

**RELATIONSHIP FORMATION IN  
MULTICULTURAL PRIMARY  
SCHOOL CLASSROOMS**

by

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for the degree of

**Doctor of Education**

in the subject

**Psychology of Education**

at the

**University of South Africa**

**Promoter: Dr E Prinsloo**

**June 1996**

## Declaration

I declare that "*Relationship formation in multicultural primary school classrooms*" is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.



LENKWANE HENRY MATHUNYANE

Ke kgona tšohle ka eo a mphago matla,  
Yena Kriste.

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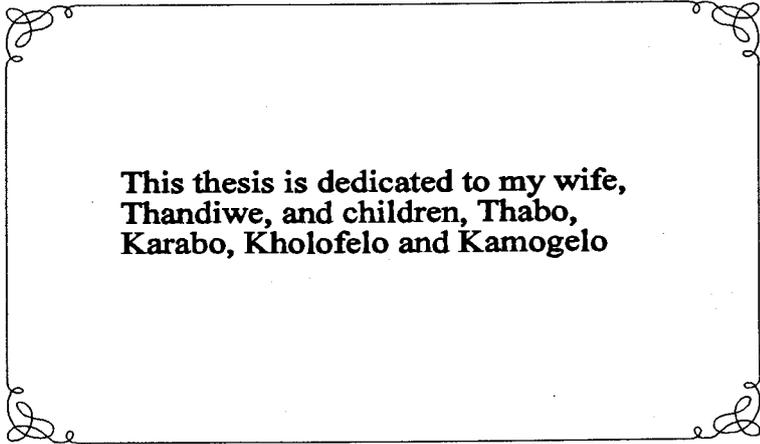
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The author

June 1996

## **Dedication**



**This thesis is dedicated to my wife,  
Thandiwe, and children, Thabo,  
Karabo, Kholofelo and Kamogelo**

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Promoter: Dr E Prinsloo  
Department: Psychology of Education  
University: University of South Africa  
Degree: Doctor of Education

## **Summary**

The research was undertaken to analyse and evaluate the nature and quality of interactions in multicultural primary school classrooms. Special attention was focused on the influence 25 independent variables had on the dependent variable, namely group membership.

Literature indicates that warm and nurturant relationships within the family help the child to achieve independence and promote social adjustment outside the home. Literature also reveals that self-acceptance and acceptance of others are dependent on the self-concept, and that acceptability in peer groups is enhanced by characteristics such as friendliness, cooperation, emotional stability and intellectual ability. It is essential to mention that some researchers claim that within multicultural classrooms, pupils often interact in racially and culturally

segregated patterns. Others maintain that no racial and cultural discrimination is evident in the choice of friends in multicultural classrooms.

The empirical research was undertaken by administering four measuring instruments, namely own designed questionnaire, the sociogram, the self-concept scale for primary school pupils and the children's personality questionnaire to 121 standard five pupils in multicultural primary schools. The administering of these instruments was aimed at determining the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The stepwise discriminant analysis method revealed that of the 25 independent variables, only six, namely family background, friendship skills, gender, scholastic achievement and personality factors E (*submissive versus dominant*) and Q<sub>3</sub> (*undisciplined versus controlled*) contributed to the variance in group membership.

The multiple discriminant function was used to determine how close the individual scores of children were, in a given friendship group. The general pattern obtained, indicated that children choose each other on the basis of similar characteristics. A point that clearly came to light, is that race and language/culture do not contribute to the variance in group membership. Children formed various friendship groups across racial and cultural lines.

In view of the aforementioned findings, the researcher made recommendations on ways in which parents and teachers can create suitable teaching and learning environments for children from diverse cultural milieus.

### **Key terms**

relationship formation; multicultural classrooms; multiculturalism; multilingualism; the primary school child; the self-concept; personality; the sociogram; stepwise discriminant analysis; multiple discriminant function

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# Chapter 1

## Problem formulation, aim and method of research

### 1.1 GENERAL ORIENTATION

The year 1990 brought about long-overdue positive changes with regard to the political and social lives of all South Africans. The then state president's announcements and preparedness to negotiate for a new South Africa for all citizens, were welcomed and appreciated. Major steps taken in this regard led to the abolition of the Population Registration Act (by which people were given racial identities), and the Group Areas Act (that prescribed specific residential areas for each race group) (Coutts 1992b:16).

The removal of the two acts had serious implications for education, since it started a process of complete change in all aspects of social life and therefore also on the educational front. This, in essence, indicated a shift from a racial to a non-racial social and education system. Since the composition of the South African society is multicultural in nature, multicultural education is the appropriate system of education for South Africa.

Some educationists in South Africa have viewed the birth of multicultural education as instrumental in achieving a harmonious society where racial prejudices, structural separation and social injustices will be limited or eradicated completely and where equal opportunities for all inhabitants will exist (Goodey 1988:8).

The concept of multicultural education had, to a lesser extent, existed in South Africa in several forms (over a number of years) in private schools, private sector funded

schools and state schools, particularly English-medium schools in certain urban communities (Multicultural Education 1991:2). Auerbach (1987:6) points out that when these open schools started, they were only allowed to enrol a quota of black pupils. Coutts (1990:21) mentions that admission to these schools was very selective and only a small number of black pupils were admitted in order to ensure that the traditions and ethos of the schools involved were not too drastically altered. Amongst other things, the fact is that only those pupils whose parents were able to pay the high fees of the private schools were admitted.

Since 1991 a number of state schools have become open schools. This came after the then Minister of Education (House of Assembly) presented education models A, B and C which gave the white parent communities the option of voting for or against the admission of pupils from various racial and cultural groups to white state-controlled schools. Quail (1992:9) reports that in January 1991, 205 state schools in the Republic of South Africa were "open", and information as in September 1994 is that about 10 per cent of the total enrolment in formerly white schools comprised pupils of other population groups (*City Press* 25 September 1994:2).

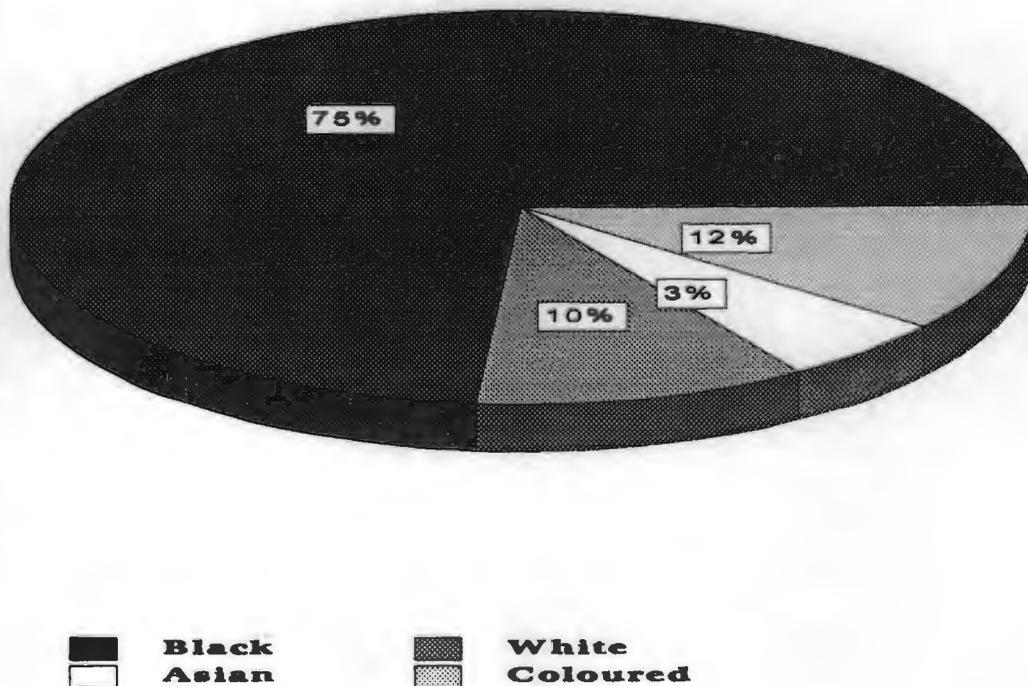
In April 1994, the Government of National Unity came into power. The Minister of Education, Professor Bengu, announced that a new single education system under his control had been established (*The Citizen* 14 June 1994:9). Professor Bengu also mentioned that the process of amalgamating the 14 ethnically based departments of education was extremely complex and in order to ensure continuity, the transition process should be made as smooth as possible.

