

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND MOTIVATION

1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, emotional intelligence has been viewed within the cultural context of the primary school child. This child is generally in the middle school age developmental phase, aged between seven and twelve years (Mwamwenda, 1996:353).

According to the researcher culture stipulates the way in which emotions are exposed, which emotions are shown and when this happen. As culture is so closely linked to the exposure of emotions, this study operated within the cultural framework of the primary school child as client. A theory on what is involved in the cultural framework of the child was thus developed.

The origin and bases of emotions was studied and a theory of emotional intelligence within an appropriate cultural context was formulated based on this knowledge.

Appropriate Gestalt play therapeutic techniques to enhance emotional intelligence in a culturally sensitive manner were researched and applied.

The whole study was conducted with the primary school child as focus. This child is usually between seven and eleven or twelve years of age. The typical characteristics of children in this developmental phase were thus taken into consideration in the development of a programme to enhance emotional intelligence in a cultural sensitive way.

2. MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF SUBJECT

The researcher chose to work with primary school children in a culturally sensitive way. The focus of the research was to use Gestalt play therapeutic techniques to improve their emotional intelligence. The choice for each one of these parts of the study will be motivated in the following paragraphs.

2.1 The primary school child as an interacting whole

According to the researcher children are able to reach their full potential on a variety of levels – including cognitive, social and personal levels – if their functioning on emotional level is healthy. The interaction between body, brain and emotions, and the influence of emotions on self-actualisation, is shown in the following quote:

“How can emotions transform the body, either creating disease or healing it, maintaining health or undermining it? ... Every change in the physiological state is accompanied by an appropriate change in the mental emotional state, conscious or unconscious, and conversely, every change in the mental emotional state, conscious or unconscious, is accompanied by an appropriate change in the physiological state” (Pert, 1999:137).

The researcher therefore chose to work with the child as a whole. The interaction of all the parts of the whole was taken into consideration in the literature study as well as in the emotional intelligence programme developed. A holistic approach was one of the researcher’s most basic starting points.

2.2 Emotional intelligence

According to literature focused on emotional intelligence, this is a better contributing factor to success in life than cognitive intelligence. If a child’s emotional intelligence is enhanced, it can assist the child to use his intellectual ability to its full potential. This is clear in the following quote:

“What can we change that will help our children fare better in life? What factors are at play, for example, when people of high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well? The researcher would argue that the difference quite often lies in the abilities called here **emotional intelligence**, which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself. These skills, as we shall see, can be taught to children, giving them a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential the genetic lottery may have given them (Goleman, 1995:xi-xii).

This study thus focused on helping children to enhance emotional functioning and thus enabled them to reach their full potential, taking their cultural environment into consideration.

2.3 Gestalt therapy and Gestalt play therapy techniques

The researcher chose **Gestalt** therapy to enhance emotional intelligence, because there is such a big resemblance between the outcomes of Gestalt therapy and enhanced emotional intelligence. The following are some of the similarities of Gestalt therapy with emotional growth and healing, which relates, according to the researcher, to enhanced emotional intelligence. The main focus of each paragraph has been printed in bold to show the similarity more clearly.

- The focus of Gestalt play therapy with children is to enhance their **awareness** of their emotions and **assist them in the process to heal from emotional wounds**. Jarosewitsch (1995:1) states awareness as the key term in Gestalt Therapy.

- The paradox of change is prominent in Gestalt theory. Here just the awareness of emotions can lead to change – **the child will thus heal himself by getting aware of emotions, their causes and consequences.** In this process the child can get control over his own life and will not be controlled by unknown and/or unwanted emotions. The child will thus not be changed in therapy, but will change automatically through the process of awareness. The paradoxical theory of change is stated by Beisser (1970:1) as follows: “...change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not”. According to Jarosewitsch (1995:2) the goal of therapy is to be more fully what you are.
- Gestalt therapy also means that **clients will take control of their own lives and emotions and be able to live life to the full.** Jarosewitsch (1995:1) states, taking responsibility of your own life as part of the essence of Gestalt therapy.

This focus on emotions, the awareness thereof and the process of healing is not only part of the theory of Gestalt therapy, but also essential in the subject of emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent children are aware of their emotions. They can identify and describe them and might be more able to find out why they are experiencing these emotions. (Le Roux & De Klerk, 2003:11)

The researcher was using Gestalt **play therapeutic techniques** because play is such an effective way to resolve emotional problems. This is clear in the following quote of Pert (1999:277): “Play is more than simple stress-reduction. It serves an important function in both animal and human life...we use play in many ways – to act out our aggressions, fears, and grief, to help us gain mastery over these sometimes overwhelming emotions. When we are playing, we are stretching our emotional expressive ranges, loosening up our biochemical flow of information, getting unstuck, and healing our feelings”.

2.4 Culture

According to the researcher **culture** is the child's mouthpiece through which he communicates his emotional intelligence. Culture is the learnt mode of, amongst other things, communicating emotions. "People learn culture" (Miraglia, Law & Collins, 2004:1). The child's experience of emotions and the communication thereof depend therefore on his learnt cultural habits. It is therefore important for the researcher to apply emotional intelligence enhancement within the cultural context of the child. Such a study will enable therapists to work on the emotional intelligence of a child, not only from his own perspective, but also within the context of the specific culture of the child. This will assist therapists not to misinterpret a difference in culture as poor or good emotional intelligence.

2.5 The researcher's experience

In the **private practice** of the researcher the low level of emotional intelligence of children often bring them to therapy for learning-, behavioural- or emotional problems. Children in this practice are helped in a holistic manner, considering physical, social, emotional and cognitive factors. It is the researcher's experience that emotional intelligence plays an essential role in children's ability to cope with difficult circumstances or cognitive challenges. A programme to enhance the emotional intelligence of children is therefore much needed in the private practice of the researcher.

The school system in Namibia might be able to make use of a programme to enhance the emotional intelligence of learners. Learners with a higher emotional intelligence might be able to perform to the best of their abilities rather than learners with lower levels of emotional intelligence. The value of emotional intelligence in the learning environment is clear in the following quote of Goleman (1996:95): "That speaks to the more general sense in which channelling emotions toward a productive end is a master aptitude. Whether it be in controlling impulse and putting off gratification, regulating our moods

so they facilitate rather than impede thinking, motivating ourselves to persist and try, try again in the face of setbacks, or finding ways to enter flow and so perform more effectively – all bespeak the power of emotion to guide effective effort”.

2.6 The importance of emotional intelligence in the middle school age phase

The primary school child starts to understand and control emotions during this stage (Le Roux & De Klerk, 2003:23) and learn some of the most important skills of adulthood during these years. (Compare Kiura, Gitau & Kiura, 1999:35-36; Newman & Newman, 1987:313.) If a child develops a good level of emotional intelligence during his early school years, he might have a good chance to succeed in school and work during later years. Mastering tasks, such as schoolwork and tools, is very important in this developmental phase. If the child can use his emotional intelligence to overcome the obstacles of this phase, he is ready to handle the rest of his school career. The researcher makes the latter statement because the skills learned in this phase are some of the most important skills for adulthood, as stated above. As the child thus has the ability to understand and control emotions and it plays such an important role in his mastering of developmental tasks, the child might need a programme to help him enhance his emotional intelligence.

Following this motivation for the choice of research elements, the researcher formulated the problem causing the need to do research in this specific field in the next section of this chapter. Formulating the research problem is the first step of a standard logical process of doing social research (Mouton, 2001:46). The rest of this chapter will give an overview of this logical process, including more detailed discussions on certain parts, which make up the phases indicated on the diagram below. The researcher therefore copied the following diagram called, “The logic of the research process” (Mouton, 2001:47):

