(b) Category: Teenage sexual behaviour

Most participants voiced their challenges of accepting their teen offspring's sexual behaviour and admitted to finding it difficult to talk to them about sex and their risky sexual behaviour.

> *The experience of fostering a teenager is quite difficult because raising a boy child is not like raising a girl child. With a girl child you get to receive a baby which you did not expect. I for one had a challenge when I found out that my granddaughter was pregnant when she was doing grade 10 … It is unfortunate that we try to advise them, but they do not listen to us. (Maitemogelo aka a go tlhokomela ngwana wa gotšwa mahlalagading a se ao nka re go a bile bonolo nie ka ge go godiša ngwana wa lesogana go sa swane le go godiša wa lekgarebe. Ngwana wa lekgarebe o go tlišetša lesea leo o be o se wa le letela. Nnaena wa mpona iye, ke kopane le bothata ge ke se no hwetša gore ngwanenyana oithwele a sa dira form three…Go hloka mahlatse garena ke gore a ba rekwe bana ba ge re ba kgala)*
> (Participant 5, Maternal grandmother).

Some families which are headed by grandparents do not offer adolescents an opportunity to talk about sexual risk behaviours. Researchers have identified household poverty, age differences between the grandparents and the adolescents, as the contributing factor that hinders implementation of sex education in such families (Anyanwu, Akinsola, Tugli & Obisie-Nmehielle, 2020). This includes the fact that too harsh discipline by grandparents leads to delinquency (Liu, 2019). Sex education in families headed by grandparents whose values are deeply rooted in culture, is not an easy thing to be practised, especially when the grandparent's style of parenting is authoritative. It is also observed that cultural kinship foster families shy away from open

communication, which leads to teenage foster children relying on friends regarding sexuality issues (Guan & Li, 2017). The grandparent may also feel that talking about sex means they are giving their grandchildren a license to go and put it into practice. In the absence of sex education from the grandparents, the orphaned teenage children will turn to their peers and social media for information about sex and sexuality, which is not always ideal. Grandparents become surprised by the grandchildren's pregnancy, whereas they know that they had never taught their grandchildren about sexuality. This is when they start complaining that raising a boy child is easier than raising a girl child.

5.3.3.2 Subtheme: Peer pressure

In the study of De Atouguia (2014) it was found that 85% of the adolescents where influenced by their peers. This influence increases as they get older (Keijsers, Loeber, Branje & Meeus, 2011). Walsh and McGoldrick (2013) indicated that friends provide support for adolescents whenever they need it. Most participants mentioned that their teenage offspring were influenced by their friends. This has made parenting difficult for them and some had to take drastic measures such as trying to end their friendship, refusing to open doors for them when they come late, refusing their friends from entering the house, and preventing them from going to play at their friends' home. This is what the participants had to say regarding their teenage offspring's peer influence.

> *The younger sister will do house chores after school, unlike her sister who*
>
> *is always with her friend. (Monyanana wa gagwe o tla dira mešongwana*
>
> *ya ka gae ge a se no bowa sekolong mara mogolwagwe yena a ka seke, sa*

gagwe ke go phela a ena le mogweragwe) (Participant 2, Maternal grandmother).

This [referring to the teenager's uncontrolled behaviour] was observed when he changed his friends whom he was schooling with since primary. (Seo ke se bone ge a se no thoma go ba le bagwera ba bangwe a hlanamela bale a tsenego na bo ka mo primary) (Participant 3, Maternal grandmother).

You know, these children do not have an ear [meaning they do not respect the rules set by the foster parent, they are disobedient] when an adult is talking to them. They are just influenced by their peers. (Watseba bana ba a bana tsebe ge motho yo mogolo a bolela nabo. Ba gapišwa ke bagwera ba bona mogofe) (Participant 5, Maternal grandmother).

According to the participants, the teenage foster children preferred to spend time with their friends rather than in their foster home and this is normal teen behaviour during adolescence that adolescents prefer their peers more than relatives, and that their behaviour in the foster home mostly is influenced by their friends. This correlates with what Keijsers *et al.* (2011) and De Atouguia, (2014) that most of teenagers' behaviours are influenced by their friends. The narratives by the participants regarding the negative influences by peers are also in line with Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, which holds that children entering the stage of adolescence (the age between 12 and 18 years) seek to identify who they are and during this process they encounter role confusion (Erikson, 1972). They would rather listen to their friends than to their grandparents, and in so doing defy the rules set by their grandparents in kinship families, causing serious dysfunctionalities. Their behaviour might influence that of the young ones at home as they serve

as their role models, and on the other hand, other family members such as uncles will want to instil discipline to them.

5.3.3.3 Subtheme: Poor academic performance

Adolescents who are in foster care encounter many academic difficulties such as grade repetition, delinquency and academic failure (Trout, Hagaman, Casey, Reid & Epstein, 2008; Pears, Kim, Buchanan & Fisher, 2015; Erickson, 2018). Most participants have expressed that their teenage offspring are not doing well at school. They said:

> *He began to experience learning challenges when he progressed to high school. He told me that he was struggling with mathematics and it's unfortunate that I did not go to school to understand his situation. I encouraged him to study other subjects even though he is struggling with mathematics. (O thomile go palelwa ge a se no ya mo sekolong seo se phagamego. O mpoditše gore ge e le Maths ona wa mo palela ebile ke madimabe a se ka tsena sekolo gore ke kwišiše seemo sa gagwe. Ke no mo tlhohleletša gore a ithute tše dingwe tšeo a di dirago le ge maths o motlaiša)* (Participant 4, Paternal grandmother).

> *What shattered me was his term 4 report, where he failed. The fact that he never asked us to help him made me think he was doing very well in class. He just said, Mama I am a genius, it is just that I did not understand some of the things during the examination. (Sa go nnyamiša kudu ke ge ke bona report ya gagwe ya mafelelo a ngwaga e re a se a atlega. Watseba ke no*

etšea gore ge a sa nkgopele thuso ka tša sekolo gora gore di sepela gabotse. O no re go nna (Mama, ke genius e no ba gore a ka kwišiša dilo tše dingwe ge ke ngwala ditlhahlobo) (Participant 6, Paternal grandmother).