In the light of the historical background information already portrayed, it is clear that the South African society is currently in a process of rapid change. It is obvious that the portrayed picture is still to change drastically in the New South Africa: more specifically in the light of the adoption of a single education system.

## 1.2 BECOMING AWARE OF THE PROBLEM

South Africa comprises various ethnic, language, cultural and racial societies. There are four main population groups, namely black, white, coloured and Asian. Each population group can be subdivided into a number of ethnic, language or religious groups (compare Goodey 1988:8). One fact which is certain, is that children from the various population groups attend various schools, still operating under the ethnically based education departments, as designed by the previous order. The following graphical presentation illustrates the pupil enrolment as per 1992 statistics and indicates what the racial composition of the classrooms looked like.

**Graph 1.1: Pupil enrolment, 1992**



(DET Graphic presentation 1993:14)

The total school population in South Africa in 1992 can be tabulated as follows:

Table 1.1: School population

Schools	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Total
Student numbers	4 820 000	2 140 000	6 960 000

Auerbach (*The Star* 15 November 1990:18) revealed the following pupil-teacher ratio:

- Blacks 1:41
- Whites 1:18
- Asians 1:21
- Coloureds 1:25

Taking growth or changes into account, it becomes an indisputable fact that the figures indicated here will drastically change and the number of students per class will increase. The South African society hopes and wishes that multicultural education will be able to absorb all the pupils belonging to the different ethnic, language or religious groups, and will be able to teach them in such a way that their cultures are respected.

Multicultural education is strongly recommended in South Africa because it will benefit all pupils by preparing them to live harmoniously with other groups and it will also strive to bring about, or maintain, a just society for all. Through multicultural education, pupils will be able to realise that cultural diversity benefits the entire society, that cross-cultural interaction on an individual basis is a normal, healthy, human endeavour. Importantly, it will bring a clear message to all: Being different does not imply being inferior, and every citizen has the right to participate and contribute to every sphere of life regardless of his or her sex, social status or religious affiliation (Brown 1982:12). It is appreciated that 10 per cent of the total enrolment in former white schools comprised pupils of other population groups. This is a good point of departure for a complete move towards multicultural education.

Researchers like Quail (1992) and Coutts (1992) have made an attempt to look at challenges for educational management and the problems of indigenous majority, policy statements and racial stereotypes prevailing in some multicultural schools. The focal point of the current research will be to evaluate the nature and quality of relationship formation amongst children in multicultural settings. Little attention has been focused on the peer group and pupil-school environment relationships in multicultural schools. It is against this background that interactions in the South African multicultural primary school classrooms need to be attended to.

### 1.3 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The essence of education is preparing the way for the future with an honest commitment to a full recognition of the complexities of the multi-faceted nature of our society (Dhlomo 1989:2). Multicultural education should be in a position to prepare all citizens for life in a society embracing diverse cultures. Educationists need to emphasise such basic human capacities as open-mindedness, curiosity, sensitivity, intellectual humility, respect for others and the ability to form independent judgements.

#### 1.3.1 Statement of the problem

Cultural diversity in South Africa is a reality and on educational grounds it is a requirement that it should, together with unity, be accommodated in the education system and well by means of multicultural education. Multicultural education is one of the important methods in bringing about social change (Goodey 1988:15).

Research has found that education on ethnic grounds or separate education has alienated the South African society in such a way that when these pupils are thrust together in the labour market, unnecessary tensions arise; there are difficulties in terms of adjustment and adaptation, with mistrust and suspicion prevailing. In the process, productivity suffers. Multicultural education would solve this problem by exposing pupils to different ethnic groups, as part of their educational experience. This

educational experience can thus be enriched through contact with different cultural heritages and may thus be rendered more realistic and relevant.

Multicultural education, however, also has its difficulties in the implementation thereof in the classroom. A difficulty to be contended with, amongst others, is the problem of language. Children will bring into classrooms the language systems of their cultures, and therefore, it will be the obligation of teachers to ensure the right of each child to learn in his or her home language until the child is able to function well in the mainstream language. This poses a great challenge to teachers, because they may be unintentionally biased in the sense that some language groups may receive more attention than others. This may result in communication problems. Communication facilitates the formation of relationships: It is through communication that children learn about other people's perspectives, opinions and values and about themselves and how others view them.

The foregoing paragraph clearly points out the importance of communication and/or the interaction process. Therefore, this study will be concerned with the interaction process within multicultural classrooms. The researcher intends to study how pupils of various racial, language and cultural groups interact with one another and specifically to determine which variables other than language and race, play a role in peer group formation in the South African context.

### **1.3.2 Formulation of the problem**

In this study the researcher will try to establish the quality of interactions within multicultural schools. The interactions referred to are pupil-parent, peer group and pupil-school environment relationships in multicultural primary school classrooms in South Africa.

### **1.3.3 Exploration of the problem**

This study on relationship formation in multicultural classrooms will be limited to senior primary school pupils. According to Vrey (1979:87) the primary school child's main task is "to discover and assign meaning to everything he is involved in. In this manner relations are formed and a life-world is established".

In the previous paragraph, mention was made of the cultural diversity of South African society. The researcher would like to focus attention on the relationships prevalent in multicultural schools and will also attempt to explain the extent to which these relationships influence education in multicultural settings.

## **1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

For purposes of clarity this research will make provision for general and specific aims.

### **1.4.1 General aim**

This research aims to analyse and evaluate the nature and quality of interactions in multicultural primary school classrooms, in South Africa.

### **1.4.2 Specific aims**

This research is concerned with the identification of specific variables which influence relationship formation in multicultural primary school classrooms, and to evaluate the influence these variables have on peer group formation. For the purpose of identifying these variables and their influence, these specific aims may be broken down into the following questions:

- Does the quality of the child's relationship with the parents influence his/her ability to adjust in a multicultural classroom?

- Does gender play a role in the formation of peer groups in primary school classrooms?
- To what extent does the school, classroom environment and scholastic performance influence the child's ability to form relationships?
- What role is played by the child's self-concept and personality in the formation of relationships?
- Do the primary school child's language/culture and racial identity influence his ability to become friends with children from other cultural groups?

## 1.5 CONCEPT DEFINITION

### 1.5.1 Relationship formation

Rulashe (Le Roux 1993:101) says that education takes place when there is dialogue or interaction between the child and the adult in an environment. The child, under the guidance of the adult, will **attach meaning** to his/her realities and create a network of personalised relationships with aspects of that particular environment.

According to Le Roux and Pretorius (1992:11), the significant and meaningful physical and psychological environment of the child includes his relationships with ideas, people, objects and himself. The child has to give meaning to these relationships and then he will be in a position to know and understand his life-world. The child in his life-world is **involved** in assigning meaning to his relationships. His **involvement** is manifested by the formation of positive or negative relationships with other people. Involvement means engaging himself totally in what he is doing and **assigning meaning** to what he **experiences**. The greater the scope for total involvement, the greater the likelihood of successful interactions. What a child **experiences** in his relationships with people helps him to **assign meaning** to them. Assigning meaning, therefore, depends on how he **experiences** a situation. The accumulation of **experiences**, in a wide variety of life situations, helps the child to gather more information about things and people. The

more the child is exposed to a wide variety of life situations, the more he becomes successful in his formation of relationships (compare Vrey 1979:29-44).

### 1.5.2 Culture

Stark (1975:36) defines culture as the way of life of a group of people or a society. He maintains that culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, ideas, values, traditions, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

A society is a comprehensive social grouping. It includes all institutions needed for human survival. Popenoe (1986:52) concurs with Stark (1975:36) that a culture is the set of values, norms and traditions that members of a society share. Culture is also learned and therefore it can be regarded as the sum total of what people learn in common with other members of the groups to which they belong.

Culture and society are interdependent. Without culture there is no society; and cultures exist only as an aspect of society (Stark 1975:37). According to Smolicz (1981:128), language is a unifying factor of a particular culture and often a prerequisite of its survival. No other factor is as powerful as language in maintaining by itself the genuine and lasting distinctiveness of an ethnic group.