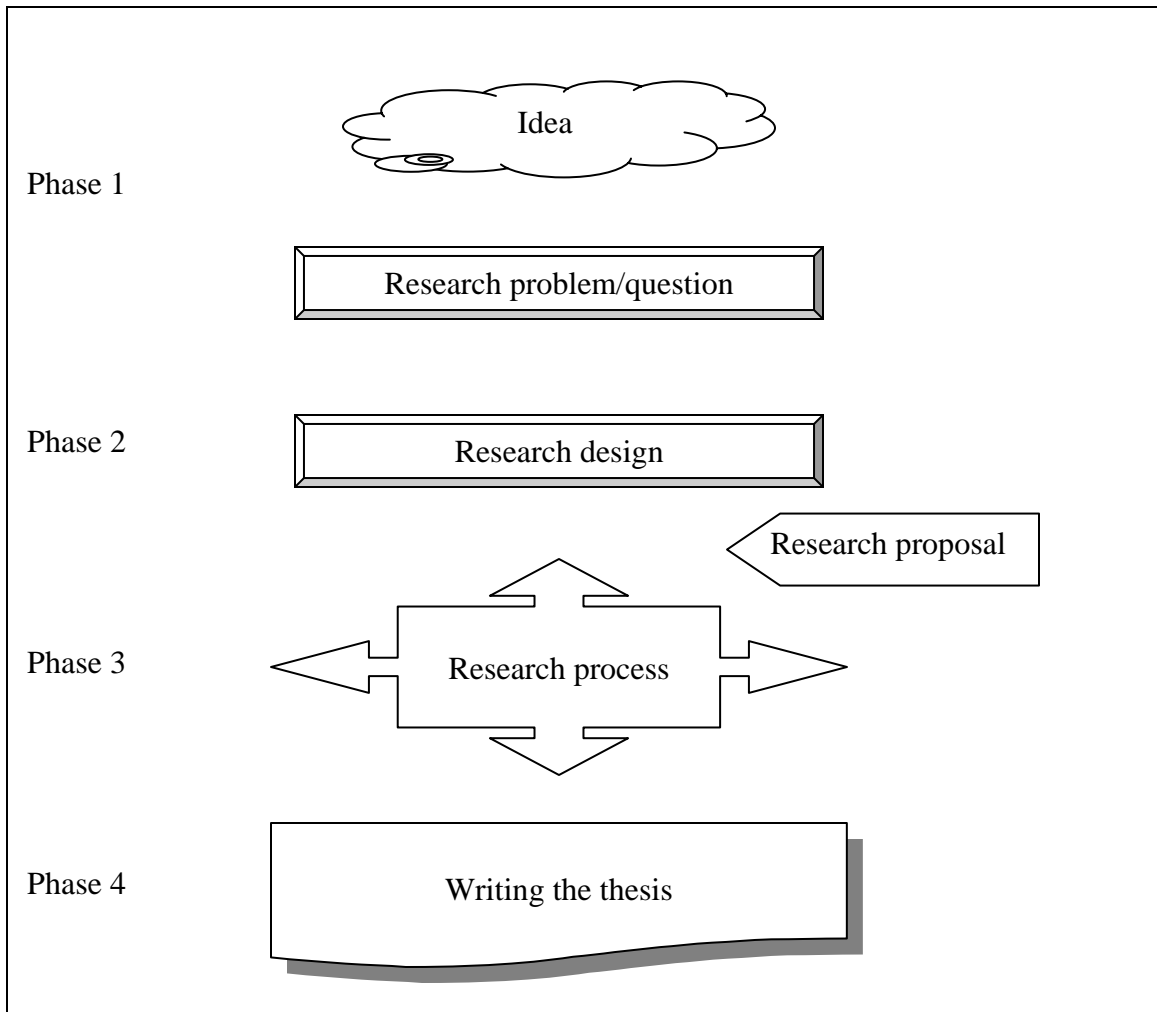


Figure 1.1 The logic of the research process

3. PROBLEM FORMULATION

According to Bennett (2003:4) a research problem identifies the big picture area of concern that needs investigation. This is the big picture of some difficulty experienced by a researcher, which needs a solution (Welman & Kruger, 1999:12).

In the case of a cultural sensitive emotional intelligence programme the following contribute to the big picture area to be investigated here:

Primary school children regularly experience problems with a variety of things, which are closely related to characteristics of emotional intelligence. The following are a few of these common themes found in the developmental phase of middle school age as well as emotional intelligence:

- Primary school children regularly experience a low self-esteem because they are sensitive to unfair criticism, humiliation and ridicule, which might take place at school during this developmental phase
- Primary school children experience problems with emotional awareness
- Primary school children experience problems with emotional vocabulary in order to express their emotions accurately
- Primary school children become more independent in their decision-making, but they regularly do not take control over their own lives, emotions and behaviour
- Primary school children have the ability to empathise with others and provide some support, but don't have the skills to do this
- Primary school children regularly do not develop effective principles to guide their actions

(Mwamwenda, 1996:61)

As the difficulties in completing the developmental tasks are so similar to the skills taught to enhance emotional intelligence, the child will have much more success in this phase if his emotional intelligence is on a higher level. The characteristics of the developmental phase of middle-school age thus influence the need for better emotional intelligence and the way it is taught in therapy.

According to the researcher's experience, culture has an influence on the way that emotions are communicated. When working with the primary school child cultural differences may therefore cause the therapist or teacher to misinterpret the level of emotional intelligence of the child client. The researcher is of the opinion that the cultural context of the child will also have an influence on the aspects of emotional intelligence to be taught, as well as the method in which it should be taught. In order to

explore all the above-mentioned possible contributions of culture, the essence of culture should be identified.

The above-mentioned factors contributing to the big picture area to be studied, lead to the following problem addressed in this study. To address this problem a specific aim and objectives will be discussed in the next section. Mouton (2001:48) stated that the research problem should be “a clear and unambiguous statement of the object of study and the research objectives”. The aim and objectives are thus still part of phase 1 of Figure 1.1 The logic of the research process.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The difficulties experienced in primary school resemble problems with emotional intelligence. The cognitive, emotional and behavioural manifestations of a child’s difficulties in this phase can either be because of low emotional intelligence or because of the misinterpretation of levels of emotional intelligence. The latter is increased by cultural differences between the child, therapist and social environment.

Figure 1.2: The research problem

4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Aim

Bennet (2003:4) stated that the purpose of research is much more specific than the problem statement and it tells the goal or aim for this specific study.

According to Fouche (2002:107) the terms purpose, goal and aim are often used as synonyms for one another. These three concepts show to a broader and more abstract conception of the end towards which this research effort is working. The researcher is of the opinion that although the aim is broad and abstract, it is still more specific than the research question.

According to the researcher the aim is thus specifically what will be reached in this research when addressing the stated problem – it is to “begin with the end in mind” (Covey, 1998:73).



Figure 1.3: The aim

4.2 Objectives

Compared to the aim, objectives on the other hand are the more concrete, measurable and speedily attainable conceptions of the end in mind (Fouche, 2002:107).

According to the researcher the objectives are the ‘stepping stones’ on the way to what “the end in mind” (Covey, 1998:73) might be. The objectives are thus the short-term goals and “the end in mind” is the final long-term goal.

The following are the short-term goals to be obtained in moving towards the long-term goal of this research.

- 4.2.1 Study the characteristics of the developmental phase of the primary school child using available literature.
- 4.2.2 Find the origin and define emotions. Explain the operation of emotions based on the literature studied.
- 4.2.3 Study the characteristics of an appropriate level of emotional intelligence for primary school children through a literature study.
- 4.2.4 Study the essence of culture and its influence on emotional intelligence using a literature study.
- 4.2.5 Identify appropriate Gestalt play therapeutic techniques to enhance emotional intelligence during the primary school years in the literature study.
- 4.2.6 Develop a cultural sensitive emotional intelligence enhancement programme using Gestalt play therapeutic techniques.
- 4.2.7 Apply this programme on a research group.
- 4.2.8 Determine the outcomes.

5. RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question closely relates to the hypotheses setting in other research studies such as quantitative studies. De Vos (2002:35-36) discusses the term ‘propositions’ as a causal statement. It is a theoretical statement about the connection between two or more variables. As soon as such a proposition is empirically tested or evaluated, it becomes a hypothesis. A proposition can only be accepted as a valid theory if it is tested against reality – thus now being a hypothesis. “Hypotheses are always in declarative sentence form, and they relate, either generally or specifically, variables to variables” (De Vos, 2002:36). The difference between a proposition and hypotheses is thus that propositions are statements and hypotheses are questions (De Vos, 2002:36).

The researcher can therefore state that the research question is a hypothesis. It should be in question form and should relate certain variables. (Compare De Vos, 2002:36; Welman & Kruger, 1999:23.) The most apparent variables in the research question of this study are, emotional intelligence, a culturally sensitive way and Gestalt play therapeutic techniques.

Although the current study is an intervention study and thus not making use of only quantitative methodology, the researcher preferred to provide the following research question to be answered in this report:

RESEARCH QUESTION

Which Gestalt play therapeutic techniques are most effective to enhance the emotional intelligence of the primary school child in a culturally sensitive way?

Figure 1.4: The research question

6. RESEARCH APPROACH

The UK English thesaurus (Microsoft Word 2000:1999), describes the term, approach, as a “line of attack, tactic, methodology”. The research approach is thus the method or tactic used to do the research. The current study made use of intervention research as a methodology.

6.1 Intervention research as a combined qualitative-quantitative methodology

The researcher found the following about intervention research in literature:

An intervention is an action taken in concert with the affected party/s to enhance or maintain its functioning and/or well-being. Intervention research is therefore specific studies, which create and test innovative services to improve or maintain quality of life and to relieve problems. (Schilling in De Vos, 2002:396)

The aim of intervention research includes both the development of a programme, the implementation thereof as well as the evaluation of its effectiveness (De Vos, 2002:396).

“Intervention research entails the empirical study of professional intervention behaviour in the human services. It may involve acquiring knowledge about the process and context of intervention, or it may focus on creating or enhancing the fundamental methods and tools of intervention” (Rothman, 2004:1).

The emphasis of intervention research is on research **for** practice, rather than research **on** practice. This approach holds the promise of providing a more orderly and predictable means of shaping innovative intervention tools that are both relevant and effective. (Rothman, 2004:9)

The current study used intervention research, because a programme was developed to “improve or maintain quality of life and to prevent or lessen problems” as stated by Schilling in De Vos (2002:396). Here Gestalt play therapy techniques were used to improve the emotional intelligence of primary school children without the denial of their cultural context. Improving emotional intelligence will, according to the researcher, assist

these children to have a better quality of life, because they might gain skills to cope more effectively with life's difficulties. This programme was developed to use for practice. The researcher did therefore not focus on studying the behaviour of the children in the research groups but rather on the programme and its effect on the children's emotional intelligence. This study therefore attempted to provide an innovative, relevant and effective tool to use Gestalt play therapy techniques for the enhancement of emotional intelligence within the primary school child's cultural context.

The approach of this research is therefore that of intervention, which comprises of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, according to De Vos (2002:368). She stated that the relatively new model of intervention research is a practical combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research approach of the current study therefore included a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology.

The following is a short overview of the essence of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies of which the combined method for intervention research comprises:

6.2 Quantitative methodology

As the term implies, the quantitative methodology includes the quantifying of information. This includes experiments, surveys and content analysis. (Fouche & De Vos, 2002:138)

A research design is a plan or blueprint of how one intends to do the research. It is a small group of worked-out formulas from which a researcher can make a selection to quantify his information (Fouche & De Vos, 2002:137).

