They were referred to Ms Nkuna, a professional counsellor, for counselling and debriefing.

2.7 Method of data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing and iterative process, which means that the collection of data, processing, analysis, and reporting are interlinked and are not merely a number of successive steps (De Vos et al., 2011:399).

In qualitative studies researchers often find it advisable and necessary to revert to their original field notes in order to verify conclusions; or to the participants to collect additional data to verify or to solicit feedback (Maree, 2007:99). Data analysis in qualitative research involves the preparation and organisation of data; for example, text data presented in the form of transcripts, image data such as photographs, categorising the data into themes through a process of coding, and finally representing the data in the form of figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell, 2013:180).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher followed the eight steps of qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:185-186) as a “plan” or method to approach the process of data analysis:

1. The researcher audio recorded the interviews which were subsequently transcribed verbatim, and made notes of ideas as they came to mind.
2. She then read the entire transcribed interviews to get a sense of the whole, and wrote down her thoughts in the margins of the transcripts.
3. Data was categorised into themes and subthemes by an independent coder, and the researcher developed themes by giving detailed descriptions, in line with literature.
4. Coding was done by an independent coder who created different categories of data. The main codes were used for publication of the research findings.
5. The story lines suitable for the themes were established with the assistance of the independent coder.

6. A final decision was made by the researcher on the most appropriate abbreviation or title for each theme.

7. The researcher organised the data relevant to each theme before initiating the process of analysis.

8. The researcher wrote a report on the research findings.

It is stated by Grinnell and Unrau (2011:448) that the purpose of analysing data in qualitative studies is “to sift, sort and organize the mass of data acquired during data collection in such a way that the themes and interpretations that emerge from the process, address the original research problems identified.” Through this process the researcher gathered data that addressed the originally identified research problems. Following the eight steps of Tesch, the researcher identified the common aims from the data collected from young adults who experienced the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants as well as those from the social workers. The data was used to understand how the young adults function socially, emotionally, physically, and financially after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.

Data was coded by the researcher and the independent coder in order to establish themes, subthemes, and categories to be presented as research findings. Tables 4 and 6 in chapter three demonstrate how data was categorised into themes and subthemes.

2.8 Data verification

Qualitative research data verification means the process of checking the accuracy and credibility of research findings from the perspective of the researcher, participants, and readers (Creswell, 2003:196). The researcher employed Guba’s model (in Krefting, 1991:214-222) of ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative data, and applied the four characteristics to ensure trustworthiness which are truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality.

2.9 Truth value

How confident is the researcher with the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants, and the context in which the study was undertaken?. Truth value is concerned with whether the findings of the study are a true reflection of the experiences of the participants (Krefting, 1991:215). The researcher used the following criteria to enhance the truth value in this study:

- **Interviewing techniques**: The researcher used various interviewing techniques during the interviews, for example probing, verbal and non-verbal communication, and restating and summarising in order to make interviewees feel comfortable with the study.

- **Triangulation**: Triangulation is the link between multiple perspectives for a better understanding of the various methods of data collection (Krefting, 1991:219). There are four methods of triangulation, namely triangulation of data-collection methods, triangulation of data sources, theoretical triangulation, and triangulation of investigators. To accomplish this the researcher used different sources, namely the expert knowledge, skills of qualitative research experts and theories. The researcher maintained eye contact during interviews in order to correlate what had been said verbally with their non-verbal responses. The use of a voice recorder and taking notes formed part of this process.

- **Peer examination**: The researcher requested input from her colleagues who are skilled in research to discuss the proposed study by asking questions and making suggestions (Krefting, 1991:215). In an attempt to further enhance the credibility of her research study, the researcher conducted all interviews in the language that the participant was most comfortable with; an English language translator was engaged to verify whether what had been said was in actual fact a true reflection.

- **Authority of the researcher**: The researcher is a social worker and has been employed in the Department of Social Development for the past eight

years. She works in the field of child care and protection and is also an e-Tutor for Unisa's social work students. The researcher attended a workshop on writing a proposal in qualitative research, and this enhanced her knowledge in formulating the content of this study.

- **Applicability:** Applicability is defined as the degree to which the findings can be applied in another context, setting, or group. In qualitative research, applicability is not always intended to generalise the findings to a larger population (Krefting, 1991:216). Applicability is established through the strategy of transferability and by means of the following criteria which were applied by the researcher; (1) provision of a solid description research methodology used; (2) employment of non-probability sampling and application purposive sampling for the selection of participants; (3) the use of explorative and descriptive methods; and (4) presentation of detailed conclusions of the study, with literature control.

- **Consistency of data**: This refers to whether the "findings would be consistent if the enquiry were replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context." Consistency is established through a strategy of dependability (Guba, in Krefting, 1991:216). During data collection a similar interview schedule was used with the same category of participants to ensure consistency. Therefore, although the responses were varied from one participant to another, they became repetitive at some stage when saturation was reached.

- **Neutrality**: This refers to the extent to which the research procedures are free from bias. Guba (in Krefting, 1991:216-217) proposed that neutrality in qualitative research should consider the neutrality of the data rather than that of the researcher, and should be confirmed or verified by other researchers. This study was guided by the promoter, Dr Mabetoa, who offered direction on decisions taken at each stage of the research, and ensured that the researcher read and checked every chapter of the research to avoid bias related errors.

2.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines that are essential to this research are informed consent, confidentiality, management of information, compensation, and debriefing of participants. These considerations have been dealt with in Chapter one.

2.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, the researcher presented in this chapter, how the research methodology was applied throughout the research study. A detailed description of the application of the qualitative research approach, the research design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, and data verification, was presented.

Chapter Three focuses on the discussion of the research findings supported by literature control.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

3.1 Introduction

The goal of the study was to explore and describe the social functioning of young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants at the age of 18 or 21 as per the Children's Act 38 of 2005 as Amended. The researcher therefore adopted a qualitative approach and used semi-structured interviews to collect data from young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants have been terminated by the Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) as well as by social workers who work in the field of child care and protection.

This chapter focuses on the findings of the study. The findings are based on comparing and contrasting the storylines of 20 participants with relevant literature. The sample of participants comprised 10 young adults and 10 social workers. An overview of the biological data of each group of participants is presented in table form, followed by a discussion. Data were analysed following Tesch's eight steps (Creswell, 2009:185-186). The services of an independent coder were used to analyse data; as result, five themes and 12 subthemes emerged from the analysis of data collected from young adults, while five themes, 10 subthemes and two categories emerged from the analysis of data collected from social workers. The researcher applied an ecological approach, relevant literature, and her knowledge as a social worker to interpret the data.

The interpretation and discussion of the findings will first deal with analysed data from young adults followed by that of social workers.

3.2 Biographical data of young adults who participated in the study

Table 3 below gives a summary of the biographical data of the young adult participants whose foster care placements and foster child grants have been terminated. The young adults' ages ranged from 18 to 25. Their details were taken

from the database of the Department of Social Development, Gauteng Province in the Mayibuye area where the Tembisa office of social workers is situated. The demographic data presented in Table 3 reflect participants' gender, age, age at the termination of the grant, educational qualification, and occupation. The participants were assigned alphabetical codes to protect their identities in order to adhere to the ethical considerations of ensuring anonymity.

Table 3: Biographical data of the participants

YA	Gender	Age	Age at the termination of grant	Qualification	Occupation	Foster parent
A	Female	18	18	Passed grade 12; Bachelor's Degree	Unemployed	Related/biological sister
B	Male	19	19	Passed grade 12; Bachelor's Degree	Unemployed	Related/maternal grandmother
B	Female	19	19	Failed grade 12	Unemployed	Related/biological sister
C	Female	20	17	Dropped out of grade 9	Unemployed	Related/biological sister
C	Female	20	21	Failed grade 11	Unemployed	Related/maternal aunt
C	Female	20	19	Failed grade 12	Unemployed	Related/biological sister
C	Female	20	19	Passed grade 12; Diploma	Unemployed	Related/maternal grandmother
D	Male	21	20	Passed grade 12; Diploma	Unemployed	Related/maternal grandmother
E	Male	22	18	Passed grade 12; Diploma	Unemployed	Related/maternal grandmother
F	Male	22	20	Passed grade 12; Diploma	Unemployed	Related/biological sister

The young adults who participated in the study consisted of six females and four males and their ages ranged from 18 to 22. According to Bergh (2011:95), a young adult is a person who is between the ages 21 and 25. However, Section 17 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2006) regard 18 years as the age of majority. The main characteristics of the young people in this phase as discussed in chapter 1 are: Firstly, individualism which refers to developing an autonomous identity, and involves accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's own actions and deciding on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influences. Secondly, the establishment of a relationship with parents not as a child but an equal adult. Thirdly, being financially independent; this translates to keeping a job and having one's own place or even being capable of establishing, keeping, and supporting one's own nuclear family. Fourthly, having a career and making life-long commitments. Fifthly, being compliant and socially responsible by adhering to the norms of society through developing self-regulation, for example by avoiding anti-social behaviour such as drunk driving, drug and alcohol abuse, irresponsible sexual activities, and unruly and aggressive behaviour (Arnett, 2001:2).

This phase is also commonly known as adolescence, which is a stage in a person's life between childhood and adulthood according to which young adults are expected to go through numerous changes in their lives (Gerald, Gerald & Foo, 2010:4). According to Eric Ericson's psychosocial stages of development, adolescence is the stage during which young adults strive to attain their own identity in terms of their values and envisaged future endeavours. Eric Ericson referred to this stage as "Intimacy versus Isolation" according to which young adults between the ages 18 and 25 begin to associate more intimately with friends and explore relationships leading to long-term commitments with individuals other than family members (Shulman & Artzi, 2003:218).

Although Arnett (2001:2) posits that most young adults at this stage are at school or college and some have started looking for jobs, having a career and making life-long commitments but Table 3 above gives a different picture. In this study it

became clear that 10 participants were unemployed, six passed matric (grade 12), two failed matric (grade 12), one failed grade 11, and one dropped out of school. Similar findings are reported by Wade and Dixon (2006:199) who found that only a minority of young adults outside the foster care system gain qualifications at school, and that most fail to establish a stable pattern of education and work. Additionally, they frequently drop out of high school because of their substandard grades (Scannapieco et al., 2007:425).

Mathews, Jamieson, Lake, & Smith (2014:92) maintain that in 2012 there were 3.54 million orphans in South Africa due to HIV and AIDS-related illness. These numbers include children without a biological mother, father, or both. All participants in the study were orphans and placed in family-related foster care. Most of their foster parents were also poor and depended on foster child grants for survival. Four of the youth were placed in the care of grandparents who were also poor due to the loss of their adult children who were the breadwinners of their families. As primary caregivers grandparents play a vital role in raising grandchildren, despite the myriad difficulties they face. They provide the day-to-day social and emotional support to grandchildren, especially during a period of bereavement. As a result, the grandparent-grandchild relationship is always considered as second to the parent-child relationship (Nziyane, 2010:8).

Six participants lived with sibling only households under the care of an older female sibling sister who was old enough to receive a foster child grant. This is commonly known as a child-headed household which has also become common as a result of the HIV & AIDS pandemic (Kindman & Palermo, 2012:172). A child-headed household according to the Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 137(South Africa, 2006) refers to a household where a parent, guardian or caregiver of the household is either terminally ill, has died, or has abandoned the children and there is consequently no adult family member available to provide care for the children in the household.

Some of the reasons for children remaining in a child-headed household are to protect the property left by the deceased parents. On the other hand, some of the

children never had a close relationship with their extended families that seldom played a significant role in their lives while the parents were still alive. The study conducted by Nziyane (2010:7) in Bushbuckridge in the Limpopo Province of South Africa revealed that children felt that extended families wanted to use them to receive foster child grants. Sometimes relatives were unwilling to accept the child in their homes mostly because of economic constraints and the fact that relatives were in need of care themselves. A strained relationship between children and their extended families is a contributing factor to children who opt to remain in a child-headed household. These children therefore choose to be independent in order to provide support to each other.

Family-related foster care is a common denominator amongst all young participants, which means that most of the youth in the study did not have to move from their foster homes when their foster child grants and the placements were terminated.

3.3 Discussion on themes and subthemes, with literature control

This section presents five themes and subthemes that emerged from data analysis, based on the social functioning of young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.

Table 4: Themes and subthemes for young adults

Theme	Subtheme
Theme 1: Life is “hard” after termination of foster care grant.	1.1 Financial struggle for meeting personal needs.
	1.2 Teenage parenthood complicate financial survival and socialising with peers.
Theme 2: Inability to copeindependently after termination of grant.	2.1 Continuing dependence on maternal family members, siblings, or friends for basic needs.

Theme	Subtheme
	2.2 Independent living complicated due to unemployment rate in country and lack of training and/or experience.
	2.3 Young adults' planning for future seems vague.
	2.4 A couple of young adults tried to take responsibility for themselves.
Theme 3: Emotional support and relationships consequences due to dependency.	3.1 Being without income and struggling for a job is a "hurtful" experience.
	3.2 Feelings that family is disrupted and they (and others) no longer care.
Theme 4: Expectations from social workers.	4.1 Expect social workers to prepare them for the discontinuation of the grant and not just inform foster parents.
	4.2 Young adults expect social workers to advocate and mediate on their behalf for financial support for continuous training.
	4.3 Young adults need counselling and support from social workers.
Theme 5: Expectations from Department of Social Development.	5.1 Young adults expect the Department of Social Development to support them until they are successfully skilled for employment.

The following section presents the themes and subthemes mentioned in Table 4 by discussing the findings, providing quotations from the transcribed interviews, and the use of literature control.

3.3.1 Theme 1: Life is “hard” after termination of foster care grant

The termination of a foster care placement and foster child grant can be a very difficult stage for young adults as they transition to independent life; this depends on the support that they receive at this stage to assist them in continuing with their lives. This is consistent with the findings by Mendes (2014:1) that most young adults out of foster care are vulnerable. Furthermore, they experience many challenges long after leaving care. As a result, the termination of their grants impacts negatively on their physical, social, emotional, economic lives, and future prospects of ever leading a successful life. Participants outlined that life is “hard” after termination of foster care placements and foster child grants; they therefore struggle to meet their basic needs, as shown by the narratives in the two subthemes below.

3.3.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Financial struggle for meeting personal needs

Termination of the foster care placement and foster child grant has been associated with numerous impacts on young adults out of foster care. Furthermore, they have been reported to experience financial hardships in their daily lives. Additionally, most young adults expressed anxiety about meeting their own short- and long-term needs, specifically their basic needs (Curry & Abrams, 2014:148).

> *It is hard…with the grant; I was able to get something for school purposes like a calculator and groceries for the family* [Female, 18 years].

> *Hey…Eish, it is difficult, I am no longer able to buy clothes…ooooh, it is difficult; even food inside the house does not last us until end of the month and when there is no food we do not know what to do; it is even difficult to have cosmetics* [Female, 20 years].

From these excerpts it is clear that they find it hard to make a living after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. For that reason, they find themselves without money for basic necessities and to further their studies.