The problem which I am facing is with this boy who is not doing well at school. His sister went to collect his term 4 report, in which he failed mathematics, and this has been the subject that kept him in grade 9 for the 3rd time. (Bothata bjowe ke lebanego le bjona ka lesogana le ke gore aowa wa palelwa ka sekolong. Kgaetšedi ya gagwe e latile dipoelo tša gagwe tša mafelelo a ngwaga ra hwetša gore aowa o šitilwe ke dipalo ebile se ebile bothata bja tekano ya mengwaga e meraro a dira form two) (Participant 7, Paternal grandmother).

Most of the participants' teenage offspring are reported to be performing poorly academically, and because of the poor educational background of these participants they find themselves not knowing how to help them. The children have to repeat grades, and mathematics was the subject that troubles them a lot. These findings correlate with other studies that also found that teenage orphaned foster children have deficits in neuro-cognitive functioning; hence they are usually reported to be performing poorly academically (Leve, Harold, Chamberlain, Landsverk, Fisher & Vostanis, 2012). In supporting the above findings, researchers explained that they are behind developmentally and functionally, which is as a result of their parent's(s') death (Whitley & Kelley, 2007; Kelley, Whitley & Campos, 2010; Mersky & Janczewski, 2012). The participants' poor academic background has a bearing on the orphaned teenagers' school performance as they are unable to stimulate the children's educational needs. They are just able to provide the physical

needs, attend school meetings and buy school necessities. Their inability to attend to the teenagers' educational needs creates more problems for the teenagers, because just encouraging the teenager to focus is not enough.

5.3.3.4 Subtheme: Use of technology (smartphones)

The most important part of adolescents' social life today is played by social media (Marengo, Longobardi, Fabris & Settanni, 2018). These social media are accessed through technological devices such as smartphones. Social media provide support and approval from peers, which are critical for adolescents as they are still developing (Uhls, Ellison & Subrahmanyam, 2017). Sharing aspects of adolescents' lives and pictures on social media platforms is what teenagers do when they log in. Uhls, Ellison and Subrahmanyam (2017) found that use of technology contributes towards adolescents' school problems. The use of technology, particularly a cellphone, to access social media websites has posed a challenge to the participants. All the participants have indicated that they are technologically illiterate and cannot monitor what their teenagers are doing on social media sites such as Facebook, while other participants get to be informed by the family members.

> *The elder sister was always on her phone and I did not know that she has Facebook until my other daughter told me that she saw her there ... My daughter told me that she saw her on Facebook again after her phone got damaged, and I asked myself where she got a phone to get to that Facebook of theirs. I then learned that she was using her friend's phone to login without my knowledge. (Mogolwage o be a phela a le mo*

phounung ebile ke be ke sa tsebe gore o ne facebook go ba go fihlela ke

sebotšwa ke morwedi waka a re o mmone fao…morwedi waka o mpoditše

gore o mmone facebook gape, morago ga gore phoune ya gagwe e

senyege, bjalo ka ipotšiša gore naa o tšeri kae phoune ya go tsenamowe

facebook ya bona. Ka thoma go lemoga gore o šomiša ya mogwera wa

gagwe go tsena fao ntle le tsebo yaka) (Participant 2, Maternal

grandmother).

My biggest challenge with him is the cellphone, which he uses even during

the night when we are asleep. I do not like the cellphone, especially this

one which they use to get to internet, hence I only bought this non-smart

phone. His uncle and my brother's son give him the smart phones which I

do not approve of. (Tlhotlo e kgolo yeo ke nago le yona le yena ke cell

phone yeo a dulago a le go yona bošego ge re robetši. A ke rate phoune

ye ya go tsena kae kae ka yona, a o bone ke moreketši ye ya lepopotwane.

Malomeagwe le morwa kgaetšedi yaka ba mo neela yona yeo ye kgolo ke

sa dumelelanego le yona) (Participant 4, Paternal grandmother).

Most of the participants are challenged by their orphaned teenage offspring who are forever on

their smartphones, which prevents them from doing house chores and disturbs their sleep. They

mentioned that these teenagers are always logging on to social media such as Facebook, which

they become aware of when their own children alert them. The technological illiteracy of the

participants prevents them from monitoring the children's social media life. Research shows that

teenage foster children are more computer literate and technologically advanced than their foster

grandparents, making them vulnerable to be influenced by social media and peer values (Mesch,

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2003; Mesch, 2006; Akyil *et al.*, 2015). It is indeed true that social media today are playing an important part in adolescents' lives (Marengo *et al.*, 2018). Parenting for the participants is challenged by technology and this makes it difficult to monitor the children's social life as they are unable to use technology. Teenagers are able to meet strangers on social media and be influenced by them without the knowledge of the participants, and some of the influences might be against the rules that have been established by the participants in their homes.

5.3.4 Theme 4 – Psychosocial challenges experienced by foster grandparents

Challenging adolescents poses a challenge to parenting, and grandparents who are experiencing psychological distress will cause these adolescents to engage in risk behaviour activities (Ryan *et al.*, 2015). While facing the challenges posed by challenging adolescents, grandparents also face their own multiple challenges which include increased financial pressures, limitations in caring for biological children and other household members, disrupted household structure, as well as deteriorating physical and psychological health due to ageing (Kuo & Operario, 2010). There are several challenges that emerged under this theme which participants encountered, and those challenges are not emanating from their teenage offspring. They are challenges which are related to the participants' health and psychological aspects, economic status, personal fears and the interference of significant others. The subthemes under this theme are as follows: significant others' interference, fear, poverty, health and psychological problems.