The current research will also have a quantitative character as the process of the research or blueprint of the research is incorporated in the research design. Furthermore the quantitative character of the research is also represented in the experiments with Gestalt play therapy techniques and the content analysis of the emotional intelligence enhancement programme.

Measurement in the quantitative methodology involves assigning numbers to individuals to reflect different characteristics or attributes numerically. Measurement instruments should be valid and reliable. Quantitative data collection include questionnaires, checklists, indexes and scales, which are methods employing measuring instruments. (Compare Delport, 2002:166; Mouton, 1996:67.)

Measurement was applied to a certain extent in the current research. The researcher was using some checklists, indexes, scales and questionnaires to quantify behavioural traits, cognitive processes and the level of emotional intelligence of the child as client.

A certain sample of the whole population was drawn to measure and to use for conclusions. A sample is a portion of the whole population, which is representative of that population. (Strydom & Venter, 2002:201)

The sample should be representative of the whole population to be able to generalise the findings from the sample to the population as a whole. There are different sampling methods, which can be divided in the following two groups: probability and non-probability sampling. In the case of probability sampling each person in the whole population studied has the same probability of being selected for the sample. (Strydom & Venter, 2002:203) Strydom and Venter (2002:206-207) state non-probability sampling as a method where random sampling is not being used. One example of non-probability sampling is purposive sampling. This sampling method is based on the judgement of the researcher. He will choose participants who have the most characteristic or typical attributes of the population studied. The current research used this sampling method. The researcher selected a group of primary school children who represent the most desired characteristics in terms of developmental phase and culture. The study then focused on these attributes as well as their emotional intelligence, and the enhancement thereof.

The current research is not purely quantitative and did thus not use a very big sample, which is quantifiable by numbers. The pilot study was thus not tried on a big number of participants. Hereafter the quantitative data will be analysed and interpreted and the research report can be written. (Strydom & Venter, 2002:197-249) This study is therefore applied research where quantitative characteristics are present.

As the current study used a combined quantitative-qualitative method for intervention research, some characteristics of quantitative as well as qualitative research was present in the process. The current study used both quantitative and qualitative methods as the researcher found it difficult to separate these two methods. There is an ongoing debate over the difference between these two methods. Cornell (2004:5) states this debate as follows:

“ Many people believe the following: quantitative research is confirmatory and deductive in nature and qualitative research is exploratory and inductive in nature” “ The problem I have with these kinds of statements is that they don't acknowledge the richness of both traditions. They don't recognize that both qualitative and quantitative research can be used to address almost any kind of research question”. Although this ongoing debate over the difference between quantitative and qualitative research still exists, the current study makes use of both research methods. Mouton (1996:40) states that the conflict between these two paradigms is not a real conflict, but that these tools are compatible. The choice of methodology is determined by the research problem. In the current study the research problem led to the need to include both methods in the study.

The following is a discussion of the utilisation of qualitative methods in the current research.

6.3 Qualitative methodology

In comparison with the quantitative methodology, the qualitative report is less structured, more intertwined with the total research process, longer and more descriptive (Creswell, Marshall & Rossman, & Neuman in Delpont & Fouche, 2002:356).

Qualitative methods are used to describe an array of interpretative techniques that attempt to describe and clarify the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena – in this case emotional intelligence within a cultural context. The design is open-ended and interpretative. The researcher's interpretation and description of, for example, the

influence of culture and the possibility to enhance emotional intelligence with Gestalt play therapy techniques are the significant data collection acts in a study like this.

The data has a subjective meaning, is rarely quantifiable and is difficult to use in making quantitative comparisons. Cornell (2004:5) states that qualitative researchers use different epistemological assumptions. Qualitative researchers understand what is going on the best when they experience what it is like to be part of it. They view it in its context. They don't want to look at one small portion of a reality. "Move into the culture or organization you are studying and experience what it is like to be a part of it" (Cornell, 2004:5). The latter was the case in the current study as the researcher was part of the Gestalt play therapy groups, part of the multi-cultural environment of the groups and although leading the groups, also experiencing the Gestalt play therapy techniques with the group members.

Such research is more concerned with the meaning of what is observed. It uses the experience and intuition of the researcher to describe the processes and structures being studied. (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996:78) The ontological assumptions of qualitative researchers are different from that of quantitative researchers. They usually don't assume that a single unitary reality apart from our perceptions exists. They reason that we all experience reality from our own point of view. Research will therefore always be biased by the perceptions of the researcher. In the research process the qualitative researcher will only hope to interpret his view of the world. (Cornell, 2004:5) Mouton (1996:144-145) also mentions the influence of the researcher on the research process. He mentions that the researcher's attitudes, opinions, expectations, preferences, tendencies and values have an influence on the reliability of a study. It is thus clear to the researcher that the qualitative researcher experiences reality and attempts to carry his findings over in the truest way possible. Although this is the case this information is filtered through the qualitative researcher's own being.

In the current research the researcher attempted to give a true reflection of reality – the enhancement of emotional intelligence in a culturally sensitive way using Gestalt play therapy techniques – based on her perception of the process. The filter of the researcher's being thus influenced the information given in this study.

Furthermore, the qualitative report tends to be a little longer than the quantitative report. This is because words, pictures, diagrams, quotes, etcetera represent data. Subtle descriptions and multiple perspectives represent the subjective worlds of the respondents. The qualitative report also tends to be longer than that of a quantitative study because of the development of new concepts and/or theories and the narrative writing style. A qualitative study uses a flexible design, which evolves throughout the research process. (Neuman, Creswell, & Erlandson in Delport & Fouche, 2002:357)

The current research used a flexible design, as certain variables were just too uncertain to restrict it to the research design. It could for example not be possible to change the emotional intelligence of certain participants with the selected techniques due to practical circumstances or other unforeseen attributes.

In the following section the researcher discusses the type of research done when using an intervention study as a combined quantitative and qualitative method.

7. TYPE OF RESEARCH

According to Mouton (1996:104), it has become accepted practice to distinguish between basic or academic research and applied research.

This study made use of intervention research as a combined qualitative-quantitative methodology. This type of research is applied research, as stated by De Vos (2002:394) “Intervention research is introduced as an exciting, new view of applied research...” .

Applied research differs from basic research because basic research’s main purpose is to contribute to an existing body of scientific knowledge. This can also be used for a better understanding of the social world, but its “point of departure, is in the World of Science” (Mouton, 1996:104). Applied research, such as social problems research, uses a social problem as a departure point. The primary focus here is to solve this social problem or to make a contribution to real life issues. (De Vos, 2002:397) The current study addressed the social problem of low levels of emotional intelligence, which inhibits children to

reach their full potential as a person. It attempted to make an effective contribution to this real life issue by developing a Gestalt play therapy programme, which is culturally sensitive, to address the problem of low emotional intelligence. The focus though was, to find whether Gestalt play therapy techniques could be used effectively for the purpose of rising emotional intelligence levels within the children's cultural contexts.

Mouton (1996:105) uses the following diagram to clarify the difference between applied and scientific research. The researcher used this diagram, highlighting the focus of this study in red to indicate intervention research as a specific type of applied research.

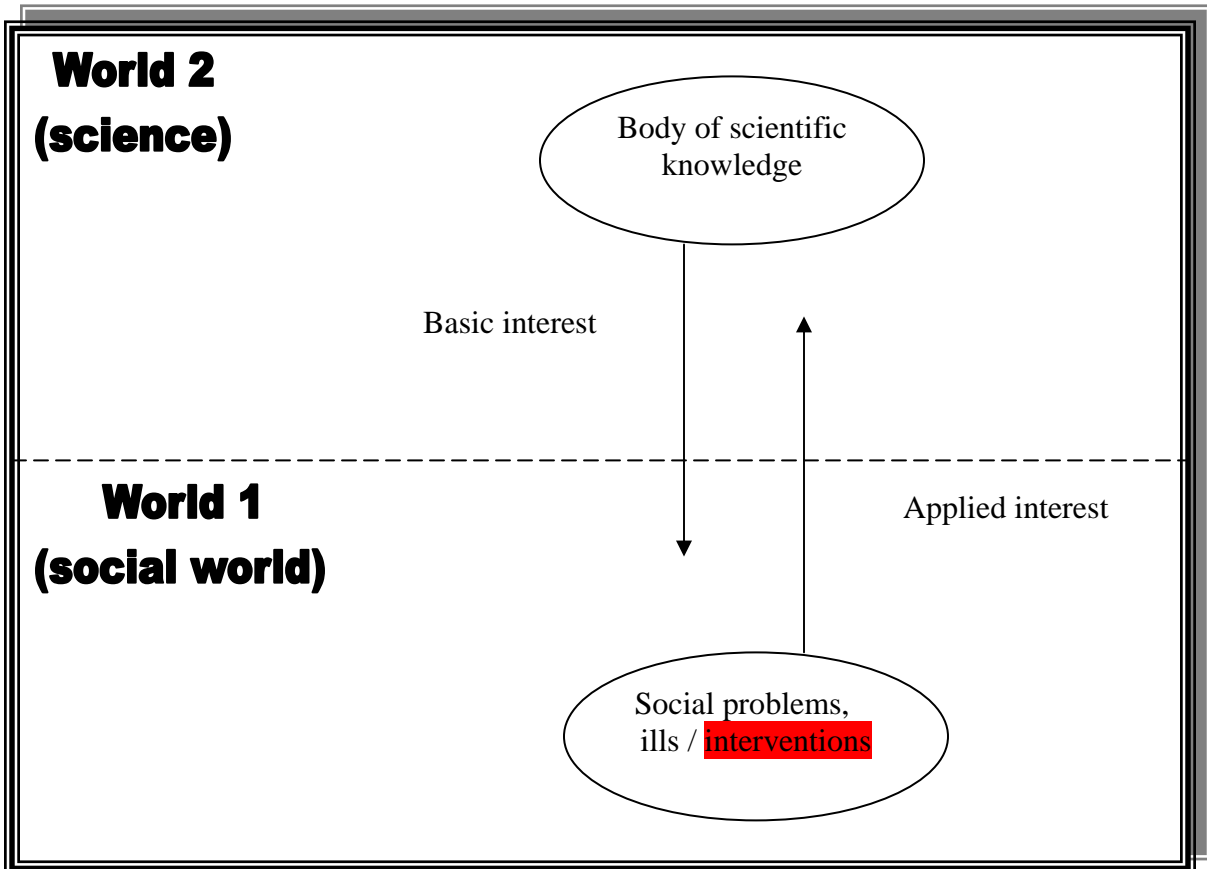


Figure 1.5 Basic and applied research

According to Abell and Wolf (2004:1), Rothman and Thomas's (in Rothman, 2004:1) innovative work on intervention research provides a model for integrating goals of practitioners on the one side and researchers on the other in a comprehensive plan for

knowledge building. This model of integrating the goals of practitioners is to the researcher's understanding the highlighted intervention part of applied interest in Figure 1.5 Basic and applied research. The goals of the researchers (the more academic researchers) are the scientific knowledge part of basic interest in Figure 1.5. Figure 1.5 as a whole represents the comprehensive plan for knowledge building, including both scientific or basic interest and applied interest or intervention.