Similarly, in the study by Hall and Sambu (2014:94) it was revealed that poverty is also a contributory factor to the plight of young adults out of foster care. A lack of sufficient income can compromise children's rights to nutrition, education, adequate living environments, and health care. By the same token, children who are placed in family-related foster care find similar circumstances as most of their foster parents are poor and some are dependent on the foster child grant; therefore, the termination of the foster child grant is bound to have a negative impact on the financial situation of both the foster child and the foster family (Fitzgerald, 2013:94). Additionally, Rosenwald et al. (2013:149) claim that young adults out of foster care face a number of risk factors including financial difficulties and public challenges such as poverty.

As a social worker, the researcher has had direct experience as to how young adults struggle to meet their basic needs after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants as they often return to the social worker's office to request food parcels. The researcher is of the opinion that many of these young adults are unable to support themselves without government assistance. The ecological perspective assumes that each individual should have a positive level of fit that will create a sense of adaptation, reduce the level of stress, and promote positive growth and development (Teater, 2010:17). In the case of these young adults, they fail to adjust to new circumstances post the termination of their grants and are unable to put plans in place to ensure the fulfilment of their basic needs.

3.3.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Teenage parenthood complicate financial survival and socialising with peers

This subtheme portrays the different views shared by young adults regarding the financial difficulties they face due to teenage pregnancy and the minimal socialisation with peers as a result of having children of their own.

> *Aaaa…I can say I am no longer able to go out with my friends for shopping to buy clothes, I do not have clothes; it is hard because my sister has a*

child; I also have my own child to be taken care of, so my sister is unable to take care of the three of us as she does not have money [Female, 18 years].

It is hard because I cannot do anything., I cannot buy anything that I need; ever since I gave birth to my child it is very hard; my sister tries; I also look for a job but I cannot find it is hard [Female, 20 years].

The father of my child is not doing anything for the child, so I am having lots of regrets that is why I want to go back to school…so it hard in a way that…even though I want to help them in the house by buying food and clothes for them I am unable to do so and I do not know what to do [Female, 20 years].

In these storylines, these young people are reflecting on the quality of their relationships with their friends. Participants articulated that these relationships are negatively affected due to teenage parenthood. One participant mentioned that the father of her baby deserted her and the baby; as a result she is regretful of the entire situation. In addition, these storylines correspond with the findings by Jones (2014:84) that higher pregnancy rates amongst young adults out of foster care and their inability to socialise with peers of their own age are also a challenge. However, Mark et al. (2006:213) assert that a family pattern of instability and risk can all contribute to the tendency of early childbearing found in young adults out of foster care. Similarly, Baugh (2008:2) notes that teenage pregnancy is more common amongst young adults out of foster care, and these individuals frequently live a life below the poverty line. It is evident from this discussion that teenage pregnancy also contributes towards young adults' socioeconomic hardship, and poses an obstacle to socialising with peers.

3.3.2 Theme 2: Inability to cope independently after termination of grant

Young adults reported that they were not coping after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants; this is due to the abrupt termination of the grants that forced them into early independence. They were expected to be independent and well- functioning young adults without the required resources.

Focusing on four subthemes, participants' views are discussed below in more detail.

3.3.2.1 Subtheme 2.1: Continuing dependence on maternal family members, siblings, or friends for basic needs

The participants reported how they received support from their foster families after the termination of their placements and grants. Most young adults depend on their families of origin as a primary source of support (Curry & Abrams, 2014:148). Family members tend to provide financial assistance, housing, and general guidance to young adults well into their twenties (Curry & Abrams, 2014:145). The following narratives demonstrate how dependent they are on their families for support:

> *It is hard because we are no longer receiving it* [grant] *and in the house is only my sister's boyfriend who is employed and he doesn't earn much and he is trying hard to support our family but…hey…it is not enough because he also has his own debt and family debts* [Female, 18 years].

> *At home is my grandmother who is a domestic worker; she provides for us and you can find that she has debts to pay as well* [Male, 19 years].

> *The situation is bad, we were depending on my foster child grant but because my grandmother has not yet reached the age of sixty to receive her old age grant, currently we survive solely on my sister's foster child grant* [Female, 20 years].

These narratives are consistent with the assertion by Tanur (2012:326) that due to the sudden termination of state support young adults depend on their families of origin for ongoing financial support. It is also highlighted by Jones (2013:236) that members of the family were the most likely providers of immediate finance to young adults out of foster care. One participant said that,

> "*I am still staying with that person* [referring to foster mother] *but I sometimes go and stay with my boyfriend because my aunt* [referring to foster mother]

she is not doing anything for me; my boyfriend buys me cosmetics and gives me money to buy clothes [Female, 20 years].

The participant refers to the fact that she mainly depends on her boyfriend for her material needs and financial support due to the lack of financial support from her foster parent, which led to a hostile relationship between the participant and the foster parent. These expressions concur with the findings articulated in the Ahmann (2017:44), which states that in some cases termination of the foster child grant negatively affects the relationship between foster child and foster parents, often to the degree that they are no longer taken care of, particularly after disagreements with the foster parent. It is also found that they fail to adjust to the financial change, and they consequently leave their foster homes to live with peers and boyfriends because they experience anger and rejection, and blame their foster parents for their dire circumstances (Hojer & Sjoblom, 2009:123).

It is evident that the majority of participants receive ongoing support from their family members and siblings after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. However, one participant received financial support from her boyfriend because the relationship with her foster parent was negatively affected by the termination of the grant.

3.3.2.2 Subtheme 2.2: Independent living complicated due to unemployment rate in country and lack of training and or experience.

This subtheme portrays the different views shared by young adults regarding the complications related to independent living due to a lack of employment and training experience. Specific life skills are necessary for successful independent living, which are also the most important requirement for finding employment (Tanur, 2012:334). Participants shared the following:

It is difficult…to get employment because they want experience and where can I get experience as I am fresh from school? [Female, 20 years].

I want to work, but they said they will call me. When I submit my CV and when they request matric certificate I do not have a choice but to give them the one I have which indicates that I have failed my matric exams. This is to show them that I really want a job. I am still waiting for their call [Female, 20 years].

I am looking for a job but at many places when they hire people they want matric certificate and I do not have because I did not complete my matric [Female, 20 years].

In these storylines participants expressed their frustration about being unable to find employment because some do not have work experience and have failed matric, while others dropped out of school and are therefore unable to obtain employment.

These findings corroborate other research outcomes that poor job preparation and limited skills training and education put young adults at an unfair disadvantage when facing the job market (Baugh, 2008:1). This is attributed to the fact that young adults leave foster care without educational qualifications, and lack of education skills can be viewed as a significant barrier to obtaining the type of employment they aspire to (Hojer & Sjoblom 2009:119). Many only qualify for unskilled, low-wage jobs which render them vulnerable to poverty and increased difficulty in establishing their independence (Jones, 2014:83).

The critical challenge facing South Africa today is the scarcity of employment and employment creation, which is important in reducing poverty and improving living conditions of the youth. Their lack of experience and employment opportunities in the country means that many young adults including those who have aged out of foster care continue to experience financial hardship. These young people are unlikely to find employment, and without a good job and the little money they earn if they do get employed means that they will always struggle to meet their basic needs (Mkhize, 2015:5).

3.3.2.3 Subtheme 2.3: Young adults' planning for the future is vague

Aging out of the foster care system without a transition plan can have a permanent impact on the future development of young adults. It is noted by Scannapieco et al. (2007:1) that young adults' future plans with regard to education were not discussed with anyone before termination of their foster care placements and grants. Additionally, they seem to be overwhelmed by financial problems to the point of helplessness. In a study by Affronti, Rittner, & Jones (2015:4) it is clear that young adults feel frustrated about their lack of involvement in decision making, particularly concerning their future while transitioning to adulthood. The participants shared the following:

> *I do not have any support, next year I wanted to go to school but I do not have money so I do not have a plan for next year* [Male, 20 years].
>
> *I am willing to go back to school but I now gave up because I see that there is nothing that I can do; I'm confused, I do not know what to do* [Female, 20 years].
>
> *I am desperate. I looked for a job and there was no job. I looked for learnership, bursaries but there was nothing…so I do not know what will happen with my life* [Female, 20 years].

These narratives are consistent with the assertion by Jones (2013:225) that young adults out of care are often uniquely challenged in developing the ability to manage financially and make appropriate planning for the future. Due to financial struggles young adults experience difficulties in meeting their basic needs (Rosenwald et al., 2013:154). Similarly, Mitchell, Jones, & Renema (2014:292) claim that without a transition plan, young adults would lack access to valuable information and resources that will help them as they transition to adulthood. Additionally, they often receive negative information about the possibility of achieving their ambition successfully.

It is evident that the majority of young adults out of foster care face a number of challenges long after their grants have been terminated; they are concerned about the future and feel helpless because of their inability to plan for the future. According to the Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 189 (South Africa, 2006), before the foster care placements and the grants are terminated the foster parent and the child should be provided with supervisory services by a social worker who would monitor the child's progress at school throughout the foster care period. This is crucial to enable the social worker to recommend the extension of the foster care placement period beyond the age of 18, as there should be proof that the young person is still at school. If the young person is no longer attending school, such extension will not be approved and once the placement is terminated, aftercare services are usually not rendered to the foster parent and the young adult.

This approach is in contrast with the service delivery or continuum of the care process expected from social workers. The Department of Social Development's (2013:27) Framework for Social Welfare postulates that social workers are required to render services to individuals, families, groups, and communities following the four levels of intervention which are prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and aftercare intervention. In prevention intervention social workers prevent the development of a problem by preparing families and communities on issues of child protection, domestic violence, as well as woman abuse. In early intervention, social workers identify the risk behaviour and symptoms in individuals, groups, and communities that could negatively impact their social interaction with others. On the other hand, social workers assess and identify the needs of clients, removal of a child or family member, and compiling court reports and return dates. With regards to aftercare intervention, social workers are required to facilitate the reintegration of a family member with his or her family and enhance the optimal functioning of families.

3.3.2.4 Subtheme 2.4: A few young adults tried to take responsibility for themselves

Pathways to independent living for young adults from the foster care system can be very challenging and the legacy of lower educational attainment is a contributory factor to unemployment (Jones, 2014:83). However, young adults are eager to work but they struggle do so due to limited skills. Some participants in the study attempted to take responsibility for their future, as shown by the following narratives:

> *Most of the time…with my friends there is something we do to survive such as Tattoos, I get something (money) from it, I also do music and produce beats and sell* [Male, 22 years].

> *I tried to look for a job at Indian shops I worked for a long period and I was earning five hundred rand every Friday until they relocated* somewhere [Female, 20 years].

> *I have tried to work piece jobs in order to help my grandmother with money to pay for our accommodation* [Male, 19 years].

These storylines are consistent with the assertion by the Department of Social Development (2009:11) that young adults after the termination of their foster care grants tried to find employment or part-time employment to be financially independent. From her experience of working with young adults who have aged out of foster care, the researcher can confirm that due to the lack of employment young adults struggle to survive financially.

Two young adults shared that they tried doing piecework:

> *I was working part-time for two, three months at Takealot.com, and now I am working at Bright House as a jokey processing invoices* [Male, 22 years].

> *I have a part-time job at Rotten Label Spartan in Kempton Park; my job is to stick barcode on CDs and DVDs* [Male, 19 years].

This confirms the assertion that those who do obtain employment may be forced to accept low-paying jobs (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006:213), which often results in continual job and income insecurity (Jones, 2014:83).

3.3.3 Theme 3: Emotional support and relationship consequences due to dependency

To young adults the transition is never easy as most of them turn to foster parents or family members for financial and emotional support long after the termination of their foster care grants. However, being dependent impacts negatively on their relationships with family members. According to Jones (2014:81), young adults in transition to adulthood face severe hardship; some of these are at least partially related to a lack of social support, which exacerbates troubled relationships. It is also highlighted by Curry & Abrams (2014:147) that most young adults experience anxiety because of their dependence on other people, and they are concerned that they will disappoint those who are willing to assist them in these dire circumstances. Two subthemes emerged from participants' shared experiences.

3.3.3.1 Subtheme 3.1: Being without income and struggling for a job is a "hurtful" experience

Financial independence is seldom attained by young adults out of foster care due to the high rate of unemployment. However, those who do succeed in finding employment often have to be satisfied with low wages which barely elevate them above the poverty line. Participants expressed the following:

> *It hurts but I pretend as if everything is fine, but I hope it will be all right* [Male, 21 years].

> *My heart is painful because when I check there is no one to give me money to buy some of the things…it is hard even to ask from my sister to buy something for my child or for me; it is hard because she will tell me that she does not have money and I know she has her own children, so it is stressful and I am hurting* [Female, 20 years].

It is difficult, we survived because we have to survive but it is not good and the worse part I am not employed [Female, 21 years].

I feel bad because the situation at home is difficult [Female, 20 years].

The above participants' accounts reveal that lack of income is a painful experience since they find it difficult to meet their basic needs and they are bound to remain in that situation as they lack employment in order to change their circumstances.

These responses also concur with the findings by Jones (2013:226) that young adults who have only one source of income are unable to alleviate the anguish and adapt with difficulty to life conditions. Ongoing financial and emotional support is essential to assist young adults out of care to adapt to the transition without support. They may be tormented by periods of emotional turbulence (Wade & Dixon, 2006:206).

3.3.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: Feelings that family is disrupted and they no longer care

Some families continue to offer social and emotional support to young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. In instances where siblings live together in a child-headed household, they experience an overwhelming feeling of loss, they are at risk of suffering malnutrition, are unable to continue their education, become victims of child trafficking, and exhibit aberrant behaviour such as prostitution and sexual abuse. Older children at times find it challenging to exercise authority over younger siblings, mostly girls with younger brothers (Nziyane, 2010:10; Cluver, Gardner, & Operario 2007:756). The participants' feelings and understanding of family dynamics and how they experience them are discussed below.

Aaaa…in my family we do not understand each other because my sister utilise money made from tenants for her own benefit and you will find that in the house there is no food and when you question it you are beaten…so…aaaa…it is boring. Also my sister and my brother always fight

for accommodation money because when he asked for money to buy shoes my sister refused, then my brother took money from tenants without informing her and bought shoes, and I cannot blame him because he does not have anything and he is unemployed, but my older brother is employed but he cannot place my younger brother at his workplace so you can see that there is no unity at home not at all [Female, 20 years].

My sister [foster parent] *who was responsible for my foster care grant and provided for me is no longer staying at home; she relocated to stay with her boyfriend and the time you phoned her to make an appointment with me she told me a week later; also my older sister she was not staying at home for a long time; she was also staying with her boyfriend; she just came home recently, you can see I am alone* [Male, 22 years].

Hey…hey…[she was shaking her head] *there is no communication amongst us and support….when I started drinking alcohol we were not communicating in the house with my siblings, but when I come to the house I will be a good person and sober. I thought maybe I am the one who makes the family not to communicate but the situation is still the same. I am not talking to them, every one mind his/her own business…I do not know…no communication…no support* [Female, 20 years].