5.3.4.1 Subtheme: Significant others' interference

The significant others of the teenage offspring such as friends, extended family members and community members, play a role in the parenting of these children. It is unfortunate that the participants have indicated that their role sometimes makes it difficult to parent these children as they influence their behaviour negatively. This is what the participants expressed:

> *My neighbours say I abuse them when I tell my grandchildren not to go to their houses. When she is in their house, she does not answer me when I call her, and what surprises me is that even my neighbours would say nothing. I will call with a loud voice until I get tired – without any response … People do not love an orphan, and when one tries to give him guidance, they will say you are abusing him or her. (Ba agelwane baka ba re ke hlakiša ditlogolo tšaka ge ke re di seke tša ya ka ga bona. Ge a le ka ga bona ga a nkarabele ge ke goeletša leina la gagwe ebile ke makatšwa ke gore le bona baagelwane ba no nkhomolela. Ke tla goeletša kaba ka re thwi ntle le phetolo…batho ba ga ba rate tšhiwana ebile ge motho a re wa mokgala bona ba re wa mo hlokofatša)* (Participant 2, Maternal grandmother).

> *These children do not just act out this way without having someone at the back feeding them with negativity. Such negativity comes from their friends, aunts and uncles. In my case I have observed that friends and uncles are influencing my grandchild. (Bana ba a ba ke ba no tšwa tseleng ka ntle le go goketšwa ke motho. Wa bona go foraforetša mo go tlišwa ke bagwera, bommangwane le bomalome. Wa bona waka ke no mmona gore*

wo yena o gapišwa ke bagwera le bomalomeagwe mogofe) (Participant 6, Paternal grandmother).

They [referring to the uncles] will tell him to leave his grandparents, promising to care for him. Pity the poor child does not know the consequences of such influence. (Ba tla moforaforetša gore a tlogele bomakgolwagwe, ba motshephiša gore ba tla mo fepa. Aowi selo sa Modimo a se tsebe ditla morago tša maradiana ao) (Participant 6, Paternal grandmother).

The above excerpts show that the decline in family bonds as a result of modernisation which has provided an opportunity for the bond that exists outside the family to extended families such as kinship, to have a stronger influence over the teenage offspring (Bengtson, 2001; Kohli, Künemund & Lüdicke, 2005). This made boundaries which are abstract dividers that function between and among systems, or subsystems within the kinship foster family and between the kinship foster family and the environment, to be weakened. The weakening of the boundaries makes them to change over time as the kinship foster family or kinship foster family members interact with one another, making the kinship foster family system to be open. It can be concluded that the participants' boundaries allow influences from outside which the participants are unable to handle (Akyil *et al.*, 2015). Significant others such as friends, extended family members (uncles and aunts) and community members can be a source of support and can also be a source of negative influence on the participants' orphaned teenage offspring. Their negative influence forms a challenge in the parenting of these teenagers and cause the participants to experience psychological and emotional stress.

5.3.4.2 Subtheme: Concerns for the future welfare of foster children

Some of the South African researchers found that foster parents are facing a challenge of fear of the unknown (Perumal, 2011; Mosimege, 2017). This was also revealed by most of the participants who face this challenge when parenting their teenage offspring. Some of the participants fear to die before imparting wisdom to them; or they fear that other family members might maltreat them; or that they might commit suicide when they are disciplined, and then resort to not disciplining them; or they fear that the use of technology might make them porn addicts, which might turn them into rapists; and that these teenage offspring might think that their parents have left them to be abused. They shared as follows:

I just said I do not want to die before guiding her about life, otherwise the enemies will laugh at them as we have some differences with her paternal family. (ke no ipotša gore ga ke nyake go hlokofala ke se ya mo ruta tša bophelo, esego fao manaba a tla ba sega ka ge re sa nwešane meetsi gabotse le babo rragwe) (Participant 1, Maternal grandmother).

I treat my own orphaned teenage grandchild as my last-born child, reason being that if I cannot do so his uncles might mistreat him. (Nna setlogolo saka sa tšhiwana ke se swara jwalo ka ngwanaka wa mafelelo lebaka e le gore bo malomeagwe ba se ka mo swara gampe) (Participant 4, Paternal grandmother).

They would even think that their parents left them to be abused. (Ba tlaba ba gopola gore batswadi ba bona ba ba tlogeletši gore ba tlhokofatšiwe) (Participant 7, Paternal grandmother).

5.3.4.3 Subtheme: Poverty

Most of the participants are living in poverty and depend solely on the social grants such as the old-age grant and the foster child grant for survival. It has been noted that most of the parents of the teenage orphaned foster children were unemployed and left no estate for their children. This has led to household economic shocks and increasing poverty, leaving the participants' family structures dysfunctional (Kuo & Operario, 2010; De Jager, 2011; Böning & Ferreira, 2013), and has put extreme pressure on the participants' family (UNAIDS, 2001; Blackie, 2014). The participants' financial problems were explained as follows:

> *After the passing of my daughter I experienced financial problems where my grant and the children's child support grants stopped, and I went to the SASSA office to explain my situation. (Morago ga go tloga ga morwediake ke bone ke goga boima ka thoko ya mašeleng, moo elego gore ke hweditše pheyi yaka le ya bana di emi, ka ba kaya SASSA go hlalosa seemo saka)* (Participant 2, Maternal grandmother).

> *By that time, I was in absolute poverty where I was without a husband and a source of income. (Ka nako yeo, ke be ke le bošuwaneng bja go šiiša moo ke bego ke se na monna le letseno)* (Participant 4, Paternal grandmother).

> *Parenting orphaned teenagers is not an easy thing as they are without parents, and one needs finance to do so, of which I do not have enough. We solely rely on social grants to care for them and we are not having any relatives contributing towards their care. (Go hlokomela bana ba go tšwa mahlalagading ba ditšhiwana ase taba e nnyane nie, ka ge ba se na le*

batswadi ebile go nyakega mašeleng gore o kgone go ba tlhokomela mola ke hlaetša. Re no lebelela yona ye ya mphiwafeela gore ka yona re kgone go ba fepa mola re se ne metswalo yeo e re thušago) (Participant 7, Paternal grandmother).

Brody, Yu, Nusslock, Barton, Miller, Chen, Holmes, McCormick and Sweet (2019) indicated that the vulnerability of children growing up in poverty results in negative changes in the children's developing brain. Poverty was not the only cause of the behavioural problems in adolescence, as was revealed by the literature. Ponnet (2014) mentioned negative parenting where parents are experiencing mental problems and financial stress also cause the behavioural problems in adolescence. The living environment of the participants have an impact on the development of their orphaned teenage offspring, and this has a bearing on the children's wellbeing. They are mostly raised in families that face poverty, which puts a strain on the participants as their only source of income is normally social grants. Meeting the basic needs of these teenagers is not easy for many participants, hence some rely on their children for assistance.