The current study is therefore clearly an intervention study, which can be categorised as an applied type of research. This study only covered certain kinds of intervention as stated by Schilling in De Vos (2002:396). He listed at least five kinds of studies that may fall under intervention. They are:

- The development of an intervention to understand problem phenomena
- Research on the process of helping
- Observing what happens to clients during and after contact with the helper
- The systematic design and development of interventions
- Full-scale experiments, testing clinical or social change strategies

The current study includes both the third and fourth points above. These two points include observing what happens to clients during and after contact with the helper and the design and development of interventions. In the current study an intervention was developed and clients were observed to determine the effectiveness of the programme and the Gestalt play therapy techniques used.

The first point is also covered. An intervention was developed to understand the influence of the child's cultural context. Although cultural context is not a problem as such, it might contribute to difficulties or problems relating to children's level of emotional intelligence. The therapist working with children might work from a different cultural context and therefore misunderstand the children's emotional expression.

According to the researcher the current intervention study is applied research because the application of what has been studied was assessed and also researched. It is a form of meta-research – to research the application of research.

8. RESEARCH DESIGN/STRATEGY

The research design or strategy is a structure or procedures according to which researchers collect and interpret data (Welman & Kruger, 1999:190) This is phase 2 of Figure 1.5. Mouton (2001:49) also stated that the design shows “what type of study will be undertaken in order to provide acceptable answers to the research problem”. It is the plan according to which the research will be done (Mouton, 2001:55).

In intervention research, the model itself is called “design and development”. The design phase is only part of this design and development model. (De Vos, 2002:407). It is important to the researcher that the following is a clear distinction:

The model for intervention research is called “design and development” and one of the phases of this model is called “design”.

The current study used this design phase as a research design or research strategy. De Vos (2002:407) provides clear indications as to what should be done during the design phase, namely:

- Designing an observational system and
- Specifying procedural elements of the intervention

These two indications are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs:

8.1 Designing an observational system

According to De Vos (2002:408) “researchers must design a way of observing events related to the phenomenon naturalistically, as well as a method system for discovering the extent of the problem and detecting effects following the intervention”.

De Vos’s (2002:408) definition of the designing of an observational system was applied to the current research in the following ways:

In this research “the phenomenon” was Gestalt play therapy techniques to improve emotional intelligence within the cultural context of the child. The extent of the problem was the influence of the child’s emotional intelligence or lack thereof on his being. The “effects following the intervention”, comprised of the improvement or not of emotional intelligence after the application of Gestalt play therapy techniques.

Gestalt play therapy techniques also formed part of the way of observing the events related to the phenomenon. Information about the child’s culture and its influence on his behaviour could be obtained by techniques like observation, creating life books or journals and parent questionnaires. This way of observation was in itself already the intervention. These intertwined methods are typical of the partly qualitative nature of this study, where very specific and structured methods are not really possible. Creswell, Marshall & Rossman, & Neuman in Delpont & Fouche (2002:356) state that the qualitative report is less structured, and more intertwined with the total research process.

Observing the influence of culture as well as the effects of the play therapy techniques may be part of the pre-experimental/hypothesis-developing/exploratory design (De Vos, 2002:139). It is said though in De Vos (2002:139) that “these designs are of a more qualitative nature, and the data collection methods would be observations and/or unstructured or semi-structured interviews”, as was the case in the current research. The designs given by De Vos (2002:139-142) do not use pre-tests. In this research the culture of the child was measured as part of the intervention, where pre-experimental/hypothesis-developing/exploratory designs (De Vos, 2002:139) were used. The emotional

intelligence of the children was determined with a typical one-group pre-test post-test design (De Vos, 2002:144). This research did not only made use of an observational system, but also of a quantitative design, namely the one-group pre-test post-test design (De Vos, 2002:144).

8.2 Specifying procedural elements of the intervention

According to De Vos (2002:409) procedural elements for use in the intervention can be identified through the studying and observation of the problem. This is the development phase. The play therapy techniques needed to improve emotional intelligence within a cultural context were selected and / or adapted through the process of determining the effects of culture. Although determining the effects of culture was part of the intervention itself, it took place before the children were exposed to the complete intervention for enhancing emotional intelligence. According to the researcher, the culture of the children forms part of their processes (personality or behaviour traits) in Gestalt play therapy.

The researcher is thus of the opinion that certain procedural elements only developed as the research continued. It was therefore only possible to line up a basic procedure for research just before the research study was completed. Within this procedure some steps changed, were removed or added as needed. After the research programme terminated the following research procedure could be finalised.

9. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

De Vos (2002:409-418) proposes a structure for the research procedure of intervention research. The steps in the current research study were divided into the three main groupings according to De Vos (2002:409-418) namely, early development and pilot testing, evaluation and advanced development and dissemination. These three main groupings are indicated on the following diagram. The relation of the sub-groupings of the current research to those stated by De Vos (2002:409-418) is indicated in the discussion of the individual steps immediately following the diagram. This is also part three of Figure 1.5 The logic of the research process. The following diagram thus represents the flow of the process of the research:

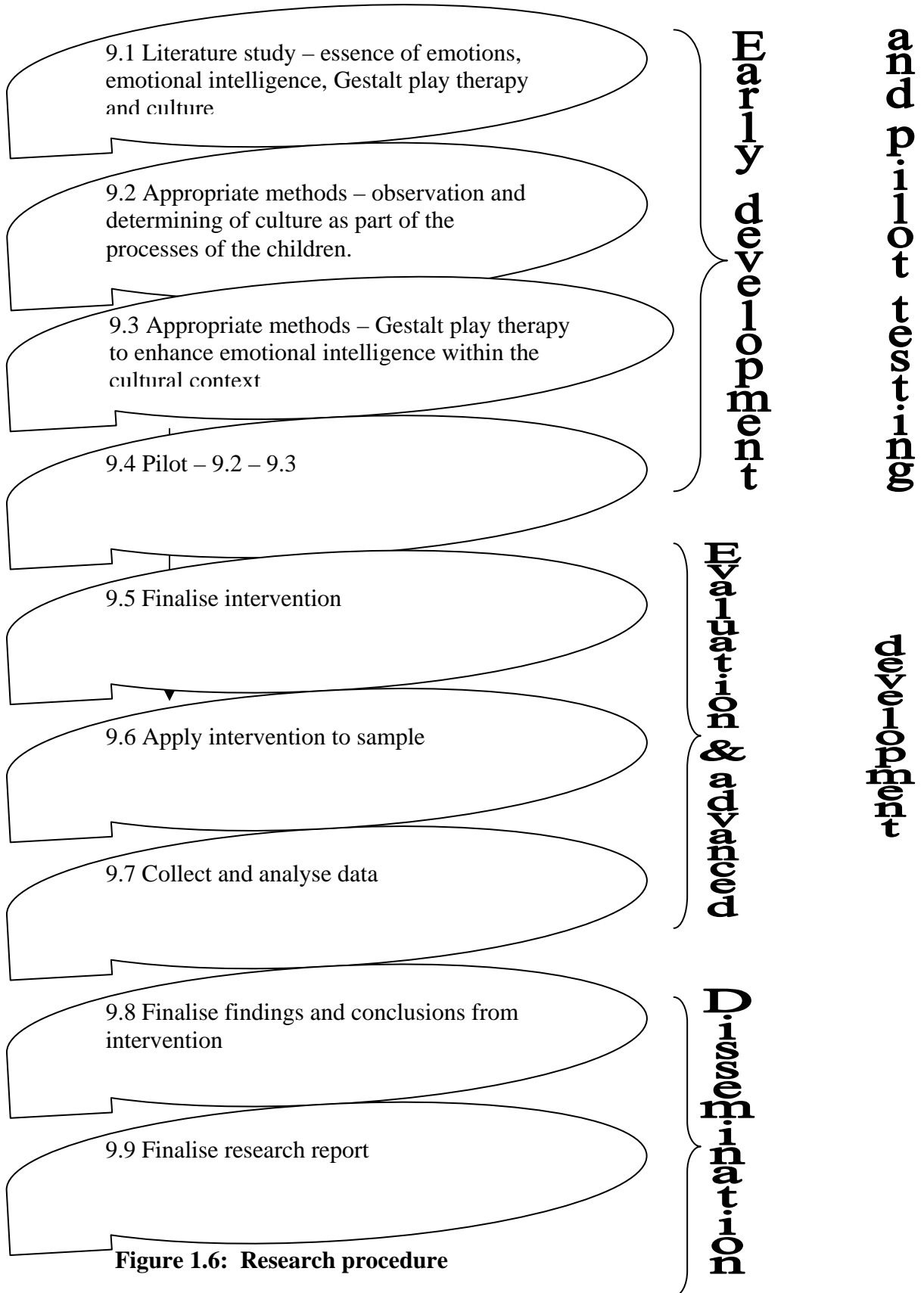


Figure 1.6: Research procedure

9.1 Literature study

The literature study covered three main concepts namely emotions, culture and appropriate Gestalt play therapy techniques. The following are concepts also covered here: emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence assessment material, and characteristics of the developmental phase of primary school children – middle school age. A preliminary theory or framework of culture and emotional intelligence was formed.