According to Baruth and Lee Manning (1992:11), ethnic groups are found within the society. Ethnicity as such refers to the manner in which members of a group perceive themselves, and how, in turn, they are perceived by others.

Bagley and Verma (1983:ix) refer to ethnicity as indicating membership of a group which is distinctive in terms of cultural identity, language, religion, physical features, and lifestyle.

The following attributes are associated with ethnicity:

- a group image and a sense of identity, derived from contemporary cultural patterns,
- a sense of history,
- shared religious, political and economic interests, and
- membership which is involuntary.

After having explained or described the concept of culture, in summary this can be described as a way in which we make sense of the world. By means of culture, persons are meaningfully related to one another, and to their physical and supernatural environments. Language, economic and technological activities, social organisations and control, philosophy and religion are all interrelated aspects of culture (Coutts 1992b:39).

### 1.5.3 Multiculturalism

Fowler and Fowler (1969:526; 621) refer to the terms *multi-* and *plural-* as denoting more than one or many; and therefore the terms *multiculturalism* and *cultural pluralism* are frequently used interchangeably (Watson 1988:538).

Baker (1979:256) maintains that a multicultural concept is an inevitable reality in any society within which people of various cultural backgrounds are changing, moving about, and learning.

According to Oliver (1990:26) multiculturalism implies that all people are members of their societies, and they are conditioned by their surroundings and culture. The purpose of multiculturalism is that people should not have any inherent bias against other cultures; that they should be encouraged to find interest in different world views, and to examine these views critically, absorbing what they find to be of worth and value. This can only exist if individuals are exposed to knowledge and skills from other societies.

Cultural pluralism, according to Goodey (1988:15) involves the mutual exchange of cultural contents and respect for different views of reality and conceptions of man, with the belief that the cultures of different groups enrich a nation and provide it with alternative ways to view the world and solve complex human problems. This concept includes basic ideas such as equal opportunity for all people and respect for human dignity.

#### 1.5.4 Education

Le Roux and Pretorius (1992:8) and Watson (1988:536) describe education as a universal, truly human phenomenon, as a process in which the society's knowledge, norms, customs, social values and skills are consciously and purposefully transmitted from one generation to another. Pius (1936:26) writes that "since, however, the younger generation must be trained in the arts and sciences for the advantage and prosperity of civil society ... it was necessary to create that social institution, the school". Kramp (Stone 1981:19) points out that in fact the primary concern of the school is maturation, that is to say, the instillation of all basic experiences, attitudes and concepts which are essential to adult life in a highly differentiated society, and therefore, schools exist to provide education in the widest sense.

Kramp (Stone 1981:19) further maintains that education in schools is concerned with the development of new patterns in relationships and new life-forms, and thus with preparation for a worthwhile life in a future social order. Le Roux (1993:100-101) views education as a process of guiding a child towards self-actualisation within the constraints of an environment, a process in which child, adult and environment appear in a reciprocal, coherent and functional fashion. In his opinion, education is constituted by various factors, amongst others, a situation or environment in which the process of actualisation takes place. This in essence means that there is dialogue or interaction between the constituents (child, adult, environment) of education.

McLean and Young (1988:11) maintain that education must take into account the way society itself operates and it should aim at the following:

- The child needs to be educated about difference. That is, where diversity exists, it must be acknowledged. Culture must be shown for what it is, that is, through education the child should be able to show his sympathies and affections and must also learn to appreciate the unity and diversity of mankind. Education must assist the child to become a civilised, able and complete human being who will not only be able to control his emotions, but will also have a sensitivity and desire for the beautiful, the good and the true. The child should, when confronted by a concrete situation, have the ability and the desire to choose the right and the good which a sense of decency demands. The educated person should, if he is left free to choose and act according to his own norms, make his decisions in conformity with his community's philosophy of life (Cilliers 1975:36).
- The child needs to be educated about similarity. It should be emphasised that despite differences in language, culture and religion, as human beings we still need one another because we share needs, values and experiences.
- The child needs to be educated about the true nature of society. Children must be taught how to cope with life in a multicultural society in a fair and just manner, and must be enabled to realise their responsibilities to bring about changes for a better future.

### 1.5.5 Multicultural education

Gollnick, Klassen and Yff (1976:1) describe multicultural education as a positive response to the recognition of the culturally pluralistic nature of the school population. Claassen (1989b:429) defines multicultural education as education which accounts for

cultural diversity in a positive manner, and that it is education for a multicultural society.

According to Coutts (1992a:8) multicultural schooling implies the presence of children drawn from different racial, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, all learning together in the same classrooms. In multicultural classrooms, pupils are exposed to the cultures of others while also enjoying the nurturing of their own cultures; that is, in the multicultural classroom the respective cultures are accepted as valuable educational resources (Coutts 1990:5).

Zukowski-Faust (1989:13) maintains that if pupils speak different languages at home and have a common medium of instruction at school, then the classroom is both multicultural and multilingual. Baker (1979:255) points out that multicultural education affirms that schools should be oriented towards the cultural enrichment of all children and youth through programmes rooted in the preservation and extension of cultural diversity as a fact of life.

Multicultural education is characterised by

- the exposure of pupils to a variety of cultural heritages, thus promoting a broad education while fostering tolerance and empathy,
- the strive for an equilibrium between the maintenance of reasonable social and political stability and the tolerance and encouragement of the diversity of cultures,
- the strive to attain:
  - equal education opportunity,
  - cultural interaction, which allows reciprocal cultural enrichment to take place,
  - recognition of the reality of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity while striving towards national unity (*Multicultural education* 1991:2),

- an educational environment that will help pupils acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills they will need to participate in civic action to make society more equitable and just (Banks 1992:32; Baruth *et al.* 1992:24).

The concept *multicultural education* has been defined or described in many various ways. It seems that many authors concur in as far as the concept description is concerned. In conclusion, Mogdil, Verma, Mallick and Mogdil (1986:28-29) point out that if education is concerned with developing such basic human capacities as curiosity, self-criticism, sensitivity, intellectual humility and respect for others, and with opening the pupil's mind to the great achievements of mankind, then it must be multiculturally orientated.

#### 1.5.6 The primary school child

The primary school child is usually between the ages of six and thirteen (Hamachek 1979:103; Prinsloo, Vorster, Sibaya and Mathunyane 1996:99). Children between these ages move from the influence sphere of the parental home to that of the peer group. Most of their time is spent playing with friends. Acceptance in the peer group is mainly based on physiological maturation and socio-psychological relations.

The term *primary school child* in this research will refer to senior primary school pupils who are either in standard four or five and whose ages range between ten and thirteen. According to Vrey (1979:103-104), it is during the senior primary school phase that the child has to take an increasing number of decisions for which he also has to accept responsibility. The peer group gives him the opportunity of acting independently. Differences that manifest themselves during adolescence, also become evident. Therefore, the child will automatically express the typical modes of conduct (in terms of gender roles) that are highly valued in the particular culture.

## **1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH USED IN THE INVESTIGATION**

### **1.6.1 Literature study**

The literature study will concentrate on a wide review of relevant writings such as books, periodicals, reports, documents and newspaper articles, that will give a broad background of multicultural education, the general social interactions experienced in multicultural classrooms, as well as the developmental phase of the primary school child.

The study of the literature will enable the researcher to gain insight into how these social interactions are influenced by developmental aspects of the child, as well as to how peer groups are formed in the multicultural setting in South African schools.

### **1.6.2 Empirical study**

#### ***1.6.2.1 Questionnaire***

A nomothetic study will be conducted in which a questionnaire for the evaluation of relationships in multicultural schools will be developed and administered.

Certain variables, for example the self-concept and personality, will be measured by making use of standardised tests developed by the Human Sciences Research Council.

#### ***1.6.2.2 The sociogram***

The sociometric technique will be used to determine friendship patterns prevalent in multicultural classrooms.

## 1.7 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

In chapter one, the background of the problem is explored and the problem stated. The aims and an outline of the method of research are also given. Key concepts are explained to facilitate understanding.