These three participants shared their feelings about their disrupted families due to poverty and living in a sibling-only household. They also reported self-centeredness amongst their siblings and family members which arose from a lack of food and other basic necessities. They were also concerned about the absence of peace in their families which resulted in family members' lack of care for one another. According to Nziyane (2010:9), conflict in child-headed household is unavoidable, and it has a negative impact on their relationship as siblings. Furthermore, a conflict situation results because siblings are subjected to interactions with each other and their ideas about what is best vary. It is further asserted by Nziyane & Alpaslan (2012:303) that children living alone without adult care lack proper guidance, discipline, and control.

The storylines resonate with the findings of Hojer and Sjoblom (2009:119) that the termination of a grant in some families results in young adults experiencing feelings of separation and dysfunction amongst family members. Similarly, young adults who have a history of disrupted relationships with their families find it difficult to establish the required stability in order to access support after the termination of the foster child grant (Jones, 2014:86). Furthermore, conflict amongst young adults and family members is common and can play a part in contributing to a lack of support (Curry & Abrams, 2014:148).

3.3.4 Theme 4: Expectations from social workers

The role of the social worker pertaining to children in foster care is to provide support and counselling to the children and support to foster parents to create an environment conducive to the upbringing and care of the foster children in a way that provides security, stability, love, and a strong sense of identity and belonging (Brown, Sebba & Luke, 2014:1) Social workers should also prepare these children and foster parents for the termination of the grants and placements through family reunification services, and for independent living for young people who have aged out of care. Three subthemes emerged from the participants' suggestions in relation to social work services to young adults.

3.3.4.1 Subtheme 4.1: Expect social workers to prepare them for discontinuing of grant and not just inform foster parent

Preparation for independent life is perceived as an important component especially to young adults out of foster care (Courtney & Dworsky 2006:212). Therefore, planning for transition out of the foster care system is required to enable young adults to cope with numerous risks in life. Same authors suggested that social workers should prepare young adults to make the transition to independent living successfully. This includes advance notification of the termination of the foster child grants by social workers to prevent greater economic strain on the families involved and to enable the affected young adults to adapt to independent living.

In the event of a grant being terminated it is also the responsibility of the South African Social Security Agency to provide notification in advance to the affected beneficiaries. This notification must include the date of the intended termination, suspension, or cancellation; the reasons for the suspension or cancellation; and the right to make a representation and appeal the decision to cancel or suspend the grant (Regulation 29(2) of the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004) (South Africa, 16 september 2010).

Considering the rights of children to participate in matters affecting them as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 and the Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 10 (South Africa, 2006) it is important to note that children obtain skills and gain confidence through participation in decision-making processes affecting them. Moreover, the decisions that are informed by children's own views will be more appropriate, more sustainable, and will have greater impact on their development (Lansdown, 2009:5).

According to National Norms and Standards for Child Protection of Children's Act 38 of 2005 (South Africa, 2006:293) an individual development plan (IDP) must be prepared for a child even before the foster child grant and placement are granted. This is an important aspect of service delivery as this assessment informs social workers' interventions for young adults in and out of foster care on many different levels. It provides a starting point for later intervention that may be developed and implemented for children in foster care as well as after they age out of the foster care system. However, this is not always the case as evidenced by how the following five participants received notification for the discontinuation of their foster child grants:

> *It is my grandmother* [foster parent] *who explained everything to me after I met with my previous social worker, she told me that if I am not studying the following year there will be a possibility that my grant will be terminated* [Male, 20 years].

I was very shocked…when I asked for money from my sister (foster parent) she told me that my grant is terminated [Female, 21 years].

My sister [foster parent] *explained everything to me that my foster care grant will be terminated when I reach eighteen years, and also if I fail they will terminate the grant* [Female, 20 years].

Eish…I was surprised when we received a letter to confirm that the foster child grant is terminated and it will be renewed only if I continue with my studies; so I was unable to continue with my studies because I did not get the bursary [Female, 21 years].

It is clear from these storylines that young adults do not receive proper preparation for the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants from some of the social workers who manage their placements. This yields negative outcomes in their transition to independent living.

The study by Tanur (2012:326) reported that young adults are often not prepared for the termination of their foster child grants by social workers. Moreover, the abrupt termination results in poor outcomes for families who still require ongoing financial assistance. Similarly, the study by Hojer & Sjoblom (2009:124) reveals that social workers who are formally responsible for placements are not always willing to complete the placement when the child turns 18. Thus, for many of the young adults the termination of the grant comes as a shock, which obviously puts greater financial strain on the family involved (Department of Social Development 2009:9).

The end result is that these young adults have become frustrated with the foster care system that affords them little or no control over their transition plans due to a lack of communication and involvement. They also expressed a desire that social workers should have listened to them more and conducted interviews with them

before the termination of their foster child grants, rather than having to depend on information from their foster parents (Affronti et al., 2015:14).

The researcher deduced from the aforementioned statements that neither social workers nor foster parents adequately prepare young adults who are in foster care to cope with life circumstances after their foster child grants have been terminated. The ecological perspective postulates that professionals have innovative ways to conceptualise the relationship between the individual and environmental contexts of human functioning, and that practitioners should therefore engage with those dynamics to bring harmony between the person and his or her environment (Gray & Webb, 2013:179). This means that professionals should ensure that in order to facilitate a fit between individuals and their environment they should ensure that all subsystems in the environment are involved in order to develop strategies that ensure that the developmental needs of children in and out foster care are met.

3.3.4.2 Subtheme 4.2: Young adults expect social workers to advocate and mediate on their behalf for financial support towards continuous training

Young adults strongly felt that social workers should support and negotiate on their behalf for financial support towards continuous training. These may include supervising the transition process and other resources that are often available to young adults out of foster care, such as job training or educational programmes (Curry & Abrams, 2014:247). Additionally, they expect a form of tangible assistance such as financial loans for educational or skills training. However, in many cases social workers are unable to provide sufficient support to young adults in the transition period to independent living, especially in South Africa due to high caseloads, case backlogs, and the lack of adequate staff. These challenges make it difficult for social workers to perform their duties effectively (Naidoo, 2004:361). Therefore, young adults find themselves without access to financial aid to continue with their studies and job training. In this instance, the following suggestions were offered:

If they can assist me and take me to school because I failed. I have tried but I am no longer able to continue due to financial constraints. I need someone professional; someone who knows his or her job to help me go to school [Male, 19 years].

Help me to get bursaries or learnerships…things like that, because I am unable to pay school fees [Male, 22 years].

If they can help me find employment or help me with my educational needs. Even if they can assist me financially, they can pay school fees and transport costs for me, that is all I want [Male, 22 years].

I request the social workers to provide bursaries for us but you cannot depend on bursaries because sometimes you apply and not get accepted at tertiary as it happened to me; they must also give us information regarding learnerships [Female, 20 years].

I wanted the social worker to take me to boarding school at the time I was still at school and receiving the foster child grant to complete my studies [Female, 20 years].

It is evident from these responses that most young adults out of the foster care system are mostly on their own without adequate financial support for educational development. Consequently, they are unable to continue with their studies and they expect social workers to intervene on their behalf for financial support to pay for their ongoing education.

This confirms the assertion by Zastrow (2009:36) that a social worker as an advocate provides leadership in collecting information and presenting the legitimacy of the client's needs and requests in order to serve the interests of the client effectively. Social workers may liaise with organisations supporting young adults out of foster care and advocate on their behalf for financial support intended for their education (Tanur, 2012:329). In South Africa, the Department of Social Development has a scholarship programme for people who want to pursue a

Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. However, the scholarship programme is not benefiting young adults out of the foster care system because they mostly lack the necessary information. It is expected that social workers would provide such information to young adults.

3.3.4.3 Subtheme 4.3: Young adults need counselling from social workers

A diversity of subjective propositions comes through from young adults about how social workers can provide them with counselling. Inherent in these propositions are the beliefs that most young adults experience loss, trauma, victimisation, and abuse in their lives. These experiences contribute towards depression and psychological distress after the termination of foster care placements and their foster child grants (Nyamukapa, Gregson, Wambe, Mushore Lopman, Mupambireyi, Nhongo & Jukes, 2010:990). Additionally, it impacts their functioning and coping abilities. These young adults need formal therapeutic intervention considering that their emotional wellbeing is often strained by environmental factors and external stressors. This is how they explicitly expressed their views:

> *If I can find someone to talk to, I need someone to talk to because my mind is occupied with a lot of things and it is eating me; I do not know who talk to* [Female, 20 years].

> *Provide counselling…we become depressed too much as orphans, sometimes people provoke us. It is painful to see some people with their parents and you do not have one; we need counselling* [Female, 20 years].

Participants reported the need for psychosocial counselling in their lives in order to enhance their emotional wellbeing as they were left with negative feelings of anger and unresolved issues.

These expressions concur with the findings by Freundlich and Avery (2006:508) that young adults often need highly intensive and specialised services to prepare them for independent living as they are prone to psychological pain, depression, and a feeling of hopelessness. Similarly, (Cluver et al., 2007:755) reveal that orphaned children are exposed to numerous stressors which may contribute to

psychological problems including debilitating parental AIDS-associated illnesses, stigma, and loss of a loved one. They experience depression, thoughts of suicide, anxiety, and peer problems. The effects of bereavement show that orphaned children are more likely to struggle academically at school; and they are more likely to live in inappropriate housing such as dwelling shacks.

It is also asserted by Skinner, Sharp, Jooste, Mfecane & Simbayi (2013:2) that orphaned children lose many basic resources that caregivers usually provide, or they may experience deepening debt and loss of the usual supports due to loss of a breadwinner. Therefore, Morris (2007:426) suggests that emotional support for issues such as anger management should be offered to young adults out of the foster care system. The policy framework for orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, defines psychosocial support as a continuum of support and care at ensuring the social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of individuals, their families, and communities. The provision of psychosocial support services to young adults will enhance their social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing and may be healing in their lives. Moreover, social workers are expected to offer psychosocial support to clients in their day-to-day interactions which include attending and responding to the child in order to assist him or her in difficult times such as coping with loss or exposure to fearful experiences, strengthening his or her life skills, and also ensure that the child's basic rights are recognised.

It is evident that orphans require psychosocial support in view of their distress emanating from losing parents and this is also exacerbated by the effects of the transition from the foster care system to independent life.

3.3.5 Theme 5: Expectation from the Department of Social Development

It has been widely reported that young adults from the foster care system are faced with extreme levels of poverty and economic hardship compared to other young adults from the general population (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006:213). Furthermore, there is often ambiguity relating to the services and resources that should be available to them upon transitioning out of foster care, and this lack of transparency

exacerbates the anxiety they experience as to what their lives would be like after leaving foster care (Mitchell et al., 2014:298).

The South African government is expected to focus on sustainable economic development to empower young adults to pursue careers and to ensure their economic wellbeing rather than merely focusing on providing foster child grants (National Development Plan 2030 (2014:359). The subtheme below emerged from participants' suggestions in relation to the Department's support until they are successfully skilled for occupation.

3.3.5.1 Subtheme 5.1: Young adults expect the Department to support them until successfully skilled for an occupation in the labour market

The young adults reflected on their expectations from the Department of Social Development to support them until they are successfully skilled for the job market, and recounted their views of how the Department of Social Development could assist them. The following suggestions were shared:

> *I can suggest that if they can only get me to school so that I can be educated and be a person that I want to be in future by paying my school fees because my grandmother will not be able to pay for me at the moment…or help me with my financial problems that I am facing now* [Male, 19 years].

> *If maybe they can help me get a job or go back to school and study so that I can look like others or work like other people in order to bring change in my family and to restore dignity to my family like other families* [Female, 20 years].

> *I will suggest that for those who are coming after us at least the government must terminate the grant after they reach the age of 21 years because you can complete your matric at the age of 18 years but you will stay and struggle at home; but when you are 21 years you're an adult you can make your own decisions unlike when you're a teenager; it is very tough* [Female, 20 years].

These confirm the assertion by Lansdown (2009:155) that young adults need skills and support to adjust to independent living, because skills enable them to find employment or start their own businesses to be financially independent. Furthermore, if young adults are not provided with appropriate tools, training, and other development opportunities they tend to lack the capabilities and strength to cope with challenges in adulthood.

3.4 Research findings pertaining to social workers who participated in the study

The sample of social work participants comprised 10 social workers who worked in the field of child care and protection in the Department of Social Development in the Johannesburg Metro Region, specifically in the Tembisa (Mayibuye) section, which has a large number of children placed in foster care every year by the Department of Social Development.

3.5 Biographical data of social workers who participated in the study

An overview of the biographical data of social work participants is presented in a table form below, followed by a discussion.

Table: 5: Social workers interviewed

Social Worker	Gender	Age	Race	Qualification	Years of experience working with children
A	Male	26	A	BA Social Work	5
B	Female	27	A	BA Social Work	6
C	Female	30	A	BA Social Work	5
D	Female	32	A	BA Social Work	6

Social Worker	Gender	Age	Race	Qualification	Years of experience working with children
E	Female	35	A	BA Social Work	10
E	Female	35	A	BA Social Work	5
F	Female	37	A	BA Social Work	11
G	Female	38	C	BA Social Work	6
H	Female	39	A	BA Social Work	11
I	Female	49	A	BA Social Work	10

3.5.1 Biographical profiles of the participants

The demographic data presented in Table 5 above reflects the participants' gender, age, race, qualifications, and years of experience working with children. The participants were assigned alphabetical codes to protect their identities in order to adhere to the ethical consideration of ensuring anonymity. All participants were qualified and registered social workers; their ages ranged between 26 and 49 and they had social work experience ranging from five to 11 years working in the field of child care and protection. Social work is a female-dominated field; only one male social worker participated in the study. All social workers were from Tembisa, which is a predominately African residential area, and from the 10 social workers who participated in the study only one social worker was Coloured.

In South Africa social workers practice generic social work, but in some cases where there is a serious demand for service delivery for a specific group of clients they are required to specialise; as in the case with child care and protection, specifically foster care placements and dealing with the backlog that emanates from the high demand for the review of the placements every second year (Naidoo,

2004:4). The Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 155(4)(a) (South Africa, 2006) instructs that the review of placements should be dealt with by the presiding officer at the Children's Court.

Besides managing the statutory process of providing child protection services, the social workers who participated in the study are responsible for providing foster care services to children in need of care and protection.

3.6 Discussion on themes, subthemes and categories on data collected from social work participants, subject to literature control

This section presents five themes, subthemes and categories (Table 6) that emerged from data analysis, based on the services rendered by social workers to young adults before and after foster care placement.