9.2 Compiling appropriate methods to determine the influence of culture

According to De Vos (2002:410) this phase is, “Developing a prototype or preliminary intervention”.

An intervention strategy to determine the influence of culture was compiled according to the literature study where the fundamentals of culture as well as Gestalt play therapy was studied.

9.3 Compiling appropriate Gestalt play therapy methods to improve emotional intelligence within the cultural context

After an in depth study of emotions a theory of emotional intelligence was developed and compared with current theories of emotional intelligence, for example that of Daniel Goleman (1996). Hereafter a study of Gestalt play therapy techniques and the consideration of the influence of culture as stated in 9.2 above, led to a compilation of an appropriate intervention to improve the skills associated with emotional intelligence the primary school years.

9.4 Pilot study of the methods to determine the influence of culture and the effects of Gestalt play therapy techniques on emotional intelligence

De Vos (2002:410) names this phase “Conducting a pilot test”.

A pilot study was conducted to determine whether the intervention is effective and user friendly. The process of determining the effectiveness of the assessment measures included the determination of validity and reliability.

The precision of measurement is expressed as **validity** and **reliability**. Validity represents how well a variable measures what it is supposed to measure. (Hopkins, 2000:9) In the current study the validity of the measurement instruments focused on whether the instruments truly measure emotional intelligence and the cultural context of the participant. Validity is important in descriptive studies: if the validity of the main variables is poor, many more subjects may be needed in the sample of primary school children used.

“Reliability tells you how reproducible your measures are on a retest” (Hopkins, 2000:9). In this study the reliability had an impact on the use of intervention techniques on the universe. It thus determined the success of the developed programme or intervention.

As this study used intervention research, the pilot study was applied on a small sample. This sample was a typical small group-therapy group of four primary school children. The results from the pilot study determined the application possibilities, practical considerations and effectiveness of the intervention. The pilot study was an integral part of the research. Results from this were not quantifiable. Discrepancies, biases and other subjective evaluations were noted. These problems were rectified after the pilot study. Hereafter the process continued on the sample group, using the adapted intervention.

9.5 Finalise intervention

De Vos (2002:411) refers to this phase with the following: “Apply design criteria to the preliminary intervention concept”.

The intervention to improve emotional intelligence within the child’s cultural context was adapted according to the information gained from the pilot study. This information from the pilot study included specific aspects where the intervention was not valid and / or reliable. The intervention programme was adapted to improve the validity and reliability.

9.6 Apply intervention to sample

This phase is referred to as “selecting an experimental design” by De Vos (2002:412).

As discussed in 8.1, a typical one-group pre-test post-test design (De Vos, 2002:144) was utilised.

The whole intervention was applied to the research group of primary school children. In order to proof the effectiveness of the whole intervention concerning validity and reliability it was not applied on the same small group-therapy group as in the pilot study.

9.7 Collect and analyse data

According to De Vos (2002:413) this phase is, “Collecting and analysing data”.

In this research study the data gained from the intervention was used to determine its effectiveness. The data collection and analysing thereof was an ongoing process in this study. From the first moment of the pilot study, the researcher recorded outcomes of the group sessions to determine validity and reliability of both the assessment as well as the intervention programme itself. The influence of the cultural context was also determined throughout the process using observation, interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The intervention (with the researcher as therapist being part of it) was continually adapted to be culturally sensitive.

9.8 Finalise findings and conclusions from the programme.

During this phase of the research, the intervention is finalised and prepared for dissemination. The research is thus prepared for the market. This is the “Dissemination” phase of De Vos (2002:414). In the current research, apart from the preparation of the product for the market, the final findings and conclusions were added to the research report.

9.9 Finalise research report

The research report was finalised and prepared for assessment and binding. This formed part of the “Dissemination” phase as described by De Vos (2002:414).

Following this research procedure of the current research study, the viability of the study will be discussed.

10. VIABILITY OF STUDY

Viability according to the UK thesaurus (Microsoft Word 2000:1999) relates to the following characteristics: feasibility, practicability, capability and possibility. Applied to this study, it means the researcher’s attempts to make this study feasible and practically usable. It thus means to use the possibilities of this study effectively. The researcher made use of a literature study, interviews with experts including the attendance of a seminar, a pilot study, and techniques to research the effects of the study on a sample, which will enable the study to be used on the population.

The following is a discussion on these attempts to make the current study viable.

10.1 Literature Study

According to Strydom (2002:210), “The prospective researcher can only hope to undertake meaningful research if he is fully up to date with existing knowledge on his prospective subject... He must trace all available literature that is broadly and specifically relevant to his subject”. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1997:109) agree on the latter statement stating that the literature study puts the work in the context of what has already been done. It allows for comparisons and provides a framework for further research. The literature study is thus the theoretical framework in which the current research study is embedded. It provided the knowledge and comprehension of this specific part of the field of Gestalt play therapy so the researcher could attempt to design something new to attribute to the field. The latter is confirmed by Cilliers in Strydom (2002:212), who states that the literature study is important for both the clear formulation of the research problem as well as for the planning and execution of the investigation. The researcher also supports Welman and Kruger’s (1999:35) statement that the literature review should not only be a compilation of isolated summaries of other related research already done in this field. It should integrate the information showing how it relates to the current study. The researcher therefore continuously attempted to tie the literature to the aims of the current study.

In this literature study a variety of aspects that have an influence on the current research were covered. This gave a broad background of available research, knowledge and understanding on the subject of study. In this chapter only a very simplistic framework with some background information on a few topics is provided. The aim of this is to introduce the reader to the value and need of this exciting field of study.

10.1.1 The primary school child (7-12 years)

10.1.1.1 Short overview of the developmental phase of the primary school child

The primary school child is usually in the middle school age developmental phase. The following are characteristics of children in this phase:

They are physically a little stronger and more mature than the younger child (Mwamwenda, 1996:61).

They moved to a more advanced level of cognitive ability with the ability to conserve as the most important element. (Compare Kiura, Gitau & Kiura, 1999:38; Newman & Newman, 1987:290-293.)

Emotionally and personality wise they focus on those skills, which are so important for adult life, like success in work and interpersonal relationships. (Compare Kiura, Gitau & Kiura, 1999:35-36; Mwamwenda, 1996:353,359; Newman and Newman, 1987:298,301.)

Concerning moral development, the primary school child mostly falls into the pre-conventional category – good or bad depends on punishment or not and what is right makes you happy. The primary school child might also develop to the next stage where he will do the right thing for the approval of others and acceptance by society. (Kohlberg in Mwamwenda, 1996:150)

The fulfilment of esteem needs and self-actualisation are very important needs and cannot be fulfilled if a child's more basic needs of physical and psychological care and safety are not fulfilled. (Maslow in Newman & Newman, 1987:349)

These developmental characteristics relate closely to emotions and emotional intelligence as discussed hereafter.

10.1.2 Emotions and emotional intelligence

10.1.2.1 *Definition and origin of emotions*

According to Goleman (1996:8) we have two minds – one that thinks and one that feels. **The emotional centres** in the brain emerged from the brainstem and form **the next layer**. As this part rings and borders the brainstem, it is called the limbic system from the Latin word, “limbus”. Emotions are the base of higher intellectual processes and will thus play a very big role in the human’s whole mental being. (Compare Le Doux, 1998:73-74,91-101,200; Goleman, 1996:9-12.)

10.1.2.2 *Emotional intelligence*

According to Le Roux and De Klerk (2001:10) emotional intelligence is a type of personal and social intelligence, existing of:

- Emotional awareness
- Emotional literacy
- Emotional control
- Empathy and communication on emotional level
- A motivated, goal oriented lifestyle

The researcher defines emotional intelligence as the intelligence to control the power of emotions. According to Vermeulen (1999:42), emotionally intelligent people deal with feelings appropriately. The following quote of Vermeulen (1999:42) also indicates emotional intelligence in children: “...’appropriateness’ is the mark of an emotionally intelligent person, it’s what will get you your own way in most situations. Children often behave inappropriately because they haven’t yet learnt self-control. They act out their feelings without understanding the consequences”.

Goleman (1996:44-45) describes qualities of both cognitive as well as emotional intelligence, although he states that “emotional intelligence adds far more of the qualities that make us more fully human” (Goleman , 1996:45).

The researcher will therefore conclude that emotional intelligence is the amount of control that a person has over his driving force or power in his life. It is about being fully himself – being a more effective and happier human being.

The children in the current study, who participated in a programme to enhance their ability to grow towards fulfilling their true selves, are all part of a bigger system of family and society. This pertains to the influence of their culture as is being discussed in the following paragraphs.

10.1.3 Culture

10.1.3.1 A definition of culture

Goleman (1996:7) stated that culture and life experiences shape the way we display our emotions.

The complexity of culture and also of defining culture is clear to the researcher in the words of Van Staden (1997:45) who states that culture exists in complex relations with other practices in the social formation, which determine, enable and constrain the possibilities of cultural practices.