In chapter two a broad background of the nature and aims of multicultural education will be outlined. The implementation and the problems inherent to the multicultural classrooms, with specific reference to South Africa, will also be looked into.

Chapter three will deal with relevant aspects of the primary school child's social and emotional level of development. Focus will be placed on the extent to which these developmental aspects influence the child's relationship formation.

Chapter four will concentrate on the social interactions experienced in the multicultural school setting of the primary school.

Chapter five will deal with the design of the study and the procedures will be discussed.

Chapter six will present the results of the investigation. These will be analysed and interpreted.

Chapter seven will provide a summary of the research findings. Conclusions will be drawn, and recommendations and suggestions for future research will be offered.

## Chapter 2

# The nature and aims of multicultural classrooms

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

A healthy multicultural school environment demonstrates a genuine respect and concern for the optimal development of all children. In such an environment, culturally different children, along with others, can learn to play an active role in a democratic society. Adams and Hamm (1991:20) point out that educating a diverse population is a shared responsibility because all educators are involved in the education of children by shaping the world in which that education will take place.

In order to fully understand multiculturalism in schools, this chapter will concentrate on education in the multicultural society. Special attention will be focused on the possible phasing in of multicultural classrooms in the Republic of South Africa.

### 2.2 THE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

A society is a comprehensive social grouping. It includes all institutions needed for human survival. Culture and society are interdependent: Without culture there is no society; and culture exists only as an aspect of society (Stark 1975:37). In paragraph 1.5.2 culture is defined as a complex whole which includes knowledge, ideas, traditions, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This description makes it evident that the concept *multicultural* encompasses many different cultures within a society. Le Roux (1992:18) mentions

that the multicultural reality is in fact made up of different cultures that overlap and influence one another.

Baker (1979:256) points out that the multicultural concept implies a view of life in which people recognise and cherish the differences amongst groups of people and search for ways to ensure that such traits become positive influences on both the individual who possesses them and all others with whom he/she associates in society. Pratte (1979:141) points out that the term *multicultural* is applicable to a society that meets three criteria, namely

- cultural diversity, in the form of a number of groups (be they political, racial, ethnic, religious, economic or age) which are exhibited in a society,
- approximate equal political, economic and educational opportunity,
- behavioural commitment to the values of cultural pluralism as a basis for a viable system of social organisation.

According to Baptiste (1986:303) the concept of *cultural pluralism* led to the emergence of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism refers to “a process of education that affiliates itself not only with the descriptive nature but, more importantly, to the prescriptive nature of pluralism...”. Therefore, multicultural education can be used as a tool in the process of social change and can thus be defined as the actualisation of the ideology of cultural pluralism in schools (Goodey 1988:16).

Weinberg (Saunders 1982:16) describes three models of education for a multicultural society, namely:

- (1) **The human relation model:** In this approach there is the assumption that people are basically tolerant of other ethnic groups. In those situations where interpersonal conflicts are found, they are believed to arise from individual perceptions. Education can provide information leading to changes in attitude, hence education is an effective antidote to prejudice.

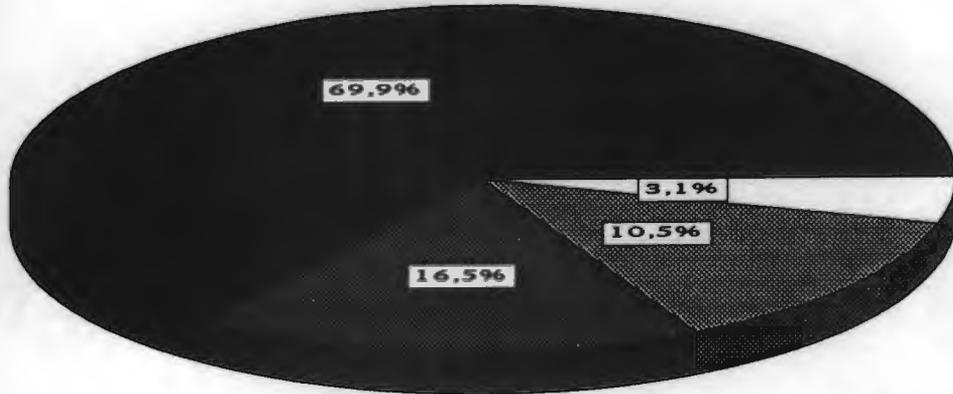
- (2) **The interracial model:** This education recognises the prejudices that exist against certain ethnic groups at group level.
- (3) **The human rights model:** This model fits some current practices in the society. Group differences are presented as positive attributes of equal worth. The crucial characteristic of this model is that the members of the ethnic groups have a legal and moral right to choose the extent to which they preserve their cultural uniqueness.

Racial and cultural tolerance is seen here as a salient factor, in which minority groups will have sufficiently strong feelings of identity and within which the greatest possible freedom of self-determination is preserved.

South Africa comprises one of the most multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious societies in the world (Goodey 1988:8). The following graphic presentations illustrate the complexity of the South African population composition, the population growth and/or changes expected by the year 2020 and the multilingual nature of the society.

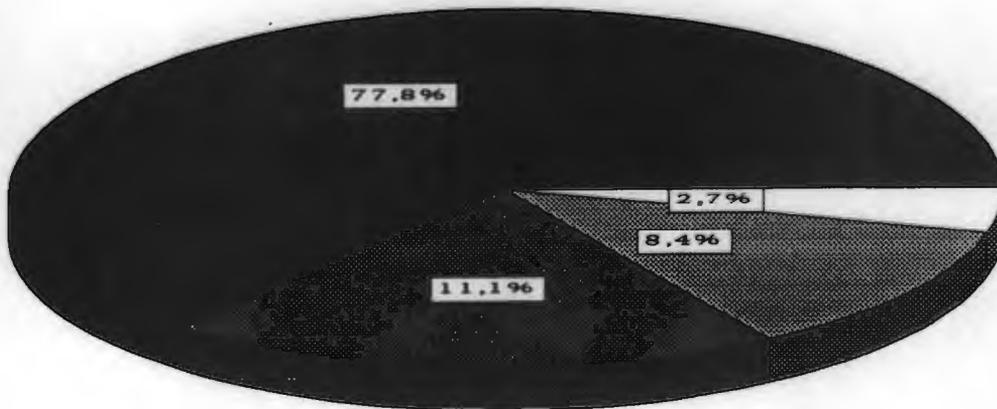
**Graphic presentation 2.1: Population composition**

**1980**



**Black**      **White**  
**Coloured**      **Asian**

**2020**



**Black**      **White**  
**Coloured**      **Asian**

*(Department of Education and Training Graphic Presentation 1993:3)*

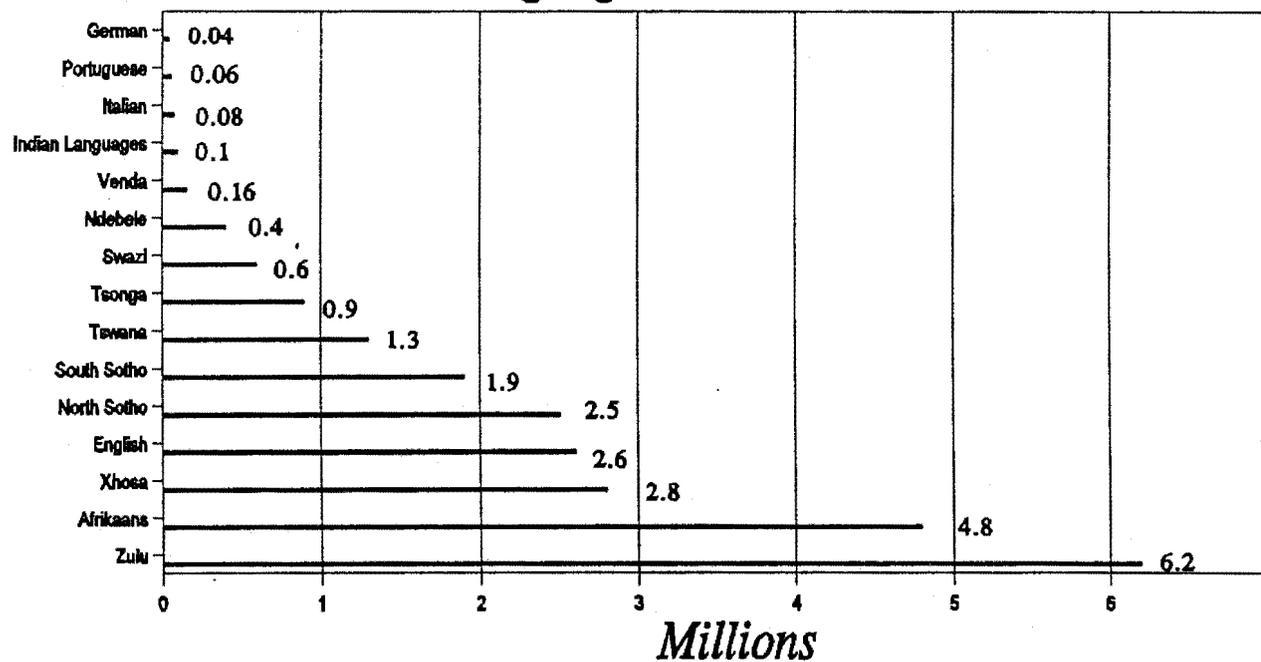
There are four main population groups, namely, blacks, whites, coloureds and Asians. Each population group can be subdivided into a number of ethnic, language or religious groups. There is also much diversity that exists within the ethnic and religious groups. To avoid complicating the already complex situation, no statements will be made about the beliefs, attitudes or values of specific groups.