(a) Category: Social grants as source of income

The effects of poverty and HIV/AIDS have been regarded as the root cause of this dependency on government grants (Böning & Ferreira, 2013; Carter & Van Breda, 2016; Fortune, 2016). Most of the participants mentioned that their family's source of income is the social grants as they are experiencing financial distress resulting from poverty. One participant shared that:

The hardest thing was on my family finances, where we relied on the social

grants. (Sa boima ka kudu e be e le mo mašeleng, moo re bego re no

lebelela motente feela) (Participant 10, Maternal grandmother).

The participants relied on social grants for the survival of the family. The effects of poverty have an impact on the development of the orphaned grandchildren that are fostered by the participants. The study of Matlakele and Erasmus (2018) revealed that there is some correlation between children's bad behaviour and poverty. This is supported by other researchers who indicate that children who are exposed to prolonged poverty at an early stage puts these children at a higher level of behavioural problems as they enter into the early stage of adolescence (Mazza, Lambert, Zunzunegui, Tremblay, Boivin & Côté, 2017). Raising grandchildren with social grants is an indication that the family is experiencing poverty and that the participants need to know the impact it has on the development of these grandchildren. As much as the participants are trying to make end meets, they need to also ensure that they take care of their grandchildren's wellbeing, including their own wellbeing.

5.3.4.4 Subtheme 4.4: Challenges relating to foster parents' health and psychological wellbeing

Research reveals that some foster parents in kinship care are found to be participants who are older and who are heavily burdened by the care that is heaped on them unlike the younger generation (Koh, 2010; Makiwane, Gumede, Makoae & Vawda, 2017). This was supported by what the participants have shared:

I even began to experience lots of stress that was caused by him. I would

even have problems with my sleeping patterns. I consulted the local clinic

many times, where they referred me to the hospital, and I did not go. (Ke

ile ka thoma go balabala ka kudu ka lebaka la gagwe. Bošego ke be ke sa

bopate boroko. Ke ile ka ya gona mo cliniking makga a mantšhi ba ba ba

nromela sepetlele feela ka se ye) (Participant 3, Maternal grandmother).

I took everything on my shoulders. (Tše ka moka ke no di bea magetleng

aka) (Participant 1, Maternal grandmother).

Most participants experienced stress and physical health problems as they continued caring for their orphaned teenage offspring. Despite all the psychological distress and health problems, they have not regarded caring for their grandchildren as a burden. Grandparents experience health deterioration due to ageing (Whitley & Kelley, 2007; Kuo & Operario, 2010; Kelley *et al.*, 2010). The findings in the study of Xu (2019) revealed that there was no significant health disadvantage suffered by grandparents caring for their grandchildren; instead they experienced emotional reward. This finding is supported by other researchers, who argued that caregiving is emotionally rewarding rather than stressful, even though lack of resources limited some of these rewards (Etaugh, 2018; Luo, Pan & Zhang, 2019). Caring for grandchildren is more emotionally rewarding than distressful, as the participants know that they are fulfilling their cultural values and that they are doing it willingly without being forced. They are able to do this even when they are experiencing health problems which may pose a danger to their lives.

5.4 REFLECTIVITY

Reflectivity in phenomenological studies is important because it requires the researcher to be aware of his/her own perceptions, experiences and bias to avoid compromising the neutrality of the research (Krefting, 1991). It is important for the researcher to consider the relationship to the study population and the phenomenon under investigation in order to maintain transparency during the data analysis process and in avoiding any undue bias (Aparicio, Shpiegel, Grinnell-Davis, King, 2019). As was mentioned above, the researcher is a social worker in the field of childcare and protection services (Foster care), and therefore it was important to distance himself from the study by keeping a reflective journal. The researcher used the reflective journal after every interview, reflecting on his own emotions and skills, and checking whether he appropriately switched from social worker to researcher during the interviews, because the participants could easily confuse the interview as a therapy session, which it was not.

The researcher's younger sister was once in the foster care of her elder brother. The researcher interviewed grandparents of the Bapedi culture, some of whom took part in the interviews. Their cultural practices prohibit talking about the deceased. It was explained to them about the aim of the study, the implications of undertaking the study, whereby the consent form and information sheet were read to them. They signed voluntarily, understanding that they could withdraw whenever they felt discomfort.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Four main themes emerged from the data analysis and were presented and discussed in this chapter. Family system theory as theoretical framework and the relevant literature on the subject were used to interpret, compare and contrast the findings in this chapter. It is clear that the kinship foster care where grandparents foster their biological teenage offspring is perceived as preferred care, despite the challenges encountered in such care.

The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The research question in this study was: What are the perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring? As such the aim of the study was to understand the essence of grandparents' perceptions and experiences of fostering their teenage offspring. The research objectives were to explore the perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring, and describe the experiences of grandparents fostering their teenage offspring.

Further clarity and exploration of their everyday life, thoughts, feelings and meaning making was sought by probing deeper within the context of this one question.

The family systems theory (family system theory) was used as a lens to contextualise this phenomenon. Therefore Chapter 1 provided a contextual overview of the study, while Chapter 2 presented the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 reviewed literature on kinship foster care, focusing on grandparents who are fostering their teenage offspring. In Chapter 4, the research methodology was discussed, while Chapter 5 presented the findings of the study. In the present chapter, the main conclusions and recommendations for this study are presented.

In line with the aim of the study, the following objectives were achieved and presented in Chapters 2 to 6:

- To explore and describe the perceptions and lived experience of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring

- To interpret the perceptions and lived experiences of grandparents fostering their teenage offspring

- To make recommendations for social work practice and policy relating to kinship care

This chapter is presented in two parts. The first part presents the conclusions as follows:

- the theoretical framework

- the research methodology

- the research findings

The second part presents the recommendations for:

- social work practice relating to kinship foster care

- social work practice relating to support services to grandparents fostering their teen offspring

- social welfare policy

- future research

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are made based on the literature reviews and the empirical study conducted with grandparents fostering their teen offspring.