According to the theorists above, the researcher forms the following opinion of culture:

It is the way we perceive our reality, the filter in our minds through which we see the world around us. Culture is thus in essence the thought processes – the beliefs of a group of people. If people have the same type of beliefs about their reality, they form a cultural group. This belief system is represented by communication in different forms – verbal, through the media, through technological development, art etcetera.

10.1.3.2 The application of the definition of culture to the current study

The current study attempted to improve the emotional intelligence of primary school children within their cultural context. This context determines, according to the definition above, the way the children think and act. Children in this study

therefore developed emotionally in different ways, handled the practical situation of weekly therapy groups in different ways and communicated in different ways. The researcher found that a culturally sensitive programme needed, most of all, a culturally sensitive therapist. The latter would be able to accommodate and unconditionally accept all the children, each from their own cultural background. The importance of the role of the therapist and the therapeutic relationship with the children in this programme is apparent in the following paragraphs, which focus on the therapeutic approach of this study.

10.1.4 Applicable Gestalt play therapy techniques

10.1.4.1 Gestalt play therapy defined in the context of the current study

The approach in Gestalt play therapy is, as stated by Yontef in Schoeman (1996a:29): “healing through meeting”. According to Schoeman (1996a:29), this healing is a restoring of wholeness. The child is broken and needs to be whole again, in which case the child will be nearer to a state of equilibrium again and be able to live a happier more satisfied life. The engagement in therapy took place in the here and now. Present difficulties were thus handled.

It is necessary for the child to be aware of himself and his needs. It is difficult to build an effective relationship with the child if this is not the case. (Schoeman, 1996a:29)

The researcher sees Gestalt therapy and the techniques studied here as excellent to build emotional intelligence. Both of these (Gestalt therapy and emotional intelligence) require awareness, responsibility for your own life, self-actualisation and a process of change and development. The relationship between the therapist and child was the catalyst in the process of increasing emotional intelligence. The play therapy techniques were tools, which assisted the therapist having a successful intervention.

The researcher attempted to extend the literature study beyond the written word by also engaging in consultation with experts on various parts of the field studied. This is covered in the following paragraphs.

10.2 Consultation with Experts

10.2.1 Doctors Le Roux and De Klerk

The researcher consulted with two of the leaders in emotional intelligence in South Africa namely doctors Ronel Le Roux and Rina De Klerk. They also wrote a workbook for children, focusing on the improvement of emotional intelligence in children. The expertise of these social scientists are important to the researcher, as they have already developed a type of intervention to improve emotional intelligence in children. They have a different focus (not Gestalt play therapy techniques) and do not include the cultural context. The research already done on the components of emotional intelligence in children and the use of techniques to improve it is very valuable for the current study. These can be used as indications of possible techniques to use as well as background on the theory of emotional intelligence in practice.

The consultation was done via email and focused on information about assessment and possible training / workshop opportunities in the field of emotional intelligence.

Contact details:

Dr. Ronel Le Roux

P.O. Box 2698

The Reeds

0158

ronellr@vouzi-isp.co.za

Dr. Rina De Klerk

hdeklerk@iafrica.com

10.2.2 Jopie Van Rooyen

The researcher contacted Jopie van Rooyen & Partners SA PTY Ltd for a training schedule of qualifying courses in BarOn EQ-^{it}m Certification. As the Bar-On EQ-^{it}m is a standardised and well-known assessment instrument, the principles underlying this assessment might be very valuable in the development of new assessment measures or the use of a certain selection of assessment measures in the current study.

10.2.3 Doctor Pieter Van Jaarsveld

The researcher participated in a weekend workshop presented by Doctor Pieter Van Jaarsveld and also had an informal discussion with him concerning the importance of emotional intelligence in relation to the children who participate in the programmes and assessments at the researcher's private practice.

The most important attribute of emotional intelligence seemed here to be the ability to control your own happiness and success in life with various techniques. These techniques included positive thinking, a healthy lifestyle (which relates to the theory of the importance of the interaction of all systems of the human being) and visualisation to heal oneself. The latter is also a very important indication of the interaction of the different systems of the human as a whole. Here the person uses his mind's eye to heal both his physical body as well as his emotions. This indicates a close relation of what one sees in your mind and the consequences thereof. Van Jaarsveld (2005) noted the importance of knowing that the mind does not distinguish between what happened in reality and what happened in the mind. A person can thus change the influence of the environment on his being by changing it in his mind.

Information gained from the consultation with experts and the literature study were all used to design a preliminary programme to use Gestalt play therapy techniques to enhance the emotional intelligence of the primary school children in the groups within their cultural field. This intervention was first tried on a small group of children to sort out any practical difficulties as well as other difficulties relating to the intervention. This was done through a pilot study, discussed in the following section.

10.3 Pilot Study

“Pilot tests are designed to determine whether the intervention will work...”. Pilot tests are implemented in settings convenient for the researcher and are somewhat similar to ones in which the intervention takes place. (De Vos, 2002:410) Baxter et al. (1997:121) agrees with De Vos (2002:410) stating that the pilot study attempts to try out research techniques and methods to see how well they work in practice. It is “reassessment without tears” (Baxter et al., 1997:121).

A pilot study makes the following valuable attributes to a research project:

- Orientates the researcher towards his/her research field,
- Helps with the problem formulation
- Helps the researcher to plan his research process
- Helps the researcher to determine his range of investigation
- The researcher can test various aspects of the project on a small scale without having to generalise the findings

(Compare De Vos, 2002:221; Welman & Kruger, 1999:146.)

The current intervention research study is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology. The pilot study is a more prominent feature of the quantitative than of the qualitative methodology. The pilot study of the current research project was applied to determine the effectiveness of a certain intervention. The researcher provided a qualitative discussion on the outcomes and how to use this in the following research process. The pilot study of this research might therefore in certain ways differ from the traditional quantitative methodology’s pilot study.

According to De Vos (2002:221), the pilot study is especially valuable to test the effectiveness and reliability of the measuring instrument. The assessment tools / measuring instruments of emotional intelligence, the children’s processes (personality and behaviour styles) and the influence of culture in the current study were piloted so the researcher could be satisfied with its validity and reliability. This was part of the bigger pilot programme. It was not a separate study only to determine measuring instruments.

According to the researcher this part of the pilot study – piloting assessment instruments – might be more related to the quantitative methodology of this study.

As the researcher developed the intervention, different parts of the assessment process and techniques to enhance emotional intelligence in a cultural sensitive environment were tried and tested in the pilot study. This assisted greatly in the development of an effective programme.

The intervention planned by the current research consisted mainly of three parts, which were particularly important to be piloted first:

- The impact of different cultural contexts of the primary school children and the researcher on the children's behaviour and participation in the programme
- The children's level of emotional intelligence – appropriate assessment tools as part of the intervention
- Gestalt play therapeutic techniques suitable for the improvement of primary school children's emotional intelligence within their different cultural backgrounds.

Each one of these three components was piloted before it was finalised and considered as part of the intervention.

Both the pilot study as well as the developed intervention was applied to a small group of children who is part of a universe of primary school children. This universe and the sample of children included in the research and the techniques to determine the latter group, is discussed in the following section.

10.4 Description of universe, sample and sampling techniques

The population of primary school children across cultures is vast. The social intervention methodology requires an intervention on a group in need of help to be able to cope more effectively in society.

“Intervention researchers choose a constituency or population with whom to collaborate. A population is selected whose issues are of current or emerging interest to the client themselves, to researchers and society” (De Vos, 2002:398).

10.4.1 Universe and population

According to Arkava and Lane in De Vos (2002:198) the distinction between universe and population is as follows:

The universe comprises of all the potential subjects with attributes of interest to the researcher. The population has some boundaries on the study units – being individuals in the universe with specific characteristics. (Arkava & Lane in De Vos, 2002:198) A population is therefore a more specific group of people to focus on when doing research. Bennett (2003:6) says, “a population is all elements that meet the inclusion criteria for a study.” She states the following as an example of a population: “The population for a study of breast cancer could conceivably include everyone in the entire world who has breast cancer” (Bennett, 2003:6). Mouton (1996:135) defines a population as the sum total of all the cases that meet this study’s unit of analysis.

According to the researcher the universe of the current study therefore included all possible Gestalt play therapy techniques and all the primary school children in the world who’s emotional intelligence can be assessed and improved.

The population of the current study consisted of intervention techniques and people. The intervention techniques related to the population of the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis included both intervention techniques as well as primary school children in Namibia whose emotional intelligence could possibly be assessed and improved. This part of the population were culturally diverse in order to assess the possibility of improving emotional intelligence without being culturally biased – thus to understand the culture of the group members of the sample as being part of their being and ability to improve on emotional intelligence level. The research in the current study thus included both intervention techniques and people. The intervention techniques could not be researched without a group of people to apply it to (Chapter 6, 4. THE SAMPLE / RESEARCH GROUP).

10.4.2 The sample

10.4.2.1 *Definition of a sample*

The sample is the part of the population that is actually included in the intervention (Arkava & Lane in De Vos, 2002:199). According to Bennett (2003:6), a sample is a subset of the population that is selected for the study.

The sample in the current research study consisted of Gestalt play therapeutic techniques, which could be used in the intervention programme to enhance emotional intelligence (Chapter 6, THE SAMPLE / RESEARCH GROUP) as well as a research group of primary school children.

The Gestalt play therapy techniques in the sample were selected according to the applicability to the intervention programme to enhance emotional intelligence in a cultural sensitive way. The primary school children subset of the population was a group of not more than five to six children randomly selected from clients who visited the mental health practice of the researcher. Clients who come to this practice represent most of the cultural groups in Namibia. The sample was thus culturally diverse.