According to De Vries (1990:7) out of the total South African population of 36 million, 28 million are blacks, six million are whites and the remaining two million is made up of coloureds and Asians.

Dhlomo (1989:2) says: "Race and culture are natural factors, historic expressions - and an inevitable social reality. The existence of culture and race cannot be wished away and as long as there is more than one group in our society, it will be futile to expect people to forgo their identities." Therefore, in order to understand and accommodate cultural diversity, people will have to gain accurate and objective knowledge about expectations, needs, and challenges facing a culturally diverse society.

*Languages*

### Home Languages of South Africans



(Department of Education and Training, Graphic Presentation 1993:19)

The graphic presentation clearly indicates the population composition of South Africa in terms of ethnicity and home languages. In addition to the graphic presentation, Lemmer (1993:18) points out that, in fact, South Africa is a multilingual country with at least 24 languages spoken besides English and Afrikaans. Smoliczs (1981:128) points out that language is a “unifying factor of a particular culture and often a prerequisite for its survival. No other factor is as powerful as language, maintaining by itself the genuine and lasting distinctiveness of an ethnic group.”

Zukowski-Faust (1989:13) concurs with Smoliczs and says that language and culture are inseparable. These two form a connection that affects every aspect of life. The diversity of the South African population, amongst others, in terms of the various languages spoken, is a cause for great concern. A Sowetan reader was concerned about the future of the South African constitution and “powers given” to provincial governments to choose their official languages. This reader had fears that other language groups might be discriminated against. In reply, Tim Modise said “cultures must find a way of expression ... problems would be created if provincial governments suppressed one language to the advantage of the others” (*Sowetan* 14 December 1993:2). In this regard, South African society has at least been assured that the various languages will still be retained and respected by the inclusion of Section 3(1) in the Interim Constitution which states: “Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho saLebowa, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu shall be the official South African languages at national level, and conditions shall be created for their development and for the promotion of their equal use and enjoyment” (*Government Gazette* 1994:4). Section 31 states that “every person shall have the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of his or her choice” (*Government Gazette* 1994:18).

The above exposition clearly explains what a multicultural society is, and highlights the complex nature of the South African society. In view of the information gathered with regard to multicultural society in general, the researcher will, in the subsequent subparagraphs, concentrate on classrooms in the multicultural environment.

## 2.3 THE PRINCIPLES OF MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLING

Multicultural education evolved over a period of time. This came about through an awareness of the multicultural nature of society. Education in a multicultural society amounts to a carefully programmed induction into the complexity of society, and lays the foundations for learning to cope with the complexities of tomorrow. The important principles of learning and teaching which play a role in multicultural schooling, are briefly outlined below:

### 2.3.1 The principle of differentiation

This is the principle of recognising differences and variety in life, which includes differential education of the child and differentiated unfolding of reality. This indicates that if a child in a plural society is not exposed to that kind of differentiation, then he or she cannot properly accept his cultural mandate (Claassen 1989b:34).

### 2.3.2 The principle of integration

The principle of integration recognises that unity in diversity must be accounted for in the total educational system. In learning, the child must acquire not only a basic knowledge of his culture but also knowledge of other lifestyles (Claassen 1989b:35; Abbey, Brindis and Casas 1990:9).

According to Coutts (1992b:97) integration implies that adaptations are made by one cultural group in order to "fit in" with the dominant cultural group, without completely disregarding their own culture (compare Hessari and Hill 1990:10). Watson (1988:542) maintains that integration ensures equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance, and the maintenance of positive intergroup relations (compare Bagley *et al.* 1983:8).

### 2.3.3 The principle of continuity

This principle is derived from a recognition of the importance of the past for an understanding of the present. It emphasises the continuing significance tradition has, for a sense of cultural identity. On the other hand, it allows for reflection, for adaptation and for changes to meet present needs. It allows, in other words, for decision-making, and facilitates personal choice.

This principle is directed towards developing the critical and evaluative faculty in pupils stage by stage, so that the decisions they make and the opinions they come to hold, are informed and reasonable (Hulmes 1989:153).

### 2.3.4 The principle of assimilation

This is the principle whereby ethnic minorities are absorbed, over a period of time, into the mainstream of the dominant group in society. They are expected to adopt the language, cultural modes (dress) and values of the host society.

Schooling can be used to good effect to ensure assimilation because not only does the curriculum ignore the fact of different minority groups, but there is official insistence on the use of one language to teach one set of social values and customs (Hessari *et al.* 1990:9; Watson 1988:537).

After having acquired background knowledge about the principles of learning and in teaching multicultural education, it is important to look at the aims and rationale of multicultural classrooms in the multicultural society.

## 2.4 THE PURPOSE OF MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS

Claassen (1989a:432) mentions that multicultural education, is education which accounts for cultural diversity in a positive manner, and that it is a universal kind of

kind of education for all students. Claassen further points out that multicultural education means education for a multicultural society and it is thus desirable that in multicultural education the school population reflect the plural composition of society. ✓

To facilitate an in-depth understanding of schooling in a multicultural setting, the researcher will portray a brief outline of general and specific aims of multicultural education.

#### 2.4.1 The general aims of multicultural education

Banks (1991-1992:32) maintains that the aim of "education within a pluralistic society should affirm and help students understand their home and community cultures". It should also help to free them from their cultural boundaries. Banks further points out that education in a democratic society should help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills they will need to participate in civic action to make society more equitable and just. ✓

Various researchers point out the following as the general aims of multicultural education. Multicultural education

- (1) is education which enables children to develop towards maturity with the ability to recognise inequality, injustice, racism, stereotypes, prejudice, bias, and which equips them with the knowledge and skills to help them challenge and attempt to change these manifestations when they encounter them in all strata of society (Hessari et al. 1990:3),
- (2) aims to open children's minds to the fact of diversity within themselves, within others and within the national society (Hessari et al. 1990:4),

- (3) aims at alerting the pupils to the varied world around them and also to inculcate cultural respect, which is the educational spearhead of a drive against racism and intolerance (Baruth et al. 1992:24; Beckmann 1992:6; Edwards 1991:939),
- (4) must make members of a cultural group aware of their own culture (Claassen 1989b:55),
- (5) must combat discrimination (Claassen 1989b:60),
- (6) aims at the creation of an educational environment in which a wide range of cultural groups (such as gender, ethnic and various regional groups) will experience educational equity (Baruth et al. 1992:24; Goodey 1988:15-16; McCormick 1984:94),
- (7) should provide an environment that recognises differences among people, perceives cultural differences as strengths rather than weaknesses to be remediated, and emphasises the importance of all differences and exceptionalities in the education process (Baruth et al. 1992:23),
- (8) must ensure that student do not have any inherent bias towards other cultures; that they are encouraged to find interest in different world-views, and examine these views critically, absorbing what they find to be of worth and value (Oliver 1990:26),
- (9) aims at preparing pupils to live harmoniously in a multicultural society and to strive to bring about, or maintain, a just society for all. Pupils must realise that cultural diversity benefits society, that cross-cultural interaction on an individual basis is a normal, healthy, human endeavour. Pupils must learn that being different does not mean being inferior, that every citizen has the right to participate and contribute to every sphere of life regardless of sex, social status, religious affiliation or skin colour (Brown 1982:12),

(10) must enable students to understand as many subcultural groups as possible (Claassen 1989b:61).

