

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

By making use of qualitative research the researcher provided for a continuous process of evaluation. In this chapter the whole process of the evaluation will be conducted.

This chapter will further be used to summarize the most important aspects of each chapter completed. As stated in chapter one, the goal of this research was to explore the medium of music from a Gestalt perspective and illustrate how this strategy contributes to the healing process of an emotionally traumatized child. The focus was on ‘how’ music can be used from a gestalt perspective, with the goal being, to obtain a better understanding and provide illumination on the process of therapy.

6.2 Evaluating the way the problem statement was addressed

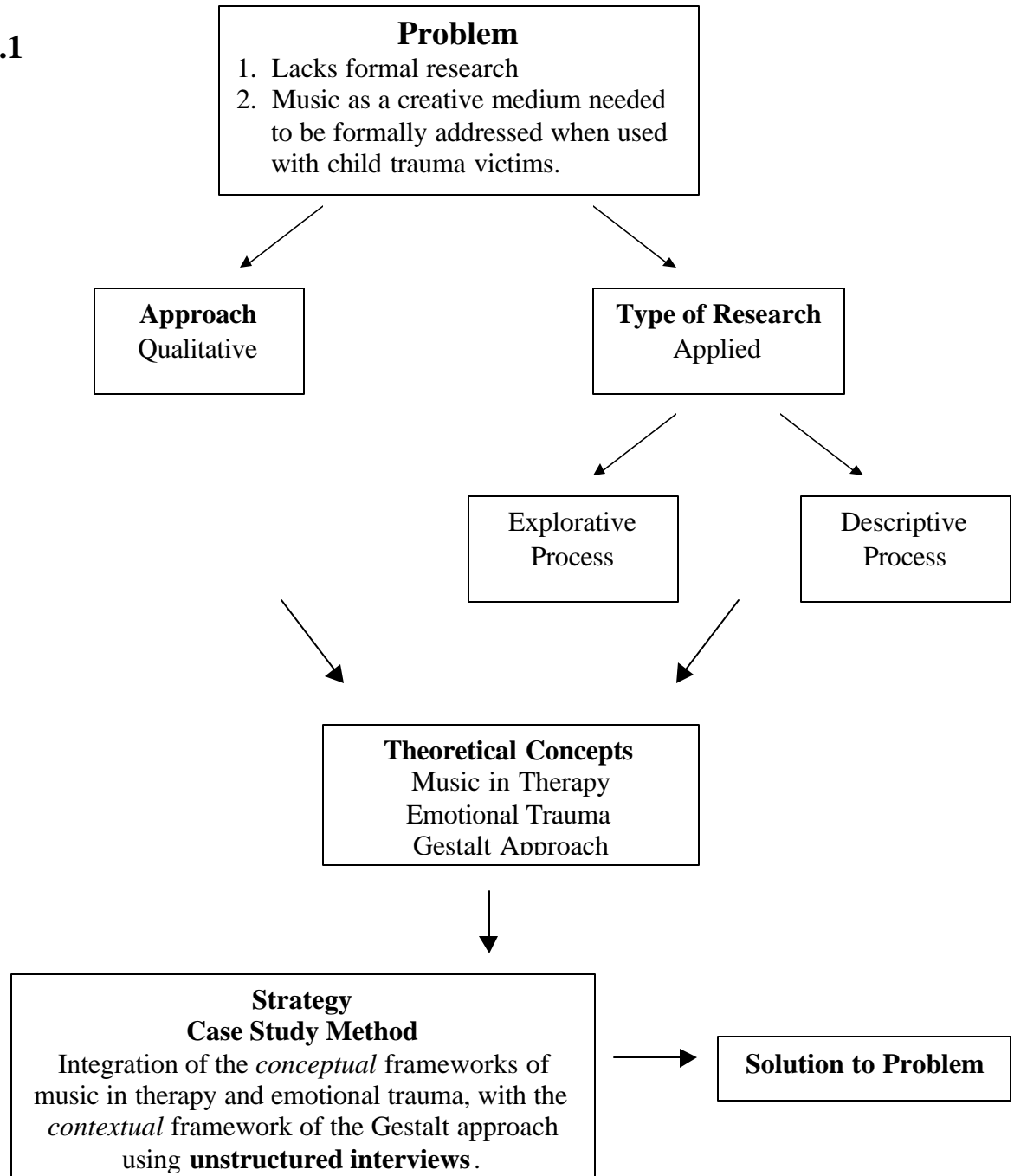
During the process of formulating the problem the researcher came to the conclusion that, the Gestalt approach in using music with the emotionally traumatized child, lacks formal research. A second problem arising from this is the fact that music, as a creative directive medium in play therapy needs to be formally addressed when utilized with child trauma victims.

The task was to identify the most suitable way to address the problem.

6.2.1 Recommendation for the way the problem was addressed

The above mentioned problem was addressed using case studies and structured interviews. Figure 6.1 illustrates the way the problem was addressed.

Figure 6.1



6.2.2 Conclusion for the way the problem was addressed

The researcher came to the conclusion that the process of using qualitative research and the explorative and descriptive processes, was the most appropriate way to address the stated problem. It was planned that this research would require intense and comprehensive observations and analysis of the content of the data collected. This would yield the richness and in-depth observations required, in order to draw necessary conclusions for this study. The emphasis of this study was not on the therapeutic result but rather on the process of using music with the emotionally traumatized child.