6.2.1 Conclusions relating to the theoretical framework

The family system theory was used as a lens to gain an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of grandparents whose teenage offspring were in their kinship foster care. This theory was relevant as it helped the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the grandparents fostering their teenage offspring. According to this theory, the family is an emotional unit, and there are subsystems that interact with one another within the system. The three principles of this theory were identified as the lived experiences of grandparents were explored. These principles are the following: a change in one part of the system affects the whole system; secondly, it is only through studying the whole family's cultural values, norms and structures that one will better understand an individual family member's behaviour; thirdly, the interaction between the system and its environment is a two-way process whereby they influence one another.

The teenage foster child and foster grandparent cannot be fully understood if they are treated independently outside the context of the kinship family system, in which they are inseparably embedded. A kinship foster family as a social system which performs certain functions and responsibilities to and for its members, should be viewed from its experiences, culture, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, race and family forms in order to understand them. There are a variety of family forms, and the functioning of these forms is influenced by the dominant culture. The cultural component of family influences help-seeking behaviour and determines how problems are defined by the kinship foster family.

Understanding the family context, family strengths, boundaries and boundary maintenance, family power structure, family decision-making process, family goals, family myths and cognitive

patterns, family roles, communication styles of family members, and family life cycle enabled the researcher to interpret the findings in the context of family system theory.

6.2.2 Conclusions relating to the research methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach which helped the researcher to create a coherent story as seen from the grandparents' frame of reference. The grandparents' experiences and actions were represented by them to better understand how they encountered, engaged with, and lived through situations of fostering their teenage offspring.

A phenomenological research design was employed to reduce grandparents' experience with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence, where multiple participants (10) were recruited to bring about an in-depth description of their common lived experiences. The lived experiences of grandparents who foster their teenage offspring were studied to understand the meaning it holds for them as primary caregivers. A phenomenological analysis as suggested by Moustakas (1994) was employed to interpret the findings and to develop themes. The unstructured interview entailed one question, as commonly done in phenomenological studies, and was used in conjunction with probing questions based on family system theory.

6.2.3 Conclusions relating to the research findings

Theme 1: Family crisis

All kinship families which are headed by grandparents had experienced a death of a parent(s), leaving orphans under the grandparents' care. Most of the grandparents are still struggling with

dealing with the loss of the orphaned teenage offspring's parent(s). During the time of death and grief they experienced health, emotional and psychological problems. Friends, church members, community members and family members such as sons, daughters and husbands were sources of strength for the grandparents.

Theme 2: **Shifting parental roles**

The death of the parent(s) of the orphaned teenage foster children has brought family structural and role changes within the kinship families. Grandparents assumed the new role of parenting their grandchildren, which is known as "parenting for the second time". Almost all grandchildren were left with their grandmothers at a tender age, so this made them grow up knowing their grandmothers as their own mother, as the grandmother regarded them as their own children. For some, this role transition was not perceived as a challenge as they had previously parented their grandchildren and/or their grandchildren were born into their care. For those who were parenting for the second time it was viewed as a strain. Most grandparents viewed caring for their orphaned teenage offspring as a cultural obligation which is emotionally fulfilling rather than being a burden. The only challenge that grandparents experienced was with disciplining their orphaned teenage offspring, for which they often used uncles and social workers to do it on their behalf.

Theme 3: **Teen behaviour and associated challenges**

Most of the grandparents were challenged by the teenager's uncontrolled behaviour, and had to deal with behaviours influenced by peer pressure, poor academic performance and technology (smartphones). The behaviour exhibited was reported as being very difficult to discipline. This

type of behaviour displayed by the foster children was different to what grandmothers experienced when raising their own children (i.e. parents of the foster children). The teenager would use the social workers and police officers as scapegoats to threaten their grandmother in avoiding being disciplined. Some of these female orphans fell pregnant, because their grandmothers did not talk about sex education due to cultural practices which do not permit elderly people to talk about sex with children.

All the grandmothers complained about the influences which the friends of their orphaned offspring and the use of technology (smartphones) had on them. They associated all the negative behaviours portrayed by the teenagers as being influenced by their friends, including those which they accessed on social media. The technological illiteracy of the grandparent makes it difficult to monitor their orphaned teenage offspring's life on social media. Most of the grandmothers reported that their orphaned teenage offspring are performing poorly at school. This is because of the limited education of the grandmothers which makes them unable to stimulate the children's educational needs, even though they did go to school and have all the necessities. The other problems were that these children spent more time on their smartphones than with their books, and may have deficits in neuro-cognitive functioning due to losing their parent(s) and living in poverty.

Theme 4: **Challenges experienced by foster parents**

Firstly, the grandmothers experienced interferences from significant others in parenting their own orphaned offspring. These significant others include friends, extended family members (uncles and aunts) and community members who caused the grandmothers to experience psychological

and emotional distress. Secondly, they were afraid of what would happen to their orphaned teenage offspring when they were no longer alive. Thirdly, they were living in poverty where their main source of income was social grants. Lastly, they experienced stress and physical health problems as they continued to care for their orphaned teenage offspring, although they did not regard it as a problem. Most of the grandmothers drew their strength from God.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 Recommendations for social work practice relating to kinship foster care

- Kinship foster care should be included in the literature for social work practice when referring to children placed in foster care with their relatives.
- A standard criterion for assessing (screening) prospective foster grandparents be developed which is to be used by Social workers when conducting their assessment for screening these prospective foster parents.

6.3.2 Recommendations for social work practice aimed at support services to grandparents fostering their teen offspring

- Social workers should render a pre-training and parenting programme which deals specifically with grandparents who are fostering their orphaned teenage offspring, taking into consideration their age, level of educational literacy, family background and kind of children they are fostering.
- Social workers should render supervision services which are not limited to the grandparents and the teenage foster children, but also include the significant others such as extended family members, neighbours, school and church members.

- Social workers should provide life skills programmes which aim to equip teenage foster children with knowledge regarding their selves and their immediate environment, including the social media.

- A data base of children in kinship foster care should be established in order to guide social work practice of the number of children who are in such care.