10.4.2.2 *Reasons for the use of samples*

Samples are more often used in quantitative studies where quantifiable information is gained from a big population. It is also used in studies where quantifiable information is generalised to a specific population. The complete coverage of a big population is seldom possible. Therefore the researcher/s will choose a representative sample of the population to use in the actual study. (Reid, Smith & Sarantakos in Strydom & Venter, 2002:199)

In the current research the population was vast. Sampling was thus necessary. In Chapter 2, a selection of Gestalt play therapy techniques is listed. This is only a selection of those techniques that the researcher found in some trusted resources. The techniques used had to adhere to certain characteristics of Gestalt therapy theory to be Gestalt play therapeutic techniques. It was thus clear to the researcher

that this population was vast and that a sample of applicable techniques for the current research study had to be selected. The population of primary school children was also vast. The researcher used primary school children who reported at the private practice of the researcher in the sample. As the effectiveness of the intervention is better researched when applied to a multi-cultural sample, children from a variety of cultures available in Namibia were thus selected. Volunteers from local schools and other institutions like children's homes were used as part of the sample, especially for the pilot study. Part of the focus of this study was to use Gestalt play therapy techniques in such a way that the culture of the respondents in the sample is taken into account when attempting to improve the level of emotional intelligence of children in a multicultural environment.

10.4.2.3 Size of a sample

The general rule, according to De Vos (2002:200), is that larger samples enable researchers to draw more representative and more accurate conclusions. Seaberg and Grinnell and Williams (in Strydom & Venter, 2002:200) state that a 10% sample of the population is usually big enough.

Hopkins (2000:8) has another opinion about sample size. He says: "Using confidence intervals or confidence limits is a more accessible approach to sample-size estimation and interpretation of outcomes. You simply want enough subjects to give acceptable precision for the effect you are studying".

As the current research was not purely quantitative in nature, the sample size was not so important that a specific number or percentage was specified here. In the present case, the population of primary school children is so vast that a 10% sample is not a very practical number to work with in a small group therapy or individual therapy scenario. Also the number of possible Gestalt play therapy techniques is vast as many new techniques can develop as long as it adheres to the theoretical principles of Gestalt therapy. Hopkins' confidence intervals (Hopkins, 2000:8) therefore seems a much more workable approach for sample size. The researcher simply used enough participants and variety of techniques in the emotional intelligence programme to provide "acceptable precision for the effect"

she was studying. The effect was the enhancement of the emotional intelligence of the children within their cultural fields and the effect of the selected techniques used to improve skills concerning emotional intelligence. The focus of the study was on the intervention.

The following paragraphs focus on ethical considerations, because this research study included human beings and the effect of an intervention on them.

11. ETHICAL ASPECTS

According to Strydom (2002:62), researchers in the social sciences are confronted with ethical issues because human beings are their objects of study. These ethical issues are pervasive and complex because they cannot focus on the data to the expense of the well being of their subjects. Babbie in Strydom (2002:62) states that all researchers need to be aware of what is proper and improper in scientific research.

Some salient concepts to consider in research include ethics, values, morality, community standards, laws and professionalism. These all differ but are not mutually exclusive. (Strydom, 2002:63) Levy (in Strydom, 2002:63) distinguishes between values and ethics as follows: values are “preferences for a certain form of conduct, while ethics imply preferences that influence behaviour in human relations”. The researcher agrees with Babbie (in Strydom, 2002:63) that values indicate what is good and desirable and ethics and morality both show to what is right or wrong.

The concepts mentioned above are to a great extent covered in the following ethical issues to keep in mind when doing research in the social sciences:

- Preventing harm to experimental subjects and/or respondents
- Informed consent
- Deception of subjects and/or respondents
- Violation of privacy / anonymity / confidentiality
- Actions and competence of researchers
- Release or publication of the findings

(Strydom, 2002:64)

The researcher wishes to shortly indicate, with related acknowledgement of the literature, how each one of these ethical issues was addressed in the current study.

11.1 Preventing harm to experimental subjects and/or respondents

According to Strydom (2002:64) harm can be done to subjects in a physical and/or emotional manner. Respondents should be informed thoroughly beforehand about the potential impact of the research. Respondents should have the opportunity to withdraw if needed.

In the case of the current research parents were informed about the nature of the programme during an individual session between the researcher and parent/s. Furthermore an informative letter, which covered the nature, need and value of the programme as well as an overview of topics being covered, practical information like dates and times and an informed consent form was sent to parents or caretakers.

The respondents themselves, which are the children who participated in the programme, were informed verbally during the first two to three sessions about the content of the programme, its proposed outcome and some practical arrangements about dates and times. The children were seen as the most important people to consider here. Parents agreed (and some disagreed) concerning the need of the programme for their child as well as the practical arrangements. The children were informed and their opinions and preferences used to adapt the programme where necessary.

A copy of the form used for parents can be found in Addendum A: Informed consent. The process of the programme and the children's input towards the programme were covered during the first two sessions of the programme. Here children were informed about the sequence of the themes in the programme with a flow chart. The children also formed their own group rules and shared expectations.

The researcher was very aware of her contributions to the programme. Her role as therapist had to contribute to a healing relationship. As this is a culturally sensitive programme the researcher had to make sure that she presents the programme without any prejudice towards different people. The researcher also needed to be aware of her own personality and behavioural traits that might have had a negative influence on the well being of the respondents. The researcher particularly had to control her tendency to feel pressed for time and to show patience when needed.

11.2 Informed consent

This implies providing all possible or adequate information on the goal of the research, procedures, advantages, disadvantages and dangers to the respondents (Strydom, 2002:65).

The procedure for informed consent was covered in 11.1 Preventing harm to experimental subjects and/or respondents. Informed consent was seen here as part of preventing harm to subjects.

The children in the current study were too young to read, understand and sign a written form of consent. Their consent was thus achieved by verbal communication as explained in the previous paragraph.

11.3 Deception of subjects and/or respondents

Loewenberg and Dolgoff (in Strydom, 2002:66) describe deception of subjects as deliberately misrepresenting facts to convince the other person to believe what is not true. Deception can also include the attempt to give incorrect information or withholding information to ensure the participation of subjects (Corey *et al.* in Strydom, 2002:66).

In the current study the results of the Das-Naglieri Cognitive Assessment System (Naglieri & Das, 1997a) done with all participants were discussed with the parents. A low score in Planning processes indicated the need to improve emotional skills. This need could be addressed by participating in the development of the current research study. This research was done because the need to improve emotional intelligence existed after the children were assessed. Parents thus expressed this need themselves and the process to fulfil their need was explained to them by the researcher. Deception about the need to include the subject into the programme was excluded by the facts on the outcomes of the test. Deception was possible if parents and participants were brought to unrealistic expectations of the outcome of the programme. The researcher explained the experimental nature of the programme verbally to the parents. It was also attended to in the written consent (ADDENDUM A, INFORMED CONSENT).

11.4 Violation of privacy / anonymity / confidentiality

Authors who are referred to by Strydom (2002:67) had the following views on privacy and confidentiality: “that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyse” (Sieber in Strydom, 2002:67), “the right to privacy is the individual’s right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed” (Singleton *et al.* in Strydom, 2002:67). The researcher understands these views as information that was not meant to be disclosed and that the respondent has the right to disclose this information to whoever, whenever, where ever and whatever he prefers.

In the current study child participants in the programme were never forced to share any opinion, feeling, or experience etcetera if he did not want to do so. The researcher also attempted to treat the children with respect so to improve their sense of self and respect for self and others. Children had the freedom to refuse to participate in activities. The informed consent form also covered the violation of privacy. Where photographs were taken, the children's faces were never revealed and they also could choose whether photographs of their work could be taken. Informed consent for a videotape of one or more of the sessions was received from the parents of the respondents. The children themselves had the freedom to say whether they would like to be videotaped. They also had an opportunity to watch the tape. They could refuse this to be used if they preferred so.

11.5 Actions and competence of researchers

“Researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake a proposed investigation” (Strydom, 2002:69). Babbie in Strydom (2002:69) states that a researcher is obliged to run the research process in an ethical correct manner and “to report correctly on the analysis of data and the results of the study”. Strydom (2002:69) also discusses the issue of cultural sensitivity, which is very applicable to the current study, in which an attempt was made to provide a cultural sensitive approach. Researchers should be aware of making value judgements based on difference and ignorance of differences in cultures of the researcher and respondents. It is important to the researcher not to impress his own values on the respondents. The researcher should evaluate all possible risks and advantages of the research study and must honour promises made to respondents. Actions, attitudes and clothing of the researcher should all be ethically correct. (Strydom, 2002:70)

The researcher in the current study trusted her training, and continuously expanding knowledge base as fundamental building blocks for her competence in doing the current research study. Proper supervision was provided via email and face-to-face contact with the supervisor. The researcher also has teaching, counselling and community work

experience with a wide variety of Namibian ethnic groups. These experiences led her to trust in her own ability to accept people as they are and not to judge them based on ethnicity. The researcher also works comfortably in a private practice with a multiracial client base. The researcher rarely ever has had contact with children from only one ethnic group during a specific day's work. The current programme was developed for groups. The researcher's competence and self-confidence with groups was formed through regular experience with groups in educational as well as therapeutic situations. This enjoyment of group dynamics might also stem from the researcher's personality profile, which is more group oriented.

11.6 Release or publication of the findings

Strydom (2002:71) states that, "Researchers should compile the report as accurately and objectively as possible". Dane (in Strydom, 2002:72) states that errors in a research study can have detrimental consequences concerning time, money and effort of researchers who might rely on these findings for their follow-up research. The researcher is therefore ethically obliged to ensure that the research procedure is correctly represented and that all findings be true.