6.3 Evaluating the goal and objectives for this study

The goal of this study was to explore the medium of music from a Gestalt perspective and describe how this strategy contributes to the healing process of an emotionally traumatized child. The objectives for this study as outlined in chapter one (section 1.4.2, page 7) were:

- (i) To increase the understanding of music as a therapeutic medium, when working with children by means of presenting applicable literature on this topic.
- (ii) To investigate Gestalt therapy practically and provide a workable strategy using the medium of music. The central focus being therefore on application in a therapeutic setting.
- (iii) To fine-tune the researcher's skills with regards to the therapeutic process which would be done through unstructured interviews with the traumatized child.
- (iv) To present the results of the unstructured interviews in the form of empirical data and make conclusions in such a manner that the therapist working with emotionally traumatized children could gain insight and knowledge of the therapeutic process and therapeutic medium.
- (v) To increase the therapist's understanding of child trauma.

6.3.1 Evaluation of the objectives for this study

Table 6.1

Objectives Summarized (refer to section 6.3)	How the Objective was reached	Chapter where objective was reached
(i) To increase understanding of music as a therapeutic medium	- Literature search - Applying it in the therapy process	• Chapter 2 • Chapter 5
(ii) To investigate Gestalt therapy practically	- Applying the contextual framework in the therapy process.	• Chapter 5
(iii) To fine-tune the researcher's skills	- Establishing a solid theoretical foundation of the conceptual and contextual frameworks. - Making in-depth observations and written records of the unstructured interviews	• Chapter 2, 3, 4 • Chapter 5
(iv) To present the results of the unstructured interviews	- Applying content analysis to each case study to obtain an in-depth understanding into the therapeutic process.	• Chapter 5 • Chapter 6
(v) To increase the therapist's understanding of child trauma	- Literature search - Unstructured interviews - Analysing the results of individual case studies	• Chapter 3 • Chapter 5

In this process of working on the objectives for this study, the goal as mentioned above in section 6.3, was the main focus directing the entire research process.

6.3.2 Conclusion regarding the goal and objectives

The five objectives for this study were reached as well as the goal, that is, exploring the medium of music from a Gestalt perspective and describing how this strategy contributes to the therapeutic process of an emotionally traumatized child.

6.4 Evaluating the research question

Formulation of a research question ensures that the relevant fields of interests will be investigated. By formulating, the research question the field of study is narrowed down and focussed on relevant aspects concerning the study.

The following relevant research question was formulated:

To what extent will the use of music in a gestalt therapeutic manner help the healing process of the emotionally traumatized child?

The research question can be answered as follows:

Music applied in a Gestalt therapy manner when treating the emotionally traumatized child, is a creative medium that can be used throughout the therapeutic process with the child in establishing contact with the self, in establishing the child's contact functions, for emotional expression, for building a sense of self support and self-acceptance within the child, for enabling the child to deal with problems and learn alternative ways of behaviour. The extent and intensity of its use is in the hands of the therapist who can decide when, how and the frequency of using this medium depending on the dynamics of the child's emotional, psychological and physical self.

6.4.1 Conclusion on the research question

Using the Gestalt approach, music as a therapeutic medium can be used effectively in the treatment of the emotionally traumatized child.

6.5 Evaluation and recommendations relating to the qualitative process of the study

- **Using unstructured interviews**

Positive comments: The researcher had the freedom to be flexible in terms of what she communicated to the child and how the medium of music was used. The purpose was not to get answers to questions but to understand the experience of the child and meaning the child was making of the experience.

Negative: The researcher needed to take precaution in dealing with subjectivity that is often related to unstructured interviews.

- **Using the case study format**

Positive comments: Enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth knowledge into the therapeutic process of a traumatized child and the influence music had on this specific therapeutic process. The aim was not to study a broad social issue but describe in detail the case being studied.

Negative comments: The analysis of the data collected cannot be generalized across a large population of children with a similar problem as the analysis only stated the process.

- **Recommendations**

The qualitative research process was suited to the objectives for this particular study as it was the researcher's intention to work directly with the child, observing the therapeutic process as completely as possible in order to develop a deeper understanding of it. If more scientific and statistically accurate data were intended

for such a study, the quantitative research process would have been more appropriate.

6.6 Limitations for this study

- a. The non-compliance on the part of the parents in case study *B* restricted the process of therapy reaching a more meaningful end result for the child.
- b. The condition of attention deficit disorder had a definite influence on the therapeutic process with case study *A*.
- c. Intelligence was not tested for each child but could have an influence on the therapeutic process in terms of the child understanding and comprehending what is expected.
- d. The duration of therapy for case study *B* was terminated prematurely due to the lack of cooperation on the part of the parents.

6.7 Recommendations for this study

- a. Exploring a wider variety of ways that a therapist can use music and musical instruments, would enable the therapist to work with greater creativity.
- b. Assessing the intelligence of children when using case study methods would enable the therapist to plan the music activities with greater accuracy taking the child's level of intellect into consideration.
- c. Focus on using music as a therapeutic medium in group therapy.
- d. Studying the violence in our community and the influence that music can have in benefiting a community therapeutically.
- e. Focus on integrating occupational therapy and the medium of music, with the gestalt approach as the foundation.

6.8 Overall Conclusion

The medium of music was applied to the two case studies used in this research.

In applying the gestalt approach the researcher focussed on the child's individual and unique process, using music to facilitate the child's progress towards satisfaction and fulfilment. The researcher needed to repeatedly apply the foundational principles of the gestalt approach to the medium of music. The researcher made application at each phase of the therapy process from the time the child's need emerged, constantly encouraging and providing opportunities through the medium of music, for the child to express their emotions in a safe and non-threatening environment. Making detailed observations, of the influence music had on the child's process together with observing the child's verbal and non-verbal responses, assisted in fine-tuning the researchers skills with regards to using music in the therapeutic process of an traumatized child.

The researcher can safely conclude that music can be used as an effective medium to facilitate a child's process of recovery and provide a non-threatening atmosphere for a child to express those painful areas in their lives that cannot otherwise be addressed directly.

Appendix