- The Department of social development should develop specific programmes that focus on grand families

6.3.3 Recommendations for social welfare policy

- Kinship foster care should be formally included in the Children's Act 38 of 2005.

- Kinship foster care should be a specialised field that will require social workers with expertise to manage cases within this field without being interrupted by any other social work services.

- All grandparents should attend mandatory training before they can be regarded as suitable prospective foster parents.

6.3.4 Recommendations for future research

- To conduct research on adolescents' experiences of being fostered by their grandparents.

- To develop an evidence-based programme for grandparents on how to raise (discipline etc) their foster grandchildren.

- To develop a programme for a multi-disciplinary team to support foster grandparents in how to deal with intergenerational challenges within a grand family.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to understand the essence of grandparents' perceptions and lived experiences of fostering their teenage offspring. family system theory was the lens used to contextualise this phenomenon. In addition to family system theory, a comprehensive literature review on foster care, and kinship care in particular, assisted the researcher gaining an understanding of this phenomenon. Employing a qualitative approach and a phenomenological research design, the study aim and objectives were achieved.

The study highlighted the enormous challenges faced by grandparents fostering their teenage offspring. The findings show that fostering their teenage offspring causes health, emotional and psychological challenges for grandparents. Recommendations are made for social work practice and policy relating to kinship care.
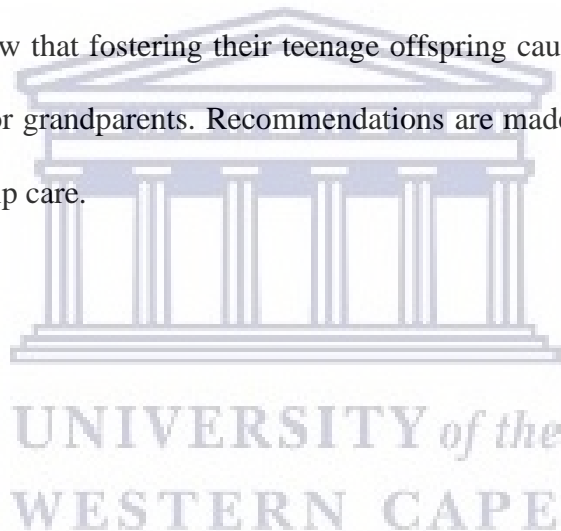
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INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Kinship foster care – perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring

What is this study about?
The research project will be conducted by Frans Lesetja Manthosi, a Master's student in Child and Family Studies at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you have been identified as a relevant information source on the topic of **kinship foster care**. The purpose of this research project is to gain an understanding of this topic by asking you about your perceptions and experiences of the issue. The study will help to create knowledge on this topic that can be used when planning and implementing appropriate interventions or policies.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?
The researcher will conduct a one (1) hour interview with you on the topic. The interview can take place at your home or at the offices of Social Development where the researcher is employed, for privacy purposes. You will be asked to answer two questions about your own perspective and experiences of fostering your teenage grandchild(ren). There are no right or wrong answers; we merely want your views on the topic. The interview will be audio recorded only so that we do not lose all that you have discussed.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?
Information will be handled in a professional and confidential manner. The information obtained in the audio recording will be stored securely. Information will only be accessible to the researcher and supervisor of this study, and you, if you want to see it. Your names or identifying details will not be used; we will only use identification codes, such as male or female. All information will be stored on a computer and will be password protected. When writing up a report, your identity will be protected at all times.

There are however limits of confidentiality which is in accordance with legal requirements and professional standards, where information must be made available to appropriate individuals and/or authorities, for example, when it comes to information about child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.

What are the risks of this research?
There may not be physical risks, but some risks can include discomfort, emotional distress, or embarrassment during our discussion. However, arrangements will be made should you need debriefing by seeing a counsellor which has been arranged for this purpose.

What are the benefits of this research?
The benefits to you may include a deeper understanding on the topic. The research study will also help produce information on **grandparents fostering their teenage grandchildren** in the selected municipality in Limpopo. The information from the study can also be used to help plan and implement appropriate services in the area as well as inform policies.

Do I have to be in this research, and may I stop participating at any time?
Participation in the research is completely voluntary. This means that no one can force you and you can decide if you want to take part in the study. If you take part in the study and wish not to continue anymore, you may stop participating at any time. You will not be penalised in any way.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?
If you experience emotional distress during or after participating in the study, you will be referred to a counsellor, Ms Nkoana Moeketsi, for counselling if you feel the need for it.

What if I have questions?
This research study will be conducted by Frans Lesetja Manthosi of the Child and Family Studies Unit at the University of the Western Cape. Should you have further questions about the research study itself, contact Frans Lesetja Manthosi at: 071 322 2040 or email at 3912809@myuwc.ac.za. If you have any questions regarding this research study or your rights as a participant or want to report any problems, please contact:

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LETLAKALA LA DITABA (Sepedi)

Hlogo ya nyakišišo: Meloko yeo e hlokometšego bana ba ditšhiwana ka semolao: Maikutlo le maitemogelo a bo Makgolo mabapi le go hlokomela ditlogolo tša mengwaga ye lesome tharo goiša go ye lesome senyane.

Naa di mabapile eng?
Protjeke ye ya dinyakišišo e tlo dirwa ke Frans Lesetja Manthosi, moithuti wa Masters' in Child and Family Studies Unibesithing ya Western Cape. Re le mema go tšea karolo moo protjekeng ya dinyakišišo ka lebaka la gore le kgethilwe go ba motho wa maleba yoo a swerego ditaba tša **meloko yeo e hlokometšego bana ba ditšhiwana ka se molao.** Nepo ya protjeke ye ya dinyakišišo ke go hwetša kwišišo mo sehloogo seo re šetšego re se botšišitše ka mo godimo mabapi le maikutlo le maitemogelo a gago moo go hlokomeleng ga ditlogolo tša ditšhiwana tša mengwaga ye lesome tharo goiša go ye lesome senyane. Thutwana ye e tlo thusa go hlola tsebo godimo ga hlogo poledišano yeo e ka šomišwago ge go logwa maano le go tšea kgato ya maleba le go direng melawana.