Table 6: Themes, subthemes, and categories for social workers

Themes	Subthemes	Categories
Theme 1: Provision of formal programmes for young adults after termination of grants		
Theme 2: Services that prepare foster children and family for termination of the grant	2.1 Informing and reminding the foster parents of the time of termination	
	2.2 Access to further education opportunities.	
Theme 3: Perceptions on the social functioning of young adults during and after foster care termination.	3.1 Social work participants report unemployment after leaving school as the major problem resulting in anti-social behaviour amongst youth whose	

Themes	Subthemes	Categories
	grants have been terminated.	
	3.2 Teenage Pregnancy and cohabitation, and/or depending on a child support grant.	
	3.3 Participants' views on "successful" cases.	
Theme 4: Suggestions for social work programmes relating to challenges experienced.	4.1 Programmes should be approved by the Department to prepare children for life after foster care.	4.1.1 Educational support programmes.
		4.1.2 Self-development programmes for empowerment.
	4.2 Integrated social work intervention needed.	
	4.3 High caseloads and lack of human resources to be addressed in order to attend to the needs of foster children and young adults.	
	4.4 Social work participants questioned foster parents' preparedness to provide care towards independence.	
Theme 5: Recommendations for	5.1 Social workers to be employed for preparing	

Themes	Subthemes	Categories
improving services to foster children and young adults.	and supporting foster children and young adults towards independent living.	

The following section presents the themes, subthemes, and categories mentioned in Table 6 by discussing and interpreting the findings, supported by verbatim quotations from the transcribed interviews and literature control.

3.6.1 Theme 1: Provision of formal programmes for young adults after termination of grants

Young adults out of foster care need specialised programmes in order to cope with the difficulties of adult life.

The Children's Act 38 of 2005, section 191(3)(e) (South Africa, 2006) makes provision for child and youth care centres and foster care services which offer transitional support to young adult out of foster care. "In addition to residential care programs, a child and youth care centre may also offer programs either for children in foster care or young adults leaving care after reaching the age of 18 years." Furthermore, regulations of the Children' Act 69-71 regarding cluster foster schemes state that the best interests of children in foster care must be promoted through the provision of prescribed types of services, specifically services that assist young adults with the transition to independent living when leaving foster care after reaching the age of 18 or 21 years ((South Africa, 2006).

Contrary to the above-mentioned provisions from the Children's Act, most social workers who participated in the study reported that there are no formal programmes for youth who were aging out of care in their organisation.

Participants' responses that no programmes exist for young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants are illustrated below.

> *If the child is no longer attending school we close the file; we do not do programmes, we do not prepare them nor refer them to companies for learnerships or things that will empower them* [Female, 37 years].

> *There are no programmes we render to foster children after the termination of foster child placement; however, as a social worker it depends by the kind of the social worker you are, you can monitor if the child has ever applied to the university to check if the application is being successful or approved for tertiary institution in order to extend the grant in case the child is in grade 12 and 18 years as long as the child is between the age of 18 or 21* [Female, 35 years].

> *I will try to assist or refer or advice anywhere I can; then after that I will phone them to find out how are they doing and I speak to the foster parent as well but as for programmes nothing really* [Female, 35 years].

> *In our department we do not have any programs…nothing is going to happen after 18 years, this means there is no life after 18 years; where else there is life and we are failing our clients and the Department must look at it in another dimension; what if the child is unemployed at the age of 18 year? We do not even conduct home visits to check the circumstances of the family; we only focus on new cases…even if it is a child-headed family we do not go back and check if the children are still happy; we just close the case* [Female, 39 years].

Participants conceded that there are no formal programmes available for children in and out of the foster care system. However, some social workers attempt to provide information and support to children who are willing to continue furthering their studies, but there is no policy document that provides guidance regarding what needs to be done in a transitional process.

The findings of this study are similar to those of Tanur (2012:327) that the Children's Act 38 of 2005 mentioned preparations and support for transition from foster care but does not mention the specific services that provide adequate aftercare support once young adults have exited state care. Although preparation for transition and aftercare support is mentioned in the legislation, the implementation of this provision has been overlooked and underdeveloped. Noteworthy is that the Department of Social Development in South Africa needs to gain insight into young adults out of the foster care system by developing a comprehensive independent living programme that must be consistent across all the provinces.

3.6.2 Theme 2: Services to prepare foster children and families for termination of grants

Participants reflected on their experiences of social work services that prepare foster children and families for termination of their foster child grants. They reported various kinds of services that they render to children in foster care and their families. However, the majority reported that there are no clear guidelines that are implemented by the Department of Social Development in preparation of children in foster care and their families for termination of their foster child grants. Two subthemes emerged from the participants as listed below.

3.6.2.1 Subtheme 2.1: Informing and reminding the foster parent and the foster child of the time of termination

Preparation for termination of placement and the foster child grant is the responsibility of the social worker handling the case (Simms, Dubowitz & Szilagyi, 2000:916). Informing and reminding the foster parent and the child of the time of termination of the foster child grant contributes to the child's successful future and decision making upon leaving the foster care system (Mitchell et al., 2014:292). The following responses indicate how participants prepare children for the termination of their foster child grants and independent living:

We only do supervision once per year to check if the child is still coping at school, things like that…as a social worker you prepare your clients, have a session with the foster parent and the foster child. Inform them that since the child is turning 18 years this year, meaning in December, the foster child grant will be terminated but if the child is attending school they must bring along the school report to sign the regulations forms so that the social worker can extend the placement [Female, 37 years].

It's just reminding them that the foster child grant will be terminated when they turn 18 years, and there could be a continuation if they want to continue with their studies. We extend the foster child grant until they are 21 years [Female, 38 years].

I feel that we do prepare them because from the very first stage of application yes, when they apply we already prepare them that there is an exit point whereby at the age of 18 years they will be out of the system; by doing so I feel that it is some kind of preparation in a way. Even if you enter into a system at the age of 10 years you are already aware that when you reach the age of 18 years you have to exit. We also explain to them that if ever you reach 18 years and still at school bring the documentary proof in order for us to extend the placement [Female, 27 years].

Participants are of the opinion that they do prepare children in and out of the foster care system by informing them of the process of foster care placement, its duration, the consequences of failing in their studies, and other factors that might lead to the termination of the placement and foster child grant.

The findings corroborate previous research outcomes by Polkki, Vornanen, Pursiainen & Riikonen (2012:119) that children are always the focus within the foster care system, and that social workers should inform children of matters that concern them such as notification of the time of termination of their grants. Provision of information and the duration of the placement assist children to adjust better in the transition process (Mitchell, Kuczynski, Tubbs & Ross, 2009:181). It

is therefore important for the notification to be introduced early on in the foster care placement with the direct participation of the child (Tanur, 2012:327).

Interestingly, one participant indicated that they concentrate more on preparing the foster parents than the foster children.

> *We specifically focus more on preparing foster parents more than the children. Most of the time will tell them that by the age of 18 years if the child does not attend school the grant will be terminated but if they continue it will be escalated until the age of 21 years. This is due to high caseload; we are having high caseload* [Female, 30 years].

This statement is in contrast with the normal process as preparation is very significant to young adults who are about to exit the foster care system to enable adequate planning to take place, such as seeking employment or acquiring the necessary documents to complete if they are still attending school. The support and advice from social workers could contribute more to positive outcomes after the termination of the foster care placements and foster child grants (Courtney & Dworsky 2006:212).

3.6.2.2 Subtheme 2.2: Access to further learning opportunities

Children in foster care are mostly faced with difficulties in educational achievement; for some this is due to a lack of resources to further learning opportunities. Although social workers deal with children in the foster care system on an individual basis, the absence of specific guidelines that specifically regulate access to further learning opportunities for children in and out of foster care has an impact on the outcome of the assistance offered by social workers. The support and assistance that children receive from social workers depend on the commitment and capacity of a social worker in supporting children to access educational opportunities. Furthermore, the social worker should ensure that education as part of foster care is provided to the child (Children's Act 38 of 2005,section 182(2) (South Africa, 2006).

The following quotes illustrate some of participants' feelings about facilitating access to further learning opportunities to children in and out of the foster care system as well as possible activities they perform:

> *We do foster care supervision services which involves monitoring the foster care placement as a whole, monitoring school progress of the child, relationship between foster child and foster parent* [Female, 35 years].

> *One tries to sit down with them* [foster parent and the child] *and say we need to have a plan in place; we need to save for the child so that when he/she is out of foster care system they will have a plan or at least have tertiary education* [Female, 35 years].

> *We write review reports for them to get the grant so that they continue furthering their studies; also preparing them to apply for bursaries if they are doing grade 12* [Female, 49 years].

> *We also gave advice to the children regarding their studies, but after the termination no formal services* [Male, 26 years].

> *We offer help with the process of application at the universities and some we assist them with CVs, how to compile a CV and how to apply, but it is not in relation to programmes that should be put in place; it is just helping those who are willing* [Female, 27 years].

> *We motivate them to go to school so that the foster child grant can continue and assist them to complete their studies; we also motivate the foster parent to save money for the child to enable him or her to go to tertiary* [Female, 30 years].

Participants articulated that despite the lack of formal programmes for children in and out of the foster care system in the Department of Social Development, some social workers do provide information and support to young adults by informing them about bursaries and learnership programmes in and outside the Department,

and also assist them with information how to compile a curriculum vitae (CV), and assist them in making positive life choices.

These storylines are consistent with the findings by Hojer and Sjoblom (2009:124) that social workers facilitate access to further educational opportunities for children in and out of foster care which changes their self-perception from being failures to competent and skilled young adults.

The statements articulated by social work participants resonate with the expectations that the youth have of social workers to provide direct services and to advocate and mediate on their behalf for financial support for continuous training.

3.6.3 Theme 3: Perceptions on the social functioning of young adults during foster care and after termination

Young adults out of the foster care system function differently compared to young adults in the general population because of the trauma and victimisation they experienced during the transition phase. They are at risk of poor outcomes and risk behaviour in adulthood (Scannapieco et al., 2007:425). Young adults out of foster care are always challenged in fulfilling the tasks that life expects of them; this is a direct result of poor educational attainment, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, and early parenting to name but a few (Stott, 2011:66). Participants reflected how young adults out of foster care function socially during and after the termination of their foster care placements. Two subthemes emerged from participants' statements.

3.6.3.1 Subtheme 3.1: Social work participants report unemployment after leaving school as the major problem resulting in anti-social behaviour amongst young adults out of foster care

It has been widely reported that young adults out of the foster care system display anti-social behaviour after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants which result in financial distress due to poverty and

unemployment; for example, some become involved in prostitution and substance abuse (Jevtic, 2011:25). According to reports from social work participants, the lack of income tends to lead to anti-social behaviour; this also corroborates statements given by young adult participants regarding behaviour problems emanating from the lack of sufficient income. The narratives below focus on the behaviour of young adults due to unemployment after leaving school.

> *Some become "boma hlalela nje"* [meaning people who stay at home and are unemployed] *because they do not have anything regarding their future, they do not study further so they do not have anything to better with their lives. Boys abuse drugs and alcohol and run around streets and in some cases they steal from the community* [Female, 35 years].

> *Oh my word* [she was holding her head with hands] *I heard stories that actually break your heart, they break your heart because you find that even though you try to prepare kids and the foster parent, that does not really happen…they do not listen to you and you do not know where the child is staying most of them they are staying with their boyfriends and they are 20 years old now, I had a few which give me hope let me say five percent in the hundred percent of kids, would say: I am in university or I am working somewhere; that gives me hope at least that is what I can hold on to* [Female, 35 years].

> *Many children basically or young adults they are unemployed, they are at home, not doing anything, there are few who continue with their studies maybe for one year or two years but I cannot tell if they definitely got a job after wards. Some of them are still unemployed and that is the experience that most of our foster children. They do not really have a productive future; I cannot show you anybody who returns and say I have done this or achieved this in my ten years of experience as social worker. I cannot refer to any child who has completed studies and found a good job afterwards* [Female, 38 years].

They end up not completing their matric and ended up in streets and they steal. However, there are those who are gifted, they complete their studies and obtain their degrees and become independent. But those who are unfortunate and have behavioural problems while there are in foster care system…yes, the social worker can try to place the child in the school of industries [Female, 49 years].

There are lot of foster children…who take that advantage that 'I do not have a parent no one is going to tell me anything' so the foster parents end up getting tired they also feel that they do not want to suffer with other people's children… In most cases they are very disrespectful we find lot of complaints regarding their behaviour so if they are no longer in the system most foster parents do not want to be part of it anymore because they are no longer legally placed with them so most children just do as they please [Female, 27 years].

They end up not knowing what to do with their lives, most of them they drop out of school, roaming around the street not knowing what to do with their lives because they are not involved in anything that will keep them busy and give them future, they are unemployed, not at school they just in the community and most of are dangerous and girls end up doing prostitution they become…I do not know…the right word to use but, useless [Female, 39 years].

Many challenges because if the child reaches the age of 21 years and he or she is un-employed what is the consequences for that child; is to stay in an informal settlement unemployed, no source of income and become a breadwinner to her own her children most of the time you find that a young adult involved in crimes, get exposed to HIV/AIDS-related diseases and their life is never in order and the government is not doing anything about it[Female, 30 years].

We see that the child is not coping and they turn not to succeed in future...they abuse substances, they demand foster grant from foster parent saying is their money there is a lot of experiences that we encounter as social workers and foster parent. Some displays uncontrollable behaviour and we end up removing them to industrial schools or place of safety because of the behaviour they display [Male, 26 years].

Participants raised concerns regarding unacceptable behaviour of young adults after the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants. They were concerned about the abuse of drugs and alcohol, crime, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS-related risks as major challenges faced by young adults who have aged out of care.

These storylines also resonate with the findings by Stott (2011:62) that young adults out of the foster care system without a high school diploma and employment suffer and are always vulnerable to engage in risky behaviour such a substance use and risky sexual activities. Similarly, young adults' transition out of the foster care system without adequate education face obstacles entering the workforce and reaching life goals (Ausbroks, Gwin & Brown, 2011:237).

It is also evident from the storylines above that although some young adults fail, others succeed in life after their termination of foster care placements and foster child grants. There are those who are in stable situations and are able to make positive adaptations to manage adulthood and independence effectively (Jones, 2013:226). They are able to continue with their education to gain educational qualifications and get employed in promising jobs in the early years after leaving the foster care system; as a result, they become financially independent (Wade & Dixon, 2006:200).

3.6.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: Teenage pregnancy and cohabitation and /or depending on a child grant

It has been widely reported that young adults out of foster care are more likely to fall pregnant and become parents at an early stage of their lives (Bilchik & Simon,

2010:16). Additionally, living with a partner in cohabitation is more common amongst these youngsters. Early parenting often brings about misery in the young adults' lives, because some are unable to care for themselves and the child, and end up being recipients of child support grants (Hall & Sambu, 2014:94). The information presented below by social workers sheds light on these young people's experiences in relation to teenage pregnancy, parenting, and cohabitation as well as dependency on child support grants.

> *Most…let me not be general; some after grade 12 or after leaving school in grade 10 because mostly leave school in grade 10 they become pregnant* [Female, 35 years].

> *Some of them they just not complete grade 12, they just drop out of school; you can try to motivate them but they just not willing to go back to school, and end up being parents. Some cohabit...That's the life they live, there is no future, is just them, kids and the boyfriend they end up not having a brighter future* [Female, 27 years].