To summarise the above-mentioned aims, it can be said that in general, multicultural education aims at providing a richer educational environment in terms of cross-cultural knowledge and understanding, the removal of artificial barriers and the creation of wider perspectives on our society (*Open Schools - the solution* 1986:10).

#### 2.4.2 The specific aims of multicultural education

There are three specific aims of education in a multicultural society. Hulmes (1989:20-22) states these aims, as distinguished by Paul Tillich, as being

- technical education,
- human education, and
- inductive education.

##### 2.4.2.1 Technical education

Tillich (Hulmes 1989:20) associates technical education with the acquisition of knowledge and skills (some of them quite basic, others much more sophisticated) in the use of tools. Every society requires the services of well-trained technicians and skilled craftsmen for a multiplicity of services. One aim of education is to produce such skilled individuals in sufficient numbers.

The ability to decide for oneself about accepting or rejecting a particular set of beliefs or attitudes to life, is an acquired skill. This has a bearing on the role of teachers in a pluralistic society. That is, they will have to work towards reaching a point where their pupils are able to think for themselves, to weigh the evidence and then make a decision on the basis of that evidence.

#### 2.4.2.2 *Humanistic education*

Education in a multicultural society aims at aiding the child to actualise his potentialities, both generally and individually. The aim of the educational process is the development of the humanistic personality in whom as many potentialities as possible are nurtured, among them being technical skills and religious functions.

#### 2.4.2.3 *Inductive education*

The induction of children into their families, with the traditions, symbols and demands of the family, is the basic form of inductive education. Its aim is not the development of the potentialities of the individual, but his or her induction into the actuality of a group, the life and spirit of the community, family, tribe, town, nation and church. Such a process happens spontaneously through the individual's participation in the life of the group.

The truth of it seems to be that these three aims of education, namely the technical, humanistic and inductive, are closely interdependent. In the final analysis, all education is inductive in the sense that it helps to introduce individuals into what, for them, are new aspects of the mystery of human existence.

## 2.5 MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLING

Multicultural schooling implies the presence of pupils from different cultural heritages learning together in the same classrooms; being exposed to the cultures of others while also enjoying the nurturing of their own cultures (Coutts 1990:5). Multicultural schooling honours the multicultural nature of the society, serves as an agent of change and also examines the connections between power and knowledge.

Multicultural classrooms provide for the growth of positive self-esteem among all children and guarantee that each child will feel successful. By providing children equal

opportunity to learn, multicultural classrooms give each child a chance to reach her/his potential. The ultimate goal of multicultural schooling is to develop children's ability to function fully within multiple cultures (Perry and Fraser 1993:48). For the child to function completely within multiple cultures, the school curriculum will have to be designed in such a way that it ensures that the child is guided to a realisation that ethnic and cultural differences are recognised, and not seen as some form of irritation and source of dispute. The implication is that the child's self-image, his pride in his heritage and his sense of security within the classroom improves, if this sense of distrust or irritation is not present. Children who are secure in their identity feel good about themselves, they are excited about what is happening at school, and their interest in the activities of the classroom improves (Davies 1988:12).

In the light of the above discussion it is imperative that the researcher allude to a few facts about the multicultural curriculum and relevant aspects such as language, literature and cooperative learning, which form an integral part of the school curriculum. } Conclude

### 2.5.1 The multicultural classroom curriculum

In order to achieve the intended goals of producing responsible citizens within a democratic society, a multicultural curriculum has to be designed and implemented. A multicultural curriculum has to reflect social and political changes towards equality of opportunity, with a curriculum focus on race relations (Vold 1992:8).

Hussey (Peters 1991:19) emphasises the point about race relations by saying that in schools, the curriculum has an important part to play in the elimination of racism and prejudice. Researchers like Baruth *et al.* (1992:173) and Perry *et al.* (1993:20), maintain that multiculturalism should extend to, and permeate, all aspects of the school. The curriculum should be set in such a way that multiculturalism becomes a basic part of the school, a natural and accepted aspect of its daily routine.

Educationists' debate about the multicultural curriculum revolves around the definition of culture. When culture is seen as a continuing creation of a people, building on a past and moving towards a future, the resulting curricula are more process-oriented. Therefore, the study of culture should not be regarded as a separate subject in a school curriculum, instead an attempt has to be made to integrate the child's awareness of the influence of culture on all areas of study.

When multicultural education is regarded as a perspective; inclusiveness in the integration with other subject areas becomes the key issue. William (Vold 1992:10) points out four dimensions in multicultural learning, namely:

- (1) As a perspective certain elements must be present to ensure authority and value. The curriculum should draw from more than one tradition, to identify the elements of the subject area.
- (2) The examples used to illustrate the principles taught, should relate to the experiences children bring with them to the classroom. These examples should recognise the children's frame of reference and help them relate new learning to their prior knowledge.
- (3) The teaching strategies used, should account for the diverse ways in which children acquire or construct new knowledge and skills.
- (4) The children should be engaged in the comparison and contrasting of their experiences across the group as they work with any subject area, so that not only similarities but also differences in experience are considered.

Children should be guided towards recognition of the underlying issues in society that influence each of the preceding four dimensions of their learning.

To summarise the whole question of the multicultural curriculum, it can be said that a curriculum is multicultural when it recognises diversity in experience, the relationships between differences in experience and the ways children acquire or construct new knowledge. A curriculum is multicultural when it enables children to recognise their prior knowledge in what is being taught.

### **2.5.2 The aspect of language in the curriculum**

It is impossible to consider any form of education - or even human existence - without first considering the impact of language on people's lives. Language must be recognised as one of the most significant human resources; it functions in a multitude of ways to affirm, contradict, negotiate, challenge, transform and empower particular cultural and ideological beliefs and practices. Language constitutes one of the most powerful media for transmitting personal histories and social realities, as well as for thinking and shaping the world (Darder 1991:101).

Therefore, schools should recognise that language is an integral aspect of a social system. Since all children bring into the classroom the language systems of their cultures, it is the obligation of teachers to ensure the right of each child to learn in the language of the home until the child is able to function well in the mainstream language. Giving attention to the home language raises it to a place of dignity and respect for multicultural pupils.

The classroom environment should be such that teachers understand cultural and linguistic differences and recognise the value of these differences while they work to enhance the learners' skills in the mainstream language. As regards language, much of its value lies in the talking, discussion and discovery which take place during children's work. For language diversity to have meaning for children, it must be included in purposeful activities. The teacher should consider language diversity during the planning of class work, so that it forms one of the strands that are interwoven through all of the children's work (Lemmer 1993:20).

Hessari *et al.* (1990:138) point out that care should be taken when trying to encourage bilingual children to contribute in their mother tongue. Children are easily embarrassed if they are made to feel different. The teacher has to aim to bring language diversity into all the work of the children. This can be achieved by enabling children to

- become less insular and to develop a broader outlook,
- gain an insight into the richness of the world's languages,
- recognise and value variety and richness of dialects and accents,
- develop an added interest in their own language,
- learn to value other people's skills in languages, particularly those of bilingual classmates, and
- gain an insight into the status of various languages, dialects and accents.

The availability of meaningful and familiar books in more than one language around the class and school, tapes of familiar stories in other languages and the use of the home language of pupils in communicating with parents, can serve as good strategies to encourage language diversity (Hessari *et al.* 1990:140).

### **2.5.3 Literature studies and the curriculum**

One way that multiculturalism can permeate the curriculum is through a literature approach that incorporates culturally appropriate children's literature in teaching the various areas of the curriculum.

The use of literature from different cultures is essential to all areas of the curriculum, because these materials meet the needs of students and help them grow in understanding of themselves and others. Through carefully selected and shared multicultural reading materials, students learn to identify with the people who created the stories, whether of the past or present (Baruth *et al.* 1992:173).