Naa ke eng se ke tla se kgopelwago go se dira gen ka dumela go tšea karolo?
Monyakišiši o tla tšea iri moo poledišanong mabapi le sehloogo sa dinyakišišo. Poledišano ye e tla direlwa ka lapeng la gago goba kantorong ya monyakišiši moo a šomago gona kgorong ya Social Development gore go be le sephiri. O tla kgopelwa go araba dipotšišo tše pedi mabapi le maikutlo le maitemogelo a gago mo go hlokomeleng di/setlogolo tša/sa di/tšhiwana tša mengwaga ye lesome tharo goiša go ye lesome senyane. Ga go Karabo ya maleba goba yeo e phošagetšego, re no nyaka maikutlo a gago mabapi le sehloogo sa dinyakišišo. Poledišano ye e tlo gatišwa lebaka e le gore, re se lahlegelwe ke ditaba ka moka tšeo o di athlaahlilego.

Naa go tšeyeng karolo gaka go tla ba sephiri?
Tlhagišoleseding e tla swarwa wa botsibi le sephiri. Tlhagišoleseding yeo e gatišitšwego e tla beiwa fao go sa fihlelelego motho. E tla ba moithuti le mothlahli wa gagwe wa dinyakišišo gomme le wena, feela ge o nyaka go e bona. Maina goba boitsibišo bja gago di ka se šomišwe; re tlo šomiša dinomoro tša go šupetša, go swana le monna goba mosadi. Ka moka Tlhagišoleseding e tla lotwa ka gare ga khomputara yeo e notleletšwego ka lentšwana la sephira. Ge go ngwadiwa repoto boitsibišo bja gago bo tla šireletšwa ka dinako ka moka.

Le ge go le jwalo feela go ne magomo a sephiri go ya ka molao le leemo la mokgwa wa go šoma moo elego gore tlhagišoleseding e tla dula e letetši batho ba maleba le/goba bao banago le maatla go swana le moo go ka hwetšwago tlhagišoleseding ya ngwana yoo a hlokofaditšwego goba go hlokomollogwa goba go kgwetša e ka go gobatša goba ya gobatša ba bangwe.

Dinyakišišo tše di hlola kotsi efe?
Go ka no se be le dikgobadi tša mmele feela goka ba le tša gosedudišege, go hlophega maikutlong goba go jewa ke hlong ge re le gare re boledišana. Feela peekanyo e tla rulaganywa ge o nyaka go boledišana le moeletši wa tša maikutlo yoo a dutšego komana madula a bapile go ntšha sa mafahleng.

Naa meputso wa dinyakišišo tše ke efe?
Meputso yeo o ka e hwetšago ke kwišišo yeo e tseneletšego mabapi le sehloogo sa dinyakišišo. Sengwalwa se sa dinyakišišo se tlo thusa go tšweletša tlhagišoleseding mabapi le **bo makgolo bao ba hlokomešego ditlogolo tša mengwaga ye lesome tharo goiša go ye lesome senyane ka se molao**, moo masepaleng woo o kethilwego profenseng ya Limpopo.

Naa Ke ya hlokagala go ba ka gare ga dinyakišišo le gona nka tlogela go tšea karolo ka nako engwe le engwe?
Go tšea karolo go dinyakišišo tše ke ka boithaopo feela. Se se ra gore ga go yo a go gapeletšago le gona o ka no kgetha go tšea karolo ge o nyaka.Ge e le gore o kgetha go tšea karolo wa ikwa o se sa nyaka go tšwela pele o ka dira jwalo nako engwe le engwe. O ka se otlwe ka tsela efe kapa efe.

A naa gona le thuso yeo nka e hwetšago ge nka swarega gampe moo go tšeyeng karolo go dinyakišišo?
Ge o ka ikhwetša o sea swarega gabotse maikutlong ka nako ya dinyakišišo goba kamorago ga dinyakišišo, o tla romelwa go moeletši wa tša maikutlo go fa tlhahlo ya maikutlo ge o ikwa o e hloka, Ms Nkoana Moeketsi.

Ge e le gore ke ne dipotšišo?
Dinyakišišo tše di tla diragatšwa ke Frans Lesetja Manthosi go la Child and Family Studies Unit kua Unibesithing ya Western Cape. Ge o ka ba le dipotšišo tše dingwe mabapi le dinyakišitšo ka bo tšona o ikgokaganye le Frans Lesetja Manthosi go: 071 322 2040 goba email go 3912809@myuwc.ac.za. Ge o ka ba le dipotšišo tše dingwe mabapi le dinyakišitšo goba ditokelo tša gago bjalo ka motšea karolo goba ge o nyaka go bega mathata afe kapa afe, hle ikgokaganye le:

Dr Shernaaz Carelse	Prof Anthea Rhoda
Department of Social Work	Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences	Sciences
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Appendix B (1)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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CONSENT FORM (English)

The research project focuses on kinship foster care – perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve, and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone by the researcher and my information will be handled confidentially. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

I agree to be audio taped.	Yes	No

Participant's name   :   …………………………………………………

Participant's signature   :   ……………………………….

Date   :   ………………………………………....

Appendix B (2)

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FOROMO YA GO FA TUMELELO (Sepedi)

Protjeke ye ya dinyakišišo elebeletše lehlakore la meloko yeo e hlokometšego bana ba ditšhiwana ka semolao: Maikutlo le maitemogelo a bo Makgolo mabapi le go hlokomela ditlogolo tša mengwaga ye lesome tharo goiša go ye lesome senyane.

Ke hlaloseditšwe sengwala se ka leleme leo ke le kwišišago. Dipotšišo ka moka tšeo ke bego ke ena le tšona mabapi le sengwalwa se di arabilwe. Ke kwišiša seo karolo yaka ese amago le gona le gore kea dumela gore ke kgetho yaka go tšea karolo ebile ke ka ntle le kgapeletšo. Kea kwišiša gore monyakišiši a ka se botše motho boitsibiši bjaka ebile ditaba tšeo ke di boletšego di tla swarwa jwalo ka sephiri. Ke ya dumela gore ge nka nyaka go tlogela go tšea karolo gosengwalwana se nka lesa neng kapa neng le go fa lebaka, ntle le letšhogo la ditlamorago tše dimpe goba go loba meputso.