> *As most girls find that they become pregnant while they are still at school, so by the time they reach the age of 21 years or older he or she has to be a parent to his/her children. If it is a girl she has to find another way to generate income for her children as she cannot support them with the child support grant. This also increases the youth -headed families in our country which also escalates to other social problems like HIV/AIDS* [Female, 30 years].

> *Another experience, you find that the child becomes pregnant while still in the foster care system, and it is a challenge to a foster parents because the grant has to be terminated; as a result some drop out of school and if they are not schooling the social worker has to terminate the placement…they go and cohabit and have kids and apply for child support grant* [Female, 32 years].

It is clear that young adults out of the foster care system appear to be especially vulnerable to risky sexual behaviour, which results in teenage pregnancy. This also increases the number of children living in foster parents' households without enough resources to meet their basic necessities. It seems some social workers had given up on the youth and felt that there is nothing that can save them.

These storylines are consistent with the findings by Geiger and Schelbe (2014:25) that every year a sizeable number of young adults out of foster care become pregnant, with more than half of these pregnancies resulting in live births. Additionally, their parenting is associated with poor outcomes and lack of financial support to their children. Similarly, young adults out of foster care who become pregnant at an early stage are unable to support themselves without government assistance such as general assistance payments (child support grants) (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006:214).

Similarly, some of the participants from young adults in this study indicated how being a teen mother has severely affected them socially and economically by being restricted from socialising with friends, and the inability to support their child and themselves.

3.6.3.3 Subtheme 3.3: Participants' views on successful cases

There is substantial evidence that young adults who access preparation for adult living services have made positive adaptations to life's circumstances after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants (Jones, 2013:226). Similarly, young adults who receive educational support from their case managers and social workers who advocate on their behalf are likely to accomplish their goals (Freundlich & Avery, 2006:513).

The information presented below depicts the views of participants in relation to young adults' functioning and achievement after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.

I never see or heard anyone, the only thing I can tell is if you encourage the child to attend school so that the foster care grant can continue most of them do pass very well in their matric and you find that by the time they reach matric they are about 18 to 19 years then the grant continue for two years after the age of majority; in that short period of time you find that the child registers at the college or computer school [Female, 30 years].

I have experienced that most of our foster children do not really have a productive future. I cannot show you anybody who return and say I have done this or achieve this; in my ten years of experience I cannot refer to any child who have completed studies and find a good job afterwards…it is actually sad to really think about it now [Female, 38 years].

I do not remember anyone coming to me and say, social worker thank you; now I am successful…I do not remember that happening [Female, 39 years].

The participants' accounts revealed that there are young adults who are more likely to succeed out of the foster care system, and also alluded to the fact that most young adults do not complete their studies due to financial constraints and a lack of social support. Interestingly one participant indicated that:

We also have some cases whereby…I feel some other things come with discipline because we do have former foster kids who made it in life; for example, I had a case - I think it is two cases. One child was under foster care system but she was fostered by unrelated foster parent but when she exited the system at the age of 18 she took it up on herself to be a foster parent to her siblings, by doing so she was fostering them, she was able to save the little eight hundred she received of the foster child grant and was able to enrol with Unisa for a social work degree. Now she has completed and she is a social worker. The other one was also in foster care, he also managed to study Information Technology with TUT and he is working now. There are children who make something out of their circumstances. I can

say it all depends on the person as an individual and the kind of a person you are and what you want and the discipline that you have, because at the end of the day even though we can provide foster care services, we can provide alternative care after they exit the system, it is up to an individual because when we make decisions, we make it based on an individual and personal level; so you cannot really put pressure on a person to become what he or she does not want [Female, 27 years].

The contrast in the storylines regarding young people who are unsuccessful in living independently and those who succeed confirms the assertion that each young adult is seen as a unique person with different needs and capabilities; each requires intervention to address his or her specific needs. Therefore, in order to best support these young adults the focus should be on developing a positive identity and building strength (Tanur, 2012:329). From an ecological approach the focus is on how an individual's needs, capacities, opportunities for growth, and the ability to adapt to changing external demands are met, provided for, and challenged by the environment (Gray & Webb, 2013:179-181). It is also evident that if the specific needs and support of children in foster care were to be provided, it would contribute positively towards their wellbeing and positive outcomes.

3.6.4 Theme 4: Suggestions for social work programmes relating to challenges

Most participants are of the view that programmes relating to addressing challenges experienced by young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants have to be addressed by the National Department of Social Development.

3.6.4.1 Subtheme 4.1: Programmes should be approved by the Department to prepare children for life after care

A number of diverse suggestions came to light as to how programmes should be approved by the Department of Social Department to prepare children for life after foster care. Two categories emerged from this subtheme, namely educational

support programmes and personal empowerment programmes, identified by the participants.

3.6.4.1(a) Educational support

Educational support includes school resources such as fees, bursaries, financial aid, and learnership to young adults in an effort to assist them to succeed educationally, and also meet specified learning requirements and standards. One of the resources found to be effective is financial aid which is implemented at tertiary level where it allows young adults with financial difficulties to access higher educational opportunities (Gomez, Ryan, Norton & Jones, 2015:514). Educational support for children in foster care has been found to be useful in the United Kingdom (Hojer & Sjoblom, 2010:124), and most participants are of the view that if it can be introduced in South Africa it will benefit children in and out of the foster care system. Participants suggested the following:

> *If we know that there is a section* [in the Department] *that focuses in helping these young people who are really serious and committed in furthering their studies and they can get the necessary assistance from the Department whether financially, motivationally and get into training programmes and training centres to make sure that something is happening with them* [Female, 38 years].

> *Negotiate with universities to take them free because NASFAS is no longer considering people the way it used to be; maybe a specific bursary for young adults…special for them that can assist and the Department subsidise those universities, or there must be an exemption for them also at the university* [Female, 39 years].

> *We need to prepare them when they are in grade 11 so that when they reach grade 12, they should know, for example, that for them to be a teacher they need to get 1, 2, 3. I know that the school does that, but somewhere somehow it is our responsibility also as they are our foster children. I think we need to have something that will prepare them for grade 12 after*

passing; they have known that I can do this even if I fail grade 12, unlike staying at home doing nothing and ending up being a criminal. Understand? [Female, 37 years].

Participants felt that educational support is an effective method of support to young adults in helping them to continue with their studies and acquiring knowledge that will assist them in discovering themselves and becoming self-sufficient.

This confirms the assertion by Gomez et al. (2015:514) that educational support helps young adults to develop a sense of future, for instance campus visits, college preparatory services, and career internship to connect young adults with meaningful experiences that can trigger an interest in higher education or a career path, and may provide opportunities to build confidence in their ability to make it on their own. Similarly, tertiary education support can benefit young adults by providing substantially higher lifetime earnings, career development potential, and an overall better quality of life (Mitchell et al., 2014:292).

The support should also include giving them advice on how to enrol at, for instance, FET colleges and vocational training for young adults who do not meet the requirements to study at a university. Such support is very significant to young adults; instead of focusing on a university education, because not all young adults are interested in a university education, there are other forms of training that they could benefit from (Hojer & Sjoblom, 2010:122). Ecological perspective upholds the concept that human development is influenced by various types of environmental systems. These systems include micro, macro, meso and exosystems and they influence an individual's behaviour. Therefore, the interests of young adults will also differ depending on how these systems impacted on them (Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2). It is also important when determining choices for young people to use the following stages in the intervention process: "mapping the ecology, assessing the ecology, creating a vision for change, coordinating, communicating, reassessing and evaluation" (Nash,2005:31-41).

3.6.4.2(b) Self-development programmes for empowerment

Self-development programmes refer to social skills, financial management, time management, planning, decision making, problem solving, self-care, use of community resources, housing, food preparation, use of public transportation, employment skills, and finding and maintaining employment (Affronti, 2015:3). These specific skills are required by young adults out of the foster care system and may lead to successful, independent lives. Participants shared their views as to how these skills could be developed.

> *Maybe before the child can exit from care we can implement a programme whereby we teach them about life skills like how to prepare for their future or job preparation, like how to draw up a CV and apply at tertiary education* [Female, 35 years].

> *Maybe we can conduct workshops with all the young adults who are about to exit the system and to those who are about 21 years, where we can teach them skills that can make them function without foster care. We can have a programme where everyone will be taught about resources that are available for them and know the reality about life so that they can be functional when they are on their own. In other words, we need to give them skills so that they can be independent even though some are unable to continue with their studies* [Female, 49 years].

> *To empower them to be able to do things on their own, to educate them and have knowledge that foster care is not for a lifetime, it will come to end; and also prepare them to face their challenges without the foster care grant and placement* [Female, 49 years].

> *Evaluation is the first thing we need to do because when you do evaluation you find out what is going on, you find out common things, you find out what your former foster children experienced. What are their challenges? Then when you know that…then you know what you can do to assist. But I do not think it is the job for one person and I do not think the Department is in the*

position to actually right now able to assist. But as social workers we can be in collaboration, we can do things together because I feel like we have common problems in terms of our former foster children, so maybe as social workers we can come together and come up with solutions for the challenges [Female, 35 years].

The programme that I heard, and I think is an excellent programme, is the one they run in St Georges; it is basically like aftercare programme where young adults out of foster care system are either studying or working, but St Georges in Kempton Park basically help them to find employment, to get bursaries for them and continue with their studies. I think that is something we need to focus on to teach our young adults to think more, to be taught business skills [Female, 38 years].

Participants are of the view that empowering young adults through teaching them basic skills would help them to cope with the challenges of adulthood and also assist them to resolve problems in the future. They also agree that social workers have a responsibility in providing training to young adults.

These findings corroborate previous research outcomes that young adults who receive life skills programmes such as financial management, consumer skills, credit management, self-care, and decision making before living independently were found to have a better outcome as they move out of the foster care system (Mitchell et al., 2014:292). Similarly, a young adult may achieve important life skills from being encouraged to work, maintain their own schedules, and make their own choices about friends and environmental situations. These might offer opportunities to be independent and manage challenges (Gomez et al., 2015:514).

3.6.4.2 Subtheme 4.2: Integrated social work intervention needed

One participant highlighted the need for an integrated approach for social work services to foster parents and children, which is the application of all three social work methods (case, group, and community) in helping children in and out of the foster care system. This subtheme shows how an integrated approach could be

relevant in assisting young adults out of foster care to an independent life and positive outcomes.

> *I only render casework services; I did not do any group or community work services because I was informed that I am not supposed to do all as it is done at regional level or cluster level, but if a newly appointed social worker can be informed that in order for you to be effective in rendering services to clients you must offer all these three social work methods; it will be easy for us to draft programmes* [Female, 35 years].

The value of using an integrated approach (including casework, group work, and community work methods of social work practice) in foster care is that the social worker renders services from a holistic and integrated point of view. For instance, apart from individual intervention, foster parents and children may be involved in support groups and community projects to enhance their social functioning. The Comprehensive Report on the Review of the White Paper for Welfare (Department of Social Development, 2016:279) suggests that the focus on statutory services implies a continuum of full services that are supposed to be rendered by social workers, starting from primary intervention to aftercare**.**

It confirms the assertion by the Department of Social Development's standard operating procedures that they should render case work and group work on a preventative level, including community work (Department of Social Development, 2015:2). Ecological approach allows the social worker to effectively treat problems and diverse needs of clients in a systematic way which includes the individual,family, group, and community to create change that promotes the best possible transactions between people and their environment (Ahmed,Amer & Killawi, 2017:2).

3.6.4.3 Subtheme 4.3: High caseload and lack of human resources to be addressed in order to attend to the needs of foster children and young adults

Participants reflected on their challenges in meeting the needs of children in foster care and young adults out of the foster care system due to the high caseload and lack of communication resources. The shortage of adequate staff results in overloading social workers with cases and as a result they are unable to play their monitoring role more competently to ensure that the needs of children in and out foster care are fully met. They are expected to conduct home visits as part of monitoring and evaluation, and participate actively in the lives of young adults out of foster care through the provision of relevant information and mentoring programmes(Naidoo,2004:323). Participants shared their experiences:

> *We are overworked, we get too many cases, I always have something going on, I am not able to dedicate myself to one child and try to help one child because there is always something else going on that is more urgent than the other one; you understand?…so you try to do as much as you can but I feel like…am I really helping the way I would love to. I try but I cannot…you know…let me give you a scenario…right now I have about seventy cases those: are just files within the files; there are about four children, three children, and two children; so there is no way one person can be able to assists all those children to their satisfaction, so you try to do the best you can* [Female, 35 years].

> *With the high caseload that we have it is not easy to go back to children who have completed their matric, hence we prioritise to help those who always come back and to concentrate on the ones that are more urgent, not that we do not care but our high caseload really does not make it easy for us* [Female, 27 years].

> *We all go under these enormous caseloads. I know that we are just happy when one or two children finish school, but if we know that there is a section*

[in the Department] *which focuses in helping children who are really serious and committed in furthering their studies and they get the necessary assistance from the Department whether financially, motivationally, getting into training and training centres to make sure that something is happening with them, but not only the institutional studies needed for them; even afterwards to make sure they are employed. I understand it is a very long-term process but something needs to be done* [Female, 38 years].

Due to high caseload it becomes more difficult to individualise them and understand what they are going through because we see them and their school reports quarterly, so you find that the child is experiencing challenges in life [Female, 32 years].

We need more professionals…we cannot have one person in charge of 80 cases - it almost like impossible…it almost like you're expected to be a superwoman and you cannot, but we do [Female, 35 years].

We have the shortage of social workers in the Department, let us say30 social workers in the building and we only have four social auxiliary workers. They are supposed to assist 30 social workers whom each have 100 caseloads; really it is not easy because yes, we can utilise them but when you want them to assist you they are busy assisting other social workers [Female, 27 years].

These responses concur with the findings by Jones (2014:88) that identifying the needs of children in and out of foster care is above and beyond the normal duties of social workers who have a high caseload of current foster children needing their attention. Similarly, a high foster care caseload is associated with the low satisfaction of foster care children, which is also an obstacle to service delivery that negatively impacts meeting the needs of foster children and young adults by social workers (McCormick, Curtis, Stowell-Weiss, Toms & Engelberg, 2010:302). Mostly, the high caseloads of social workers make it difficult for them to concentrate on tasks they believe to be important because they are always busy

responding to one crisis or another which takes precedence over foster care services (Lee, 2012:563).

The researcher has first-hand experience of how social workers in the child protection system practise statutory work compared to other tasks that they are supposed to perform. Due to high caseloads the focus is on meeting court return dates and not necessarily meeting the holistic needs of young adults. It is clear that most children in foster care do not receive adequate services that can sustain them even after the termination of their foster care placements and grants. The high caseloads experienced by social workers emanate from the 478, 158 children who are in foster care in the country, while the foster care system is designed for 55 000 (Department of Social Development, 2016:364). Gauteng alone has 58 031 children in foster care (South African Social Security Agency, 2017). The ideal caseload in child protection is 80 to 100, but the participants' caseloads are more than a 100 per social worker.