#### 2.5.4 Cooperative learning in multicultural classrooms

Cooperative learning aims at helping children learn to live in harmony with those who are different. It improves social relations between culturally different children. In such an atmosphere group members become more accepting of classmates who are different (Adams *et al.* 1992:20).

Cooperative learning is a useful instrument to facilitate a smooth learning and teaching situation. It revolves around the idea of active, small-group learning environments. Children at various ability levels cluster together, discuss topics, and learn to take charge of their own learning. Team spirit rather than individual rivalry is stressed, as children learn to work together in mixed-ability groups to accomplish a learning goal. The use of intercultural learning teams is one way of organising classrooms striving for multicultural harmony.

According to Jakupcak (Putnam 1993:172) cooperative learning is a teacher-initiated strategy used within the general classroom, that encourages the acquisition of social skills and communication capabilities and enhances employment preparation. It provides opportunities for practising appropriate decision-making skills relevant to the use of leisure and recreation time.

In cooperative learning groups, the teacher places a heterogeneously balanced mixture of students together and assigns a rotating role to each. In such a setting, the growth of trust, interdependence, a sense of responsibility to others, and self-esteem become visible.

Slabbert (1992:439-441) mentions that in multicultural settings there are problems such as low or negative self-esteem, poor language proficiency and prejudice. Cooperative learning is one of the best instruments through which these problems can be solved. With cooperative learning there is true integration because students become friends with

their team-mates. In cooperative learning, helping, sharing, cooperating and assisting become classroom norms and the barriers that inhibit learning quality disappear.

## 2.6 THE MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Creating the most favourable climate for learning is a challenge to teachers because of various factors being involved, such as interpersonal relationships, the attitudes of children, and the development of the teacher's own abilities to interact with people from different cultures. A multicultural classroom climate is a fully established environment that reflects and respects racial, cultural, gender, ability and age diversity through classroom design, use of curriculum, and sound personal interactions. Sound interactions will create a psychologically safe learning environment (Clasen 1992:160).

For a healthy, informative and educative classroom climate to exist, the teacher, child and parents have important roles to play. /

### 2.6.1 The role of the child

Children from specific cultural and ethnic groups may come to school with stereotype ideas about other groups, and this may sometimes result in conflict. Nonetheless, it can be reasonably assumed that schools provide significant opportunities for raising cultural awareness and understanding, and for the formation of caring communities, perhaps more so than any other setting, especially because schools provide an environment in which youngsters spend most of their time together in one setting.

It is when children from different cultures begin to interact with and get to know one another in a supportive classroom environment that they can learn to recognise stereotypes and their associated prejudices and begin to address them (Putnam 1993:146).

Children from various cultural backgrounds will have to master or acquire certain social skills in order to accept one another, and to maintain the envisaged warm multicultural classroom climate. They will have to respond positively to the demands of the multicultural classrooms, control and regulate their behaviour, consider and respect the opinions of others and express emotions in a socially acceptable way. If these goals are achieved, learning in multicultural classrooms will be most exciting.

### 2.6.2 The role of the teacher

In order to provide quality instruction, teachers have to provide a warm, safe and nurturing emotional environment and children have to receive expressions of esteem and positive regard from the teacher. A good teacher expresses caring for the children, advocates for them in relationship negotiation with other children, and generally responds to them as he or she would with an own child.

A good teacher has authority. Authority, within the context of multicultural schooling, is intimately linked to the manner in which teachers exercise control, direct, influence and make decisions about what is actually to take place in their classrooms (Darder 1991:107).

Children attend school to learn, to solve problems, to make mistakes and to learn from them in a positive environment. Some children exhibit consistent cooperative behaviour, while others are a daily challenge to the patience of teachers. The multicultural classroom transmits the message each day to each child that the opportunity exists to change and to improve under the direction of an understanding teacher.

In the same breath, a teacher, through his control, direction and influence, has to create opportunities for children to develop a sense of industry and self-efficacy. Good teachers know how to orchestrate the activities of children so that they experience successes in a variety of tasks. They also know how to recognise special efforts and to

encourage special abilities. Good teachers will always share with parents and children common cultural assumptions and experiential backgrounds (Perry et al. 1993:241)

According to Vold (1992:68), teachers in the execution of their duties will have to ensure that the climate of their classrooms is observably multicultural. In order to maintain such a classroom climate, Fennimore (Vold 1992:69-70) suggests the use of the "accept, value, identify, model and advocate" model which provides a conceptual guideline enabling teachers to analyse and focus their attitudes and subsequent classroom and social behaviour.

Fennimore's model outlines the following steps:

- (1) Teachers **accept** the diversities in their classrooms (compare Drake 1993:264).
- (2) Teachers **value** the diversities as a challenge to the successful preparation of all children for life in a multicultural world, and are determined to find the valuable skills and attributes of all children (compare Clasen 1992:160).
- (3) Teachers **identify** and articulate exactly what they can accomplish for their students regardless of diversities (such as learning disabilities, unemployed parents, or family abuse situations) and that which might be perceived as discouraging negatives.
- (4) Teachers willingly **model** excellence, acting as school leaders in terms of their positive and productive approach to diversity.
- (5) Teachers **advocate** for children through design of classroom interaction, peer interaction, and social interaction that might impact on the acceptance and positive valuing of their children.

Grossman (1991:161-162) concurs with Perry *et al.* (1993) and Vold (1992) by emphasising that for teachers to achieve the intended objectives of multicultural classrooms, they will have to acquire cultural sensitivity, meaning that they should be aware of the effects of these differences; and of cultural literacy. They will have to acquire a detailed knowledge of the cultural characteristics of specific ethnic and socio-economic groups, and in some cases, also be aware of attitudinal and behavioural changes.

Teachers who do not agree that they need to be culturally literate when working with a group of ethnically and socio-economically diverse children, will have to change their attitude about how to deal with diversity among children.

### **2.6.3 The role of the parents and community**

A school belongs to the parents and the immediate community. It is very important that efforts be made to get parents as involved in the education of their children as possible. Parents and other community members should be aware of what is happening at school and they should feel that their contributions and opinions are sought and respected.

As parents become involved in education and learn more about the school's goals, there is likely to be more overall support and assistance in the general affairs of the school (Baruth *et al.* 1992:190). Parents function as helpers, experts, decision-makers, as well as teachers in the home. Parents are co-planners of the educational welfare of their children and are also responsible for the provision of an environment and atmosphere conducive to learning and development.

One other important function of a parent in the promotion of a warm multicultural classroom climate, is to become a "real home-teacher". Parents who read stories to their children and expose them to multiple pictures of different peoples, cultural materials

and so on, expose children to (and prepare them for) the expectations of the multicultural environment (compare Orr 1992:21).

## 2.7 MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.7.1 Education in a multicultural South African society

Since representation of all cultural groups is necessary in a democratic society, educational practices that are inclusive and address multiculturalism, are crucial. Given the ethnic and cultural diversity in South Africa, schools will definitely be fertile grounds for children to interact with others who are different from themselves.

Education should strive to help pupils towards an understanding and appreciation of the reality of our society as a diverse and changing entity. Multicultural education, within and without our own society, is therefore an essential element which needs to be interwoven into all areas of learning. Multicultural education in South Africa should strive to widen children's concepts, to enable them to appreciate the essential equality of all people, to accept and value the variations that are possible within broad similarities, to revel in the richness of variety, to recognise stereotype opinions and to substitute them with facts and reason.

Perry *et al.* (1993:16) emphasise the fact that multicultural education aims to prepare all students for first class citizenship in a nation predicated on a diversity of racial and ethnic origins. Schools must always pursue policies that support the education of all students for full citizenship in a multiracial, multicultural and multilingual democracy.

South Africans should commit themselves to a future of hope, social justice and economic upliftment but there needs to be a willingness and commitment on the part of all people of all races and persuasions to promote the development of all our human resources (Finlayson 1991:11; African National Congress 1993:2).

To fully participate in a democratic society, students need the skills multicultural education can give them to understand others and to thrive in a rapidly changing, diverse world (Banks 1991-1992:35). In the South African situation, the realities that confront the provision of education for all its people must be seen from a socio-political and socio-economic perspective in addition to the conventional educational perspective.