Ke dumela go gatišwa mantšu	Ee	Aowa

Leina la motšea karolo :……………………………………………

Mosaeno wa motšea karolo : ……………………………….

Letšatšikgwedi : ………………………………………...

Appendix C (1)

UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOSTER GRANDPARENTS (English)

Title of the study: **Kinship foster care – perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring**

1. What are your perceptions and experiences of fostering your teenage offspring?

   Themes to be explored (based on family system theory):

   Family context
   Family strengths
   Boundaries and boundary maintenance
   Family power structure
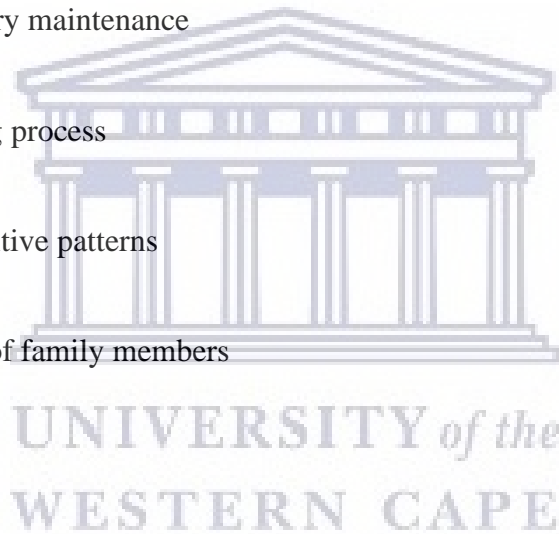   Family decision-making process
   Family goals
   Family myths and cognitive patterns
   Family roles
   Communication styles of family members
   Family life cycle

Appendix C (2)

TLHAHLO YA POLEDIŠANO LE MAKGOLO WO A HLOKOMETŠEGO NGWANA WA TŠHIWANA SE MMUŠO (Sepedi)

Hlogo ya nyakišišo: **Meloko yeo e hlokometšego bana ba ditšhiwana ka semolao: Maikutlo le maitemogelo a bo Makgolo mabapi le go hlokomela ditlogolo tša mengwaga ye lesome tharo goiša go ye lesome senyane**.

1. Naa maikutlo le maitemogelo a lena mabapi le go hlokomeleng setlogolo sa lena sa tšhiwana sa mengwaga ye lesome tharo goiša go ye lesome senyane ke a mohuta mang?

Merero yeo e tlogo thlahlojwa (go lebantšwe family system theory):

Go ya ka fao malapa a lego ka gona

Maatla a lelapa

Magomo le hlokomelo ya magomo

Sebopego sa maatla a lelapa

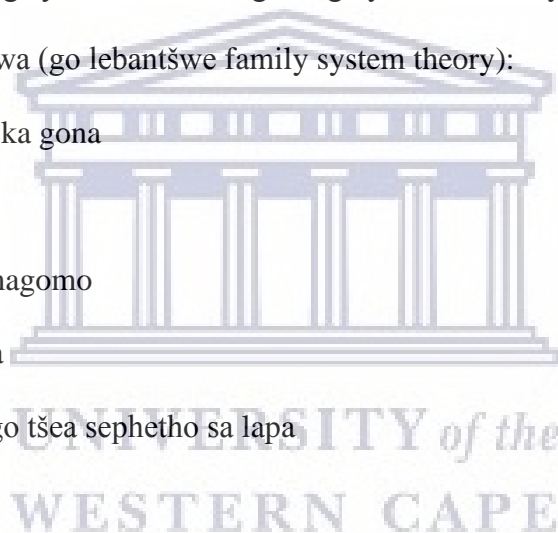Tshipidišo ya mokgwa wa go tšea sephetho sa lapa

Diphegelelo tša lelapa

Dinonwane tša lelapa le mekgwanakgwana ya tšhumišo ya go nagana

Dikarolo tša lelapa

Mekgwa ya poledišano ya maloko a ka lapeng

Bophelo ba bophelo ba lelapa

Appendix D

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

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WESTERN CAPE

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07 October 2019

Mr FL Manthosi
Social Work
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

Ethics Reference Number: HS19/8/2

Project Title: Kinship foster care perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring.

Approval Period: 19 September 2019 – 19 September 2020

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

HSSREC REGISTRATION NUMBER – 130416-049

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

Appendix E

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TO: PARTICIPANTS

APPROVAL TO USE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT'S FACILITIES

This certifies that **Mr. Manthosi Frans** has been granted approval. His proposal was evaluated and approved by Research and Ethics committees which sit at Office of the Premier, *titled: Kinship foster care - perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring".*

The study will be useful to DSD in Limpopo to plan and implement social work interventions and policies for kinship care where grandparents are fostering their teenage offspring. The study may be useful in other provinces with the similar characteristics as clients in the Limpopo Province.

TARGETED POPULATION

The study will require 10 participants who are grandparents fostering their teenage offspring in Makhuduthamaga municipality, Sekhukhune district in Limpopo province in South Africa.

In view of the above, this letter grants **Mr. Manthosi Frans** permission to use the Department's facilities in **Sekhukhune** District.

Dr. Mokobane R.

26/08/2020

D.Director: Statistics and Research   Date

Facility Letter Manthosi 26 Aug 2020

Appendix F

TRANSLATING • WRITING • EDITING • PROOFREADING

Anna-Mart Bonthuys (D Litt et Phil – SA)

Independent Contractor

Email: annamart.bonthuys@gmail.com

Website: www.annamartbonthuys.co.za

Always in excellence mode

DECLARATION: EDITING

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned Dr Anna-Mart Bonthuys, hereby declare that I am a fully qualified and experienced language practitioner, and that I have thoroughly edited and proofread the masters dissertation of Frans Lesetja Manthosi, titled *"Kinship foster care – perceptions and experiences of grandparents regarding fostering their teenage offspring"* (UP), to the best of my abilities.

Dr Anna-Mart Bonthuys   Date: 28 September 2020