In order to reduce these numbers to ensure that the foster care system caters only for children who have been abandoned, abused, and neglected, Cabinet has in December 2015 approved the provision of an extended child support grant to orphans in the care of relatives and child-headed households. The reasoning behind this decision is that the majority of children under the care of relatives are not in need of care and protection services, although these foster care families do need financial assistance due to poverty (Department of Social Development, 2016:365).

There are researchers who support this notion that the foster child grant has become a poverty-relief mechanism because it is used for orphans (Moloi, 2012:1). Initially the foster child grant was intended as financial support for children removed from their families and placed in the foster care system for protection, especially in situations of neglect or abuse. However, it is gradually being used to provide financial support to family related foster parents of children who are orphaned (Sambu & Hall, 2014:97).

However, there are concerns regarding this move as there are orphans who suffer abuse and neglect at the hands of relatives. It is also asserted by Morantz, Cole, Vreeman, Ayaya, Ayaku & Braitstein (2013:3) that orphaned children experience emotional and sexual abuse by family members. They are being threatened or made to feel like a burden in the family, and orphaned girls are forced to marry young to relieve this burden. Furthermore, they are also forced into prostitution by caregivers due to poverty (Cluver & Gardner, 2007:758). Moreover, orphaned children are treated less well that other children within the family by caregivers; this involves being deprived of resources such as food, clothing, and schooling (Nyamukapa et al., 2010:990).

3.6.4.4 Subtheme 4.4: Social work participants questioned foster parents' preparedness to provide care towards independence

Foster parents are possibly the most vital people in helping young adults develop independent living. However, little has been done to prepare them to work with young adults out of the foster care system. Their responsibility is to assist young adults to adjust to independent living by providing basic skills such as financial management, buying groceries, preparing food, self-care; also to learn about young adults' development, job opportunities, community resources, and communication skills. However, due to their lack of adequate preparedness they are unable to provide care towards independence. Participants shared the following:

> *The foster parent has to see that the child has to go to school and get everything they need, to see that the child furthers his or her education at tertiary level for them to become independent…most of our clients they are after money so when they get grant they do not care about the needs of the child, they do not look after them properly like when the child has challenges at school they just push the child so that the social worker can review the foster care grant, nobody cares whether the child is doing well at school...As a result of a high rate of foster care application, we turn to lose focus of*

rendering those services that will help young adult to be grounded and become independent [Female, 49 years].

The foster parents are not prepared for their role under foster care. The children are not controllable…but at some point they are not even sure how to raise them and how to discipline them because they are very manipulative and they become spoiled brats. They do not want to work, they want to rely on foster care and always say "I have foster care grant," "what you are doing with my money" like all those kinds of…sometimes they just leave them and they live the way they want to be as long as they are still alive it is fine [Female, 27 years].

These accounts echo the findings by Affronti et al. (2015:14) that thorough preparation for foster parents is required to prevent poor levels of care and support towards independence. Similarly, important information on preparatory mechanisms need to be introduced to foster family members and relatives to ensure positive support to young adults out of the foster care system towards independent life (Baker, 2007:153). Foster parents are recognised as valued resources to children in and out of foster care, and the need for preparation and information gives them the expertise to continue caring and supporting foster children. Additionally, foster parents must be provided with quality support, and should be well informed about the amendments to policies and legislation and changes made to the foster care system as and when they occur (Brown, Anderson & Rodgers, 2016:337).

It is important to note that the training of foster parents is critical as they are key figures in the provision of care and protection to every foster child. Therefore, they need support and training in dealing with children in and out of the foster care system. The training will assist foster parents to handle children with uncontrollable behaviour in a positive way and will also prepare them in aspects of child development and parenting skills. This will enable them to understand what children in foster care are going through because the more understanding foster

parents are, the better equipped they will be to support children in and out of foster care (Booysen, 2006:34).

Two participants stressed the lack of implementation of criteria for selecting foster parents:

> *Social Development must go back to their policies of foster care placement, the requirement of one to become foster parent…now we are experiencing a lot of applications whereby clients apply, apply, apply* [Female, 27 years].

> *Social workers, we can conduct trainings and workshops with all the prospective foster parents and foster parents in order to give them skills that will make them understand the process and functions foster care placement* [Female, 49 years].

The findings support the view that a prospective foster parent must be a suitable and appropriate person assigned to care for a foster child. They should also be prepared and able to take on, exercise, and maintain the responsibilities of such care. Furthermore, they should have the capacity to provide an environment that is conducive to the child's growth and development (The Children's Act 38 of 2005) (South Africa, 2006:181).

Most of the children are placed in family related foster care because the prospective foster parents come to the social workers office to apply for foster care placement. The social workers are required to investigate the circumstances of the prospective foster parent, but often the social worker will not remove the child concerned from the prospective family related foster parent even though he or she does not have the capacity to provide an environment that is conducive to the child's welfare (Department of Social Development, 2012:26).

Furthermore, according to the Comprehensive Report of the Review of the White Paper for Welfare (2016:364), the majority of these children are living with relatives and are not in need of care and protection services, although they do need financial assistance due to poverty. This results in some children being abused, abandoned,

or neglected, who do not receive the level of service they require because social workers spend much of their time dealing with administrative and court return dates related to foster care.

3.6.5 Theme 5: Recommendations for improving services to foster children and young adults

Most participants recommended that in order to improve services to foster children and young adults, the Department of Social Development should employ more social workers who can focus specifically to young adults out of the foster care system and facilitate aftercare programmes. One subtheme emerged:

3.6.5.1 Subtheme 5.1: Social workers to be employed for preparing and supporting foster children and young adults towards independent functioning

The participants' recommendations regarding improving services to children and young adults are as follows:

> *The Department must hire more social workers to work on aftercare services* [referring to support foster children towards independence]. *I know is the role of the social worker but remember with the department you deal with budget and you follow the procedure…some of the things you cannot say, I want to do a programme while you do not have money, so if I want to do a programme where am I going to get the money to cater clients. So it must start at national office so that it can be funded from national office, so when it comes to us already they have allocated money for that programme. There should also be social workers specifically dealing with children exiting the system, like school social workers* [Female, 37 years].

> *It is a plea to the Department to employ more social workers because now social workers are sitting with high caseload; that is why maybe immediately the child is no longer attending school, we closed the file high caseload and social workers are leaving is not possible we have high caseload and*

shortage of social workers; you find that one social worker is managing 150 cases only for supervision [Female, 37 years].

The Department is only concerned about the statistics; they do not care about the quality of my work...It is our responsibility but we still feel like we have limited resources because even if you can consult with management or whosoever their concerned is about the valid court orders and new files, for the cases that has been terminated they do not care of which is a serious problem because the unemployment rate and other social problems keep occurring as it is like we are working in circles and we are faced with a serious problem [Female, 30 years].

We often have component meetings with our managers; even if you raise the point they pretend as if they heard you but they will not do anything; so we do not know what to do anymore, we feel like if the child reaches the age of majority my help ends there…that is how I feel…because even if you tell them that I have this child who passed with six distinctions they are not doing anything about it, the first question they will asked is "the foster parent save money for the child concerned" even if she was; what would happen to the child that the foster parent was not saving the foster child receive grant?…you feel powerless as you can also see that there is a potential in this child but at the end there is nothing to offer to him or her [Female, 30 years].

Participants reported that the Department of Social Development must employ more social workers to focus on aftercare programmes as participants have to deal with high caseloads, and there is always one crisis or another that needs urgent attention; there is consequently little time available, which results in poor quality work.

The provision of statutory services to orphaned children such as foster care placements and supervision are dominating the role of social worker related to young adults. The researcher has experienced first-hand that other tasks become

impossible to achieve due to the high volume of statutory cases. This may explain why it is a struggle for social workers to render programmes to young adults out of the foster care system. In most cases, social workers focus on urgent cases and court return dates. They are unable to perform certain duties such as monitoring, providing information, and implementing programmes that can assist young adults to independent life.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research findings derived from the transcribed interviews with 10 young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants have been terminated, and 10 social workers who work in the field of child care and protection. The biological profiles of participants were presented in the first section, a discussion of five themes and 12 subthemes of young adults and five themes of social workers, 10 subthemes and two categories were also discussed. Verbatim quotes from the transcribed interviews, supported by literature control, were provided.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This study focused on the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the methodology that guided this study as well as the findings, followed by a discussion, recommendations, and the conclusion.

4.2 Summary of the previous chapters

In Chapter One of this research report the researcher provided a research plan outlining the background, problem statement, and motivation for the study. The methodology she proposed to use for the investigation was presented and the goal and objectives of the study. Qualitative research methods were introduced followed by the theoretical framework, all of which informed the study. Ethical guidelines were considered for informed consent, confidentiality, management of information, compensation, and debriefing of participants; also, key concepts used in the study were explained.

In Chapter Two the practical description of how the research methodology process was applied was provided. The focus was on the research approach and research design, selection of the population and sampling, preparation of the participants for data collection, data-collection methods, pilot testing based on the interview guide, data analysis, and data verification.

In Chapter Three the research findings were provided with an overview of the data gathered from 20 participants. The findings were based on comparing and contrasting the storylines of all the participants with relevant literature, the researcher's knowledge as a social worker, and the ecological approach used to interpret the findings. The qualitative data was analysed by the researcher and an independent coder. Five themes and 12 subthemes emerged from young adult participants; and five themes, 10 subthemes and two categories emerged from the

interaction with the social work participants. Verbatim quotations from the transcripts were used to present the findings.

The ecological perspective was considered appropriate for this study because the challenges faced by young adults after termination of their foster child grants that also impacted their social functioning, emanated from the type of interaction they have or had with their environment, which includes their foster parents, social workers, their families, peers, communities, resources, and societal laws and expectations.

4.3 Conclusions

In this section the researcher articulates her conclusions about the research methodology, process, and research findings after having explored the social functioning of young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants, and to report on the services delivered by social workers to young adults before and after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.

4.3.1 Conclusions, and process, pertaining to the research methodology

A qualitative research approach was employed with the intent to answer the main research question in this study. The researcher was able to explore and describe the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants, and also to explore and describe the social work services available to young adults in preparing them for termination and advising them of possible support services after termination.

The following comprehensive research questions were framed in order to understand the social functioning of young adults after termination:

- What is the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants?

- What types of social services are available to young people after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants?

The goal of this study was:

- To develop an in-depth understanding of the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.
- To report on the services delivered by social workers to young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goals, the researcher achieved the following research objectives:

- To explore and describe the social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants in Tembisa, Gauteng Province.
- To explore and describe the social work services available to young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.

The following task objectives guided the researcher to accomplish the goals of the study:

- To identify and obtain a sample of young adults who have aged out of foster care, and social workers who work in the field of child care and protection.
- To obtain a sample of young adults whose foster care placements and foster child grants have been terminated, and social workers who have work experience in the field of child care and protection.
- To conduct semi-structured interviews aided by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide.

- To analyse data gathered from young adults who have aged out of foster care and that of social workers in accordance with the eight steps of qualitative data analysis constructed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2003:186).

- To draw conclusions and make recommendations to address the needs of young adults after termination of their foster child grants.

In pursuing these objectives the researcher recruited 10 young adult participants through the DSD database:

- Between the ages of 18 and 22 at the time of the interview and placed with related foster parents.

- Residents of Mayibuye (Tembisa) and regarded as having rich information on the topic under investigation.

The researcher was also able to recruit social work participants through visiting their workplace.They were between the ages of 30 and 49 at the time of the interviews; employed by the DSD at the Tembisa office; worked in the field of child care and protection; and had five to 11 years' working experience.

Data was collected from participants through semi-structured interviews. The questions used were contained in an interview guide specific for each group of participants. Through a pilot study, the interview guides were tested and found to be appropriate and relevant to young adults and social workers. The researcher ensured that no offensive language was contained in the interview guide. The interviews were audio recorded, with participants' permission. The sample size was not determined at the outset but the researcher envisaged to interview six young adults and six social workers. However, after the researcher had interviewed 10 young adults and 10 social workers it became apparent that no new information was forthcoming, and it was concluded that the saturation point had been reached.

The eight steps of qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:185-186) were followed. The services of an independent coder were used to

analyse the data. Five themes and 12 subthemes emerged from the analysis of data collected from young adults; and five themes, 10 subthemes, and two categories emerged from the analysis of data obtained from the social workers.

4.3.2 Conclusions pertaining to the research findings for young adult participants

Conclusions were drawn from five themes and 12 subthemes which resulted from the young adult participants' data analysis:

4.3.2.1 Theme 1: Life is "hard" after termination of their foster care grants

The findings show that life is difficult after termination of the foster care placements and foster child grants; therefore, young adults struggle to meet their basic necessities. Financial struggles in their daily lives remain a challenge because some young adults are placed with foster parents who are unemployed. As a result, the termination of their grants impact negatively on their physical, social, emotional, economic quality of life, and future prospects of ever living a comfortable lifestyle. Based on the participant's narratives, it is concluded that the termination of foster child grants is bound to have a negative impact on the financial situation of both the foster child and the foster family.

4.3.2.2 Theme 2: Inability to cope independently after termination of grants

Young adults reported not coping independently after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. However, they continue to live with their foster families and receive support from them. The findings show that this is due to the abrupt termination that forced them into independence, with no resources to assist them to become well-functioning individuals. The lack of employment and training experienced are also contributory factors that prevent these young people from taking responsibility for their own future. Based on the participants' narratives, it is concluded that after termination of their foster care placements and grants these young adults are unable to meet their day-to-day needs. They will always experience financial hardship and require ongoing support from their family

members, siblings, and peers; and those who are willing to take responsibility for their own lives, are unlikely to find well-paying and long-term employment due to their lack of proper training.

4.3.2.3 Theme 3: Emotional support and relationship consequences due to dependency

Some of the participants expressed their anxiety about depending on other people, including that their families and foster parents would be disappointed if they requested assistance. The findings show the painful experiences of young adults who were without income and struggling to find gainful employment. They felt that their families had been disrupted and no longer cared for one another. The narratives revealed that in instances where siblings lived together in a child-headed family, they experienced numerous challenges; these participants felt that their families were disrupted due to poverty, self-centeredness amongst siblings, and family conflicts which arose from the lack of food and other basic necessities.

4.3.2.4 Theme 4: Expectations from social workers

Participants expect social workers to prepare them for the discontinuation of the grant in addition to informing their foster parents. In instances where grants have been terminated it is the responsibility of SASSA to provide prior notification to the beneficiary, the foster parent, and the foster child. The notification should include the date of the intended termination and the reasons for cancellation. However, it is also the responsibility of the social worker to prepare the child even before the foster child grant is granted. Participants revealed that the abrupt termination of the grant made their transition to independent life more challenging without the necessary resources to function independently. Therefore, prior notification of termination could enable young adults to prepare for adaptation to life circumstances after termination.

Young adults strongly felt that social workers should support and negotiate on their behalf for financial support for continuous training. The narratives show that social support can be in the form of, for example, negotiating scholarships, educational

programmes, and job training to sustain them in their attempts to lead an independent life. These participants also required counselling from social workers. They believed that experiences of loss, trauma, victimisation and abuse in their lives contributed to psychological distress after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. It also impacted their functioning and coping abilities. These young adults acknowledged their need for continued formal therapeutic intervention after termination considering that their emotional wellbeing for living independently is often compromised by environmental factors.