The following is a list of obligations for researchers to make their research reports as user friendly as possible:

- The final research report must be "accurate, objective, clear, unambiguous and contain all essential information" (Strydom, 2002:72)
- Any form of emphasis or slanting should not bias results
- All resources and people consulted in the study must be listed in a reference list, as plagiarism is a serious offence.
- It is important to admit all known shortcomings and errors
- Findings should be stated as objective as possible, without impairing confidentiality.

(Strydom, 2002:72)

The researcher thus attempted to present all information as user friendly as possible. All findings have been stated as objectively as possible in a combined qualitative-quantitative study such as the present one. The researcher also attempted to be as critical as possible concerning the findings in order to show all possible shortcomings and errors in the current study.

11.7 Debriefing of respondents

Salkind in Strydom (2002:73) explains debriefing in the following way: “The easiest way to debrief participants is to discuss their feelings about the project immediately after the session or to send a newsletter telling them the basic intent or results of the study”. According to Strydom (2002:73) debriefing after the research programme is important to rectify any misconceptions and to provide all relevant information about the project that might have been withheld or misrepresented (Dane in Strydom, 2002:73).

In the current study debriefing were done using feedback reports to parents and having feedback sessions with the children who participated in the programme. The first debriefing was done after the first part of the intervention programme, although being part of increasing awareness. The children received feedback on the DISC assessment, which was done in the second or third session, depending on the needs of the group. This debriefing was done using activities, which suited the developmental phase of the participants. It focused on the results of the DISC assessment and had self-awareness and –knowledge as a goal. The DISC assessment is an instrument to determine a person’s behaviour style, which is also linked to a personality style. The DISC instrument is discussed in full detail in Chapter 4, 3.2.1.1 DISC behaviour style.

Debriefing at the end of the programme took the form of reports to the parents. In this report the parents were informed about the outcomes of both the DISC and learning style assessments in the beginning of the programme as well as the final outcome of the programme. A short summary of the aim and objectives of the programme were given and also to which extent their child reached these. The results of the post-test were given with a short explanation and comparison with the pre-test results. The outcomes of the

test results were explained in non-technical language so parents could get better insight in the development of the emotional intelligence of their child. Parents were also given the option to make an appointment for face-to-face feedback if they needed to discuss any uncertainties or other issues concerning the outcomes of the programme or the well-being of the child who participated.

The child-participants were also considered in the feedback report by adding a small memorabilia in the form of a group photo of their group and an emotional intelligence message focused on the areas in which they need more attention.

The researcher attempted to keep this research study as ethical as possible. All material used in this attempt and an ethical proposal, as part of the initial research proposal of this study, are included in the addendums at the end of this study.

12. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND KEY CONCEPTS

12.1 Unit of analysis

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (in Fouche, 2002:107) the unit of analysis can be seen as “the person or object from whom the social researcher collects data”. Mouton (in Fouche, 2002:107) stated different kinds of units of analysis like individuals, groups, organisations, institutions, social actions and events, cultural objects, and interventions. In this research the unit of analysis comprised of interventions, which was the following:

Gestalt therapeutic intervention techniques to improve the emotional intelligence of primary school children, taking into account the cultural contexts of the subjects.

Figure 1.7: The unit of analysis

The type of analysis was social intervention, which was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology. The intervention was on social level, meaning that intervention took place on the level of relationships with self and others.

12.2 Concepts

The concepts below were already defined and discussed in more detail as part of the literature study where the viability of this study was discussed (10. VIABILITY OF STUDY; 10.1 Literature Study). The discussion of concepts under the subheadings here are thus the researcher's summaries of the concepts as covered in 10. VIABILITY OF STUDY to prevent duplication of information.

12.2.1 Middle school age

A discussion of the middle school age developmental phase can be found in **10.1.1 The primary school child (7-12 years)**.

In the context of this research middle school age is the age when moral and emotional development of the child incorporates important aspects of success during adulthood. This phase includes the first years of school when success experiences in school are important. The latter will enable the child to trust in himself to make a success of the remainder of his school and work career. It is therefore an important age to use the benefits of a good level of emotional intelligence.

12.2.2 Emotions

The definition of emotions is covered in **10.1.2.1 Definition and origin of emotions.**

In this research emotions are perceived to have the power to have a driving impact on intellectual as well as personal and physical components of the human being. It is indeed a type of power or an energy force that can be used in any preferred way. Here the primary school child was encouraged and given the opportunity to learn how to use this driving force positively.

12.2.3 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is defined in **10.1.2.3 Emotional intelligence.**

Emotional intelligence is of special importance in the current study because it incorporates the intelligence to control the power of emotions. It also involves the power of being in control of ones own life, thus taking responsibility for your own life.

12.2.4 Culture

The definition of culture is covered in **10.1.3.1 A definition of culture.**

It is significant for this research that culture is the mouthpiece through which emotions is communicated. This understanding of culture assisted the researcher to accommodate children within their different cultural contexts, without judging from ones own cultural perception. Children therefore differ in their communication of emotions because of their cultural belief system and behavioural background.

12.2.5 Gestalt play therapy techniques

A definition of Gestalt play therapy and the techniques to be applied in the current study is covered in **10.1.4.1 Gestalt play therapy defined in the context of the current study.**

In the context of this research Gestalt play therapy techniques are important instruments to use to enhance emotional intelligence because the philosophy of Gestalt theory resemble the essence of emotional intelligence to a great extent. It mirrors the importance of responsibility as stated also in 12.2.3.

13. RESEARCH REPORT LAYOUT

The following is a framework of the layout of the research report. The researcher attempted to give a holistic view of what to expect in the rest of this report. All the detailed sub headings were thus not included here. Such detail can be found in the table of contents in the beginning of this report.

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A COPY OF THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

14. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a framework of the value, goal and practical structure of the current study. The practical structure of the research study will be applied in the following chapters to reach the goal set here and to determine the value of this study. The following diagram shows how the different chapters in the structure of this study fit together.

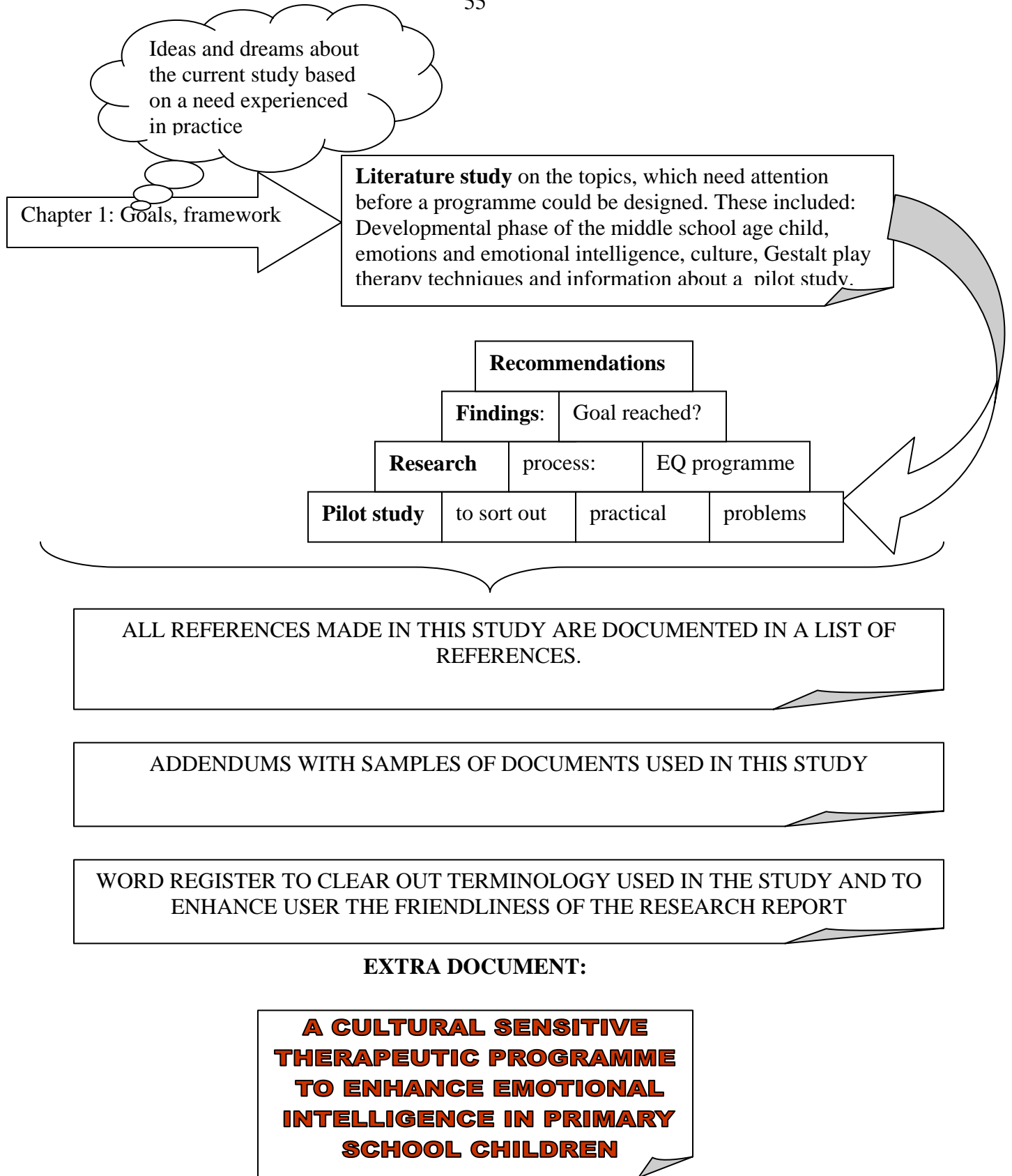


Figure 1.8: Summary of research document