Participants expected the Department of Social Development to support them until they were successfully skilled for an occupation in the labour market. They recounted their views as to how the Department of Social Development could be of assistance if they could equip them with the basic skills to look after themselves once they are out of the system. The researcher concluded that little or no skills development was provided by social workers through the Department of Social Development to prepare young adults for independent life. Currently in South Africa there are no government funded preparatory programmes available for young adults out of the foster care system. It is believed that the lack of formal preparatory programmes hinder their progress in achieving independence in life.

4.4 Conclusions pertaining to the research findings for social workers

Following data analysis, conclusions were drawn from five themes, 10 subthemes, and 2 categories that emerged from the interaction with social work participants.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Provision of formal programmes for young adults after termination of placements and grants

The findings show that there are no formal programmes for young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. The narratives revealed that there was no action from anyone after the child reaches the age of 18. They close the case if the child is no longer attending school, and this is because there are no clear guidelines that are implemented by the Department of Social Development in preparation of young adults out of the foster care system.

Based on the participants' accounts it is concluded that social workers do not provide services and adequate aftercare support before or after the young adults have exited the foster care system.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Services to prepare foster children and families for termination of the grant

Participants indicated that they prepare young adults by informing and reminding them of the time of termination. They provide supervision by monitoring the school progress of the child and conduct home visits to confirm whether the circumstances of the child are still the same. Based on the participants' reports, the researcher concluded that due to the lack of clear guidelines some social workers perform their duties while others do not, especially with regard to informing the foster children about the time of termination of their foster care placements and grants.

Foster care services entail facilitating access to further learning opportunities. However, the narratives revealed that lack of specific regulations that specifically regulate access to further learning opportunities to children in and out of foster care, the support and assistance that children received from social workers, depend on the individual social worker and his or her capacity in assisting the children to further learning opportunities.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Perceptions on the social functioning of young adults during and after termination of their foster care grants

The findings show that unemployment amongst young adults after leaving school is a major problem resulting in antisocial behaviour. The narratives revealed that young adults out of foster care face difficulties obtaining employment because they lack educational qualifications. Those with little or no education and experience are unable to secure well-paying positions in the workplace; they therefore find themselves in low-paying jobs. Participants revealed that the lack of sufficient income tends to lead to anti-social behaviour such as stealing from the family and community, prostitution, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Participants reported pregnancy amongst girls, cohabitation, and/or dependency on child support grants. These bring misery in young adults' lives, because some are unable to care for themselves and their children and end up being recipients of the child support grant.

Despite the high school dropout rate, unemployment, antisocial behaviour, and teenage pregnancy amongst young adults, participants had positive stories to tell regarding successful young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. The narratives revealed that there are young adults who have become independent and successful in life after exiting the foster care system. Based on the participants' explanations, it is concluded that a young adult should be seen as a unique person with different needs and capabilities; each requires specific intervention to address his or her particular needs. Therefore, in order to best support these young adults the focus should be on helping them in developing a positive identity and building strength.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Suggestions for social work programmes relating to challenges

The findings show that the Department of Social Development should collaborate with schools, non-profit organisations, and other government departments to develop a clear policy on preparatory and aftercare programmes for children in foster care and those that have aged out of foster care. The participants suggested that educational support could assist in funding children in and out of foster care to access higher educational opportunities, attain self-development, and empower them with skills such as decision making, planning, problem solving, and employment skills to face the realities and challenges of independent life.

Suggestions were made by young adults that the Department of Social Development should assist them to access tertiary institutions and help them acquire bursaries and learnerships in order to continue with their studies because currently they are no longer studying due to financial constraints.

The support should also include giving them advice and support on how to enrol at tertiary institutions, FET colleges, and vocational training for young adults, especially those who do not meet the requirement to study at a university.

One participant reported the need for an integrated approach to social work services to foster parents and children. She was referring to the application of all three methods of social work which is case work, group work, and community work in helping children in and out of the foster care system. She revealed that if she could be given an opportunity to render all three methods of social work in her work it would be easy for social workers to implement after-care programmes because the value of using the integrated approach (including casework, group work, and community work methods of social work practice) in foster care is that the social worker renders services from an integrated and holistic point of view. For instance, apart from individual intervention, foster parents and children may be involved in support groups and community projects to enhance their social functioning.

The findings show the challenges in meeting the needs of children in foster care and young adults out of the foster care system due to high caseloads and a lack of resources. The narratives revealed that the shortage of adequate staff results in social workers dealing with high caseloads and are unable to play their monitoring roles more competently by ensuring that the needs of children in and out foster care are fully met as provided for in the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

The participants reported a lack of adequate preparation of foster parents. The narratives show that little has been done to prepare foster parents to live with young adults out of the foster care system. Their responsibility is to assist young adults to adjust to independent living by providing basic skills such as financial management, self-care and adult development, but due to their lack of adequate preparedness they are unable to provide care towards independence for young adults.

4.4.5 Theme 5: Recommendations regarding improving services to foster children and young adults

The participants' recommendations to the DSD for social work services for foster care children and young adults based on their personal experiences, are as follows:

- Department of Social Development to employ more social workers that can be responsible for young adults out of the foster care system and aftercare services to reduce the high caseloads.
- Department of Social Development to develop programmes to empower children in and out of the foster care system.

The young adult participants' recommendations for social work services based on their personal experiences are as follows:

- Notification of the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants to be provided to young adults early in the foster care placement to enable them to plan and cope with independent life upon termination.
- Social workers should advocate and mediate on behalf of young adults for financial support for continuous educational opportunities and training.
- Social workers should provide information to young adults regarding preparation for employment.
- Social workers to mediate amongst foster children in child-headed households to address difficult issues and help them engage in open discussions about their circumstances.

4.5 Discussion

The views of young adults and social workers regarding the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants were in some respects similar, but there were some contrasting opinions as well. For example, on the issue of young adults

not coping independently the young participants said that life is difficult because they lack employment due to their low level of education. These views correlate with the social workers' sentiments that young adults, after the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants, drop out of school which results in a lack of skills to find proper employment in order to sustain themselves.

The findings that teenage pregnancy and teenage parenthood exacerbate the situation of the young adult who has aged out of care came from both young adult participants and social workers. Both concurred that teenage pregnancy amongst girls who are out of the foster care system brings about misery in their lives as some are unable to care for themselves and their children; they then end up being recipients of child support grants.

In addition, young adults shared that independent living is impacted by the high unemployment rate in the country and their lack of training or experience. These views are similar to that of the social workers who reported that unemployment after leaving school is a major problem resulting in anti-social behaviour amongst young adults whose grants have been terminated, because they are vulnerable to risky behaviours such as substance use and prostitution.

Young adults also expect the Department of Social Development to support them until they are successfully skilled for employment. These views are corroborated by social workers who stated that the Department of Social Development must employ more social workers who can implement programmes and provide support to children in foster care and young adults out of the foster care system. There were contrasting views from two groups of participants. For example, on the issue of programmes for children in and out of the foster care system young adults alluded to the fact that they want social workers to advocate and mediate on their behalf for financial support and continuous training. These views are contrary to those of social workers because they indicated that the Department of Social Development should hire more staff to deal with the needs of young adults out of foster care because social workers are overloaded with cases that always need urgent attention.

4.6 Summary

In summary, what has emerged from this study is that young adults who were interviewed had difficulties with functioning optimally after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants. Various factors within the ecosystem impacted negatively on them hence they had difficulties in functioning socially, emotionally and economically. The main challenges that contributed to their inability to cope and function independently were poverty, unemployment, continuation with their education, teenage pregnancy, lack of financial support, family discords, and the absence of therapeutic support from social workers.

Predominant issues raised by social workers regarding factors that influenced the support they provided to young adults who had aged out of care, were the lack of resources, programmes, high caseloads, teenage pregnancy and the low level of commitment amongst some young adults and social workers.

What is also evident from the study is that the Children's Act 38 of 2005 was not fully implemented especially for monitoring and preparation for the termination of the placements. This was also exacerbated by shortage of resources to develop and put programmes in place.

In addition, the use of the integrated and eco systems approaches, that could contribute to addressing the problematic situations, were not taken into account (Germain & Gitterman, cited in Gray & Web, 2013:180). These include relationships and interactions an individual has with his or her immediate surroundings such as family, school and neighbourhood which also have an influence on their development and functioning (Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2). Therefore, from the ecological perspective, social workers should be able to involve other subsystems such as family members, society, teachers, and government in service delivery to young adults, with the aim of achieving their independence.

It is also vital that skills development programmes should be made available to children and young adults in and out of foster care in order to assist in preparing

them for many circumstances that they will encounter in independent life. This can also provide them with the necessary skills that could benefit them when applying for employment or further education. The consequence of the lack of skills to allow them to participate in the social-economic environment is that they become trapped in poverty and the substandard living conditions, and this leads to a cycle of disadvantage from one generation to another (Makiwane & Kwizera,2009:223).

4.7 Recommendations

Based on the research findings and research process the following recommendations for practice, the Department of Social Development, policy, and future research are provided:

4.7.1 Recommendations for practice

Social work professionals should:

- Provide foster care services in accordance to the regulations of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, in particular the development and implementation of developmental plans for each child.
- Prepare both the child and foster parent for the eventual termination of the foster care placement and the foster child grant when the child turns 18 or 21.
- Liaise with tertiary institutions to consider young adults out of the foster care system to be their priority for bursaries or learnerships.
- Offer social skills development programmes to young adults, for example, to help them manage and care for themselves.
- Conduct support groups to help foster children to realise that they are not alone and that there are others who encounter the same challenges.
- Embark on teaching foster children and child-headed households the communication skills to improve communication.

- Initiate anger management programmes to help foster children control their emotions and bitterness that children hold because of a parent's death.
- Offer psychosocial support to young adults for their emotional wellbeing.
- Make use of support systems and resources to effectively offer support to foster families and child-headed families to gain strength and courage.
- Need to become familiarised with the ecological perspective to better understand and assist young adults out of the foster care system.

4.7.2 Recommendations for the Department of Social Development

- The Department of Social Development should make sure that the foster care chapter in the Children Act 38 of 2005 and Norms and Standards pertaining to foster care services are fully implemented by social workers through training and monitoring.
- Introduce mandatory programmes for children who have aged out of foster care and provide financial support for such programmes.
- Strengthen, develop, and ensure implementation of parenting skills training programmes for foster parents in order to improve effective parenting and family functioning.
- Support the youth out of foster care until successfully skilled for the labour market, for example, provide these young people with basic necessities such as clothes, food, and financial assistance.
- Ensure that there is an adequate number of trained social workers to deliver foster care services to those who have aged out of care.
- Monitor and evaluate services to youth and children whose foster care placements and grants have been terminated.

4.7.3 Recommendations for policy

- Policymakers should develop clear guidelines on how preparatory and after-care programmes for foster care should be implemented country wide.
- Policymakers should consider effective systems to ensure that social workers provide aftercare services to young adults out of the foster care system, and various forms of support for those who are unable to continue with their studies.
- Develop a policy framework for dealing with the needs and rights of children in foster care and young adults out of the foster care system in South Africa in an effective, collective way of communicating, across various departments.
- Ensure that relevant legislation and amendments concerning children in foster care and young adults out of the foster care system are implemented and provided to all government departments in order to have a common understanding in helping process.
- To have in place clear, inter-sectoral systems and processes that can be effectively monitored and evaluated by those in management on a regular basis.

4.7.4 Recommendations for further research

In view of the fact that there is a shortage of research conducted on the social functioning of young adults after the termination of foster care placements and foster child grants, the researcher recommends that future research should focus on the following:

- Evaluate and test the current programmes offered to young adults who exited foster care system for possible adaptation and roll out in the country.
- Explore and develop guidelines for rendering programmes to young adults out of the foster care system.

- Investigate the experiences and expectations of foster parents living with young adults out of the foster care system inorder to address their challenges.
- Investigate the existing training programmes for prospective foster parents to evaluate and monitor their effectiveness.
- Explore and describe the need for psychosocial support to children in and out of the foster care system.
- Research the use of an integrated service delivery approach in foster care service.

4.8 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter the report provides the reader with a summary of the qualitative research application as presented in Chapter One and Chapter Two. Moreover, a summary of research findings based on five themes from young adults and five themes from social workers followed by discussions and conclusions are also presented as well as the recommendations for practice, the Department of Social Development, policy, and future research.

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ADDENDUM A

APPLICATION LETTER FOR A RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED IN THE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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PRIVATE BAG X03
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2000

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To: Mrs Refilwe Makapelo
Director: Research and Demography
Sub-directorate: Research and Policy Co-ordination
Co: Development and Research
Tel: 011 355 7678

Dear Mrs Makapelo

Subject: An application Letter for a Research to be conducted in the Department.

I Nyiko Given Ngoveni, the undersigned, am a student social worker and a social worker in service of Gauteng Development of Social Development stationed Johannesburg, and a part-time Masters student in the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. In the fulfillment of requirements for the Master's degree, I have to undertake a research project and have consequently decided to

the following research topic: **The social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.**

The research project originated as a result of the researcher practicing as a social worker in the Johannesburg working in the field of Child Care and Protection. The researcher develops an interest in understanding the social functioning of young adults after termination of foster care placement and foster care grant. The aim of the study is to:

- To conceptualize young adults social functioning after termination of foster care placements and foster child grants.
- To explore and describe the social functioning of young adults after termination of foster care placement and foster child grant.
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations to address the needs of young adults after termination of foster care placements and foster child grants.

The information gathered from this study will contribute towards, developing an in-depth understanding of the functioning of young adults physical, emotional and economic after the termination of foster care placement and foster care grant. The researcher will interview the young adults between the age of 18 to 21 whose their foster care placement and foster care grant has been terminated and the social workers who works in the field of child care and protection in order to share with the researcher the professional assistance that can be offered to former foster care young adults.

Thanking you in advance

Kind regards
N.G. Ngoveni
Signature of researcher

ADDENDUM B

THE LETTER REQUESTING THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG ADULTS WHOSE FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS AND FOSTER CHILD GRANTS HAS BEEN TERMINATED

Dear participant

I Nyiko Given Ngoveni, the undersigned, am a student social worker and a social worker in service of Gauteng Development of Social Development stationed Johannesburg, and a part-time Masters student in the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. In the fulfillment of requirements for the Master's degree, I have to undertake a research project and have consequently decided to the following research topic: The social functioning of young adults after termination of foster care placement and foster care grant.

In view of the fact that the foster care placement and the foster care grant is terminated and you are well informed about the topic, I hereby approach you with the request to participate in the study. If you decide to participate in the research project, I am going to explain to you the aims of the study and why there is a need of a particular study, you will be informed about what your involvement in this study, the risks and benefits involved by participating in this research project and you rights as a participant in this study. Within two weeks i will contact you telephonically to arrange for an appointment with you. I hope you will be able to participate in this study.

Should you agree to participate, you will be requested to participate in the face to face interviews that will be conducted at your home (participant) from January 2016 to December 2016. It is estimated that the interview will last approximately for 45 minutes. During the interview the following questions will be asked:

- The biographical information will be asked to obtain the personal information of the participant.
- Can you please explain to me how you have been prepared for the termination of foster care placement and foster care grant?
- How does termination of foster care placement and foster care grant affected you physical, social and emotional?
- Share with me your feeling and emotions you experience after the termination of foster care placement and foster care grant?
- How do you experience relationships in your family since the foster care placement and foster care grant has terminated?
- Share with me your copying strategies after the termination of foster care placement and foster care grant?
- Tell me about support you receive in your situation?
- Share with me the kind of professional assistance do you require?
- If you were to improve anything the foster care system what would be?

With your permission, the interview will be audio taped. The recorded interviews will be transcribed word for word. Your response to the interviews will be both recorded and notes and notes will be kept strictly confidential. The audio tape will be coded to disguise any identifying information and locked in my cabinet. The transcripts will be made available to my research supervisor, a translator (if they need to be translated into English), and an independent coder with the sole purpose of assisting and guiding me with this research undertaking. My supervisor, the translator and the independent coder will each sign an undertaking to treat the information in strict confidentiality. The audiotapes and transcripts of the interviews will be destroyed upon the completion of the study. Identifying information will be deleted or disguised in any subsequent publication and/or presentation of the research findings.

Participation in the research is voluntary. You are not obliged to take part in the research. Your decision to participate, or not participate, will not affect you in any way now or in the future and you will incur no penalty and/ or loss to which you may otherwise be entitled. Should you agree to participate and sign the information and informed consent document herewith, as proof of your willingness to participate, please note that you are not signing your rights away.

If you agree to take part, you have the right to withdraw at any time during the study. However, you will be requested to engage with me in formal discussion so that the research partnership that was established can be terminated in an orderly manner. As a researcher, I also have the right to dismiss you from the study without regard to your consent if you fail to follow the instructions or if the information you have to divulge is emotionally sensitive and upset you to such an extent that it hinders you from functioning physically and emotionally in a proper manner. Furthermore, if participating in the study at any time jeopardises your safety in any way, you will be dismissed.

Should I conclude that the information you have shared left you feeling emotionally upset or disturbed, I am obliged to refer you to a counselor for debriefing or counseling.

You have the right to ask questions concerning the study at any time. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, contact these numbers 012 429 6739.

Please note that this study has been approved by the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa. Without the approval of this committee, the study cannot be conducted. Should you have any questions and queries not sufficiently addressed by me as the researcher,

you are more than welcome to contact the Chairperson of the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa. His contact details are as follows: Prof AH (Nicky) Alpaslan, telephone number: 012 429 6739, or email: alpasah@unisa .ac.za.

If, after you have consulted the researcher and the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa, their answers have not satisfied you, you might direct your question/concerns /queries to the Chairperson, Human Ethics Committee, College of Human Sciences, PO Box 392, Unisa ,0003.

Based on the information provided to you above, and being aware of your rights, you are asked to give your written consent in case you want to participate in this research project by signing and dating the information and consent form provided herewith and initialing each section to indicate that you understand and agree to the condition.

Thank you for your participation

Kind regards
N.G. Ngoveni

Contact details: (011) 207 2683
Cell number: 0824690381
Email address: Nyiko.Ngoveni@gauteng.gov.za

ADDENDUM C

THE LETTER REQUESTING SOCIAL WORKERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Dear colleague

I Nyiko Given Ngoveni, the undersigned, am a student social worker and a social worker in service of Gauteng Development of Social Development stationed Johannesburg, also a part-time Masters student in the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. In the fulfillment of requirements for the Master's degree, I have to undertake a research project and have consequently decided to the following research topic: The social functioning of young adults after termination of foster care placement and foster care grant.

In view of the fact that the foster care placement and the foster care grant is terminated and you are well informed about the topic, I hereby approach you with the request to participate in the study. If you decide to participate in the research project, I am going to explain to you the aims of the study and why there is a need of a particular study, you will be informed about what your involvement in this study, the risks and benefits involved by participating in this research project and your rights as a participant in this study. Within two weeks i will contact you telephonically to arrange for an appointment with you. I hope you will be able to participate in this study.

Should you agree to participate, you will be requested to participate in the face to face interviews that will be conducted at your office (participant) from January 2016 to December 2016. It is estimated that the interview will last approximately for 45 minutes. During the interview the following questions will be asked:

Share with me programmes and services you render to young adults in preparation of their discharge?
Tell me programmes and services you render after the termination of foster care placement and foster care grant?
Share with me experiences do you have with regard to the social functioning of former foster care young adults?
Share with me the kind of professional assistance can be provided to assist former foster care young adults?
What suggestion and recommendation will you make concerning the social functioning of former foster care young adults?

With your permission, the interview will be audio taped. The recorded interviews will be transcribed word for word. Your response to the interviews will be both recorded and notes and notes will be kept strictly confidential. The audio tape will be coded to disguise any identifying information and locked in my cabinet. The transcripts will be made available to my research supervisor, a translator (if they need to be translated into English), and an independent coder with the sole purpose of assisting and guiding me with this research undertaking. My supervisor, the translator and the independent coder will each sign an undertaking to treat the information in strict confidentiality. The audiotapes and transcripts of the interviews will be destroyed upon the completion of the study. Identifying information will be deleted or disguised in any subsequent publication and/or presentation of the research findings.

Participation in the research is voluntary. You are not obliged to take part in the research. Your decision to participate, or not participate, will not affect you in any way now or in the future and you will incur no penalty and/ or loss to which you may otherwise be entitled. Should you agree to participate and sign the information and informed consent document herewith, as proof of your willingness to participate, please note that you are not signing your rights away.

If you agree to take part, you have the right to withdraw at any time during the study. However, you will be requested to engage with me in formal discussion so that the research partnership that was established can be terminated in an orderly manner. As a researcher, I also have the right to dismiss you from the study without regard to your consent if you fail to follow the instructions or if the information you have to divulge is emotionally sensitive and upset you to such an extent that it hinders you from functioning physically and emotionally in a proper manner. Furthermore, if participating in the study at any time jeopardizes your safety in any way, you will be dismissed.

Should I conclude that the information you have shared left you feeling emotionally upset or disturbed, I am obliged to refer you to a counselor for debriefing or counseling.

You have the right to ask questions concerning the study at any time. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, contact these numbers 012 429 6739.

Please note that this study has been approved by the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa. Without the approval of this committee, the study cannot be conducted. Should you have any questions and queries not sufficiently addressed by me as the researcher, you are more than welcome to contact the Chairperson of the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa. His contact details are as follows: Prof AH (Nicky) Alpaslan, telephone number: 012 429 6739, or email: alpasah@unisa .ac.za.

If, after you have consulted the researcher and the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at Unisa, their answers have not satisfied you, you might direct your question/concerns /queries to the Chairperson, Human Ethics Committee, College of Human Sciences, PO Box 392,Unisa,0003.

Based on the information provided to you above, and being aware of your rights, you are asked to give your written consent in case you want to participate in this research project by signing and dating the information and consent form provided herewith and initialing each section to indicate that you understand and agree to the condition.

Thank you for your participation

Kind regards
N.G. Ngoveni

Contact details: (011) 207 2683
Cell number: 0824690381
Email address: Nyiko.Ngoveni@gauteng.gov.za

ADDENDUM D

INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

TITTLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

THE SOCIAL FUCTIONING OF YOUNG ADULTS AFTER TERMINATION OF THEIR FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS AND FOSTER CHILD GRANTS

REFERENCE NUMBER**: 57657068**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/RESEACHER**: NYIKO GIVEN NGOVENI**

ADRESS**: 6989**

MAFUMO CNR MASAKA STREET

OLIEVENHOUTBOSCH

CENTURION

0187

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER

(w): 011 207 2683

©: 0824690381

DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE PARTICIPANT:	Initial
I, THE UNDERSIGNED,---------- (name), [ID No: ----------] the participant or in my capacity as ---------- of the participant [ID No ----------]of---------- ---------- ----------(address)	
A. HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:	
1. I/the participant was invited to participate in the above research project which is being undertaken by (name)	

---------- of the Department of Social Work in the School of Social Science and Humanities at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa.	
2. The following aspects have been explained to me/ the participant: 2.1The researcher is studying the social functioning of young adults after termination of foster care placement and foster care grant. The information will be used to/for developing an in-depth understanding of the functioning of young adults physical, emotional and economic after the termination of foster care placement and foster care grant.	Initial
3. I understand that: The researcher has the right to dismiss me from the study without regard to my consent if I fail to follow the instructions or if the information I have to divulge is emotionally sensitive and upsets me to such an extent that it hinders me from functioning physically and emotionally in a proper manner. Furthermore, if participating in the study at any time jeopardizes my safety in any way, I will be dismissed.	Initial
4.Risks: My participation may evoke the emotions that I encountered with my experience of the termination of foster care placement and foster care grant. Having to provide information that may be regarded as confidential by the participants.	Initial
5. Possible benefits: As a result of my participation in this study The researcher will develop an in-depth understanding	Initial
6.Confidentiality: My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators/researchers.	Initial

7. Access to findings: Any new information/benefit that develops during the course of the study will be shared will be shared with me.	Initial
8. Voluntary participation/refusal/discontinuation: My participation is voluntary. My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect me now or in the future.	
9.The information above was explain to me/the participant by ----------(name of the relevant person) in English/Sotho/Pedi/Zulu/ other ----------(indicate other language) and I am in command of this language/ it was translated to me satisfactory by ---------- (name of the translator). I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answers satisfactory.	Initial
10. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participate and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage from the study without any penalty.	Initial
11. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to me.	Initial
B. I HEREBY CONSENT VOLUNTARILY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE PROJECT. Signed/confirmed at ----------on ----------20— ---------- ---------- Signature or right thumbprint of participant Signature of witness	

ADDENDUM E

INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE FOR YOUNG ADULTS PARTICIPANTS

The following biographical questions were asked:

- Gender.
- What is your current age?
- At what age was your foster care placement and foster child grant terminated?
- What is your highest educational qualification?
- Are you currently employed?

The following questions were used to gather information from young adults to determine their social functioning after foster care placements and foster child grants were been terminated.

- Tell me how life is for you now that your foster care placements and foster child grants has been terminated.

- For how long have you been terminated from foster care services and the grant?
- Share with me the sentiments and emotions you have experienced after the termination of your foster care placement and the foster child grant.
- Can you please explain to me how you have been prepared for the termination of foster care placement and foster child grant?
- Tell me how your living arrangements have changed since your foster care placement and foster child grant have been terminated.
- How has the termination of your foster care placement and the foster child grant affected you economically?
- How has it affected your education?
- Was it difficult for you to get employment?

- How do you experience relationships in your family (foster family or biological family or both) since your foster care placement and foster child grant have been terminated?
- What are the challenges you experience after the termination of your foster care placement and foster child grant?
- Share with me your coping strategies after the termination of foster care placement and the foster child grant.
- Tell me about the financial and social support (if any) that you receive from other people in your biological family, foster family, or community.
- Share with me the kind of professional assistance you require from social workers regarding some of the challenges you have mentioned to me earlier.
- What suggestions and recommendations will you make to the Department of Social Work concerning the termination of foster care placements and the foster child grants?

ADDENDUM F

INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE FOR SOCIAL WORK PARTICIPANTS

The following biographical questions were asked:

- Gender.
- Race
- What is your current age?
- What is your educational qualification?
- How long have you working for the Department of Social Develoment?

The following questions were included in interview schedule for social workers who work in the field of child care and protection.

- How long have you been rendering foster care servicers?

- Share with me the programmes and services which you render to young adults in preparation of their discharge from foster care after they have reached the age of majority.
- Which programmes and services do you render to young adults after the termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants?
- Share with me experiences you have had with regard to the social functioning of former foster care young adults.
- Share with me the kind of professional assistance that can be provided to assist former foster care young adults.
- What suggestion and recommendation would you make to the Department of Social Development concerning the termination of foster care placement and the foster child grant?

ADDENDUM G

LETTER REQUESTING DEBRIEFING TO BE OFFERED TO PARTICIPANTS

I, Nyiko Given Ngoveni, the undersigned, am a social worker in the service of the Gauteng Department of Social Development stationed in Johannesburg, and a part- time Masters student in the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. In fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's degree, I have to undertake a research project and have consequently decided on the following research topic: **The social functioning of young adults after termination of their foster care placements and foster child grants.**

I hereby approach you with the request to offer therapeutic sessions to participants if the information shared left them feeling emotionally upset.

Thanking you in advance
Kind regards

N. G. Ngoveni
(Signature of researcher)

ADDENDUM H

UNISA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

18 January 2016

Ref#: DR&EC_2015_014[1]
Name of Applicant: Ngoveni, NG
Student#: 57657068

Dear Ms Ngoveni

DECISION: ETHICAL APPROVAL

Name: **Ms NG Ngovani**

Address & contact details: **6989 Mafumo Street, Olievenhoutbosch, Centurion 0046**
Tel: 0733845149/0824690381

Supervisor: **Dr M Mabetoa**

Title of Proposal: ***THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF YOUNG ADULTS AFTER THE TERMINATION OF THE FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT AND FOSTER CHILD GRANT***

Qualification: **Masters in Social Work**

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Department Of Social Work Research And Ethics Review Committee.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics by the abovementioned Committee at a meeting conducted on 9 December 2016.

Final approval is granted for the duration of the project.

[1] Note: The reference number (top right corner of this communiqué) should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication (i.e. Webmail, E-mail messages and letters) with the intended participants as well as with the Department of Social Work' Research and Ethics Review Committee.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392, UNISA 0003, South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

ADDENDUM I

APPROVAL LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

GAUTENG PROVINCE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: Ms Judith Demeshane
Tel: +27 (0)11 227 0130
File no: 2/9/32

Ms Nyiko Given Ngoveni

Dear Ms Nyiko Given Ngoveni

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you for your application to conduct research in the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

Your application on the research **"The Social Functioning of Young Adults after the Termination of the Foster-Care Placement and Foster-Child Grant"** has been considered and approved for support by the Department as it was found beneficial to the Department's vision and mission. The approval is subject to the Departmental terms and conditions as endorsed by you on the 05/04/2016.

May I take this opportunity to wish you well in the journey that you are about to embark upon.

We are looking forward to a value adding research and a fruitful co-operation.

With thanks.

Ms. WR Tshabalala
Head of Department: Social Development
Date: 15/4/16.

ADDENDUM J

EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF YOUNG ADULTS AFTER THE TERMINATION OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS AND FOSTER CHILD GRANTS

NYIKO GIVEN NGOVENI
(57657068)

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the editing process comprised the following:

Language editing

- Syntax.
- Sentence construction.
- Grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Appropriate word selection.
- Final proofreading.

Format/layout editing

- Uniformity in page layout.
- Comparing in-text citations/sources in reference list.

Freelance editor	:	S M Bell
Completed	:	April 2018
Signature	:	Sue Bell

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