According to Ginwala (1990:8) in such a situation the de-racialisation of all institutions of learning must be accompanied by the imperative of establishing all the sectors within society that are in need of education.

### **2.7.2 The new South African education system**

South Africa became a democratic society under the Government of National Unity. The challenge that lies ahead is to create an education system that will ensure that human resources and potential in our society are developed to the full.

A new education system should promote and express national unity. Bearing in mind the non-racial basis of a new education system, provision will have to be made for the accommodation of diversity, based on internationally recognised and educationally relevant basic human rights such as mother-tongue education, freedom of religion and the practise and transmission of an own culture. Freedom of association must consequently form a cornerstone of the new education system (National Education 1992:17).

An education system that promotes national unity is education that strives to achieve the following objectives:

- The elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour and gender.
- Equal opportunities.
- The recognition and accommodation of language, culture, religion and other legitimate interests.

- The provision of person power for national needs.
- The forming of whole human beings.
- The sharing of responsibilities for the provision of education between the state and interested sectors, such as the parent community.
- The full utilisation of the resources of all communities.
- The implementation of responsible affirmative action (Coutts 1992b:1; National Education 1992:17).

The African National Congress (1993:3-4), which forms part of the Government of National Unity, has proposed the following principles with regard to education:

- (1) The State has the central responsibility in the provision of education and training.
- (2) The provision of education and training shall be planned as part of a coherent and comprehensive national, social and economic reconstruction and development programme (RDP), including a national strategy for the development of human resources, and the democratisation of our society.
- (3) The education process shall aim at the development of a national democratic culture, with respect for the value of our people's diverse cultural and linguistic traditions, and shall encourage peace, justice, tolerance and stability in our communities and nation.
- (4) Education shall be based upon the principle of cooperation, critical thinking and civic responsibility, and shall equip individuals for participation in all aspects of society.
- (5) The provision of quality general education for all, which will necessitate the introduction of ten years of free and compulsory general education (African National Congress 1993:10; *The Star* 29 June 1994:21).

### **2.7.3 Resources for teaching and learning in South African multicultural classrooms**

In a multicultural society like that of South Africa, it is essential to establish learning environments most conducive to celebrating all differences and creating multicultural harmony (Clasen 1992:159).

South Africa is a country of many languages. Large numbers of South Africans of all races understand and use other languages in addition to their own. In fact, multilingual communication is probably the normal practice - a part of everyday life for most South Africans. On the basis of the aforementioned facts, the following with regard to languages has to be taken into account:

- Language policy in education should be the subject of a nationwide consultative process, to ensure that proposed changes in policy have the broad consent of the language communities which will be directly affected by them.
- No person or language community should be compelled to receive education through a language of learning it does not want.
- No language community should have reason to fear that the education system will be used to suppress its mother-tongue.
- Language restrictions should not be used to exclude citizens from educational opportunities (African National Congress 1993:62-63).

#### *2.7.3.1 Languages of learning*

Since language is essential to thinking and learning, learners must be able to learn in the language or languages which best suit this purpose. Within schools, the African

National Congress (1993:65) proposes that the choice of language or languages of learning be based on one of three options:

- (1) A language of wider communication, such as English, to which the school community subscribes, irrespective of whether this is the home language of the learners. If the language chosen is not the home language of the learners, then it should be introduced gradually.
- (2) The home language of the majority of learners in a particular school is the medium of instruction, as long as this does not discriminate against learners whose home language is different. Where the choice of a single language of learning would discriminate against significant numbers of learners, schools should, where possible, adopt more than one language of learning. In such cases, parallel classes could be run for different sets of learners.
- (3) The use of different languages as languages of learning, for example, to teach different subjects (compare Squelch 1991:62).

#### *2.7.3.2 Promoting multilingualism*

All South African children should be given access to, and be expected to learn, at least two South African languages throughout the period of compulsory schooling, as subjects and/or as language of learning. The learning of more than two languages will be strongly encouraged (compare *Government Gazette* section 3(9)(d) 28 January 1994:6).

Schools will be encouraged to offer, if necessary through appropriate incentives, at least one African language. In particular, the learning of an African language by non-African children will be actively promoted, as a contribution to raising the status of these languages, aiding understanding and communication across cultures, and thus building a non-racial society based on common citizenship (African National Congress 1993:66).

### 2.7.3.3 Curriculum

The African National Congress (1993:69) believes that the curriculum must promote unity and the common citizenship and destiny of all South Africans, irrespective of race, class, gender or ethnic background. It must be relevant to the needs of the individual as well as the social and economic needs of society. The curriculum must promote independent and self-critical learning and respect the equality of all forms of knowledge. More importantly, the process of curriculum development must be democratised through the participation of all stake holders (Squelch 1991:62).

Appropriate varieties of science and mathematics will be integrated into all levels of the national curriculum. The science and mathematics curricula will

- provide students with an understanding of the values of the sciences, how scientifically informed decisions are made and the risks these entail;
- relate to everyday life and include the study of technological applications and processes;
- include a balance of physical, biological, earth and environmental sciences;
- be accessible and affordable; and
- confront gender bias in the curriculum and pedagogy (African National Congress 1993:85).

### 2.7.4 The phasing in of multicultural education in the Republic of South Africa

In the past, the education system of South Africa reflected a division of pupils and staff on racial lines, in accordance with the dictates of the Population Registration Act of 1950. This dispensation focused on the need to separate pupils on the basis of their cultural heritages. Segregation in school was legally enforced. Through this act, South African society was conditioned by years of experience of "own affairs" (apartheid education) of which the underlying factor had been race. It is regrettable to mention that this separation resulted in a situation where most Blacks are presently under-

educated, underskilled, and underprepared for full participation in the social, economic and civic life of their country of birth.

At this point in time South African society faces the challenges of implementing the proposals made by the African National Congress. A major step was taken with the announcement by the Minister of Education, Professor Bengu, that a new single education system under his control had been established (*The Citizen* 14 June 1994:9).

The then Finance Minister, Derek Keys, when presenting the 1994/95 budget, alluded to the challenges facing the government when saying that "the Government is to focus the nation's efforts on properly meeting all the needs and aspiration of its people ... some of the needs are ... an education that will allow its subjects to contribute for a lifetime in this modern technological world ..." (*The Star Budget Special* 24 June 1994:1). The allocation of R29,2 billion to education, which represents 22 per cent of Government expenditure (*The Star* 23 June 1994:5), is a clear indication that the Government of National Unity regards education as very important and is committed to its upliftment.

Professor Bengu mentioned that the process of amalgamating the separate education departments had begun. He stressed that in order to avoid any disruption of education, it was vital that the transition process be smooth and orderly, meaning that the new education system would have to be phased in.

In view of the differences of race, culture, gender and socio-economic background that tend to characterise classes in multicultural schools, it is important that multicultural schooling be gradually phased into the school situation and suitable approaches to teaching be pursued.

Banks (Claassen 1989a:430) describes the following possible phases to be adopted:

- Multi-ethnic courses such as a course on the music of minority groups,

- Multi-ethnic education in which the emphasis moves from a single course to a total educational approach (the whole curriculum must reflect pluralism),
- Multicultural education in which aspects of subcultures enjoy attention.

### **2.7.5 Possible problems to be encountered in multicultural schooling in the Republic of South Africa**

The introduction of any new dispensation is always flooded with a variety of problems, some of which may be very obvious and serious and some unnoticeable, only to surface at a later stage. It is, however, evident that there are possible problems which may be encountered in the implementation of multicultural classrooms in the Republic of South Africa.

The undermentioned problems have been identified:

#### *2.7.5.1 Free and compulsory education*

Free and compulsory education means all children roaming the streets, who were unable to go to school because of a lack of finance or accommodation, will have to be drawn into the classrooms. There are a number of problems facing educators in this regard: Free and compulsory education would mean much older pupils may be admitted to lower classes or standards. Having children of diverse ages and physical and emotional developmental stages in one classroom, will have a detrimental effect on friendship formation and peer group formation, especially in the primary school. This is a problem and challenge to educators: To plan in such a way that every child gets a fair chance to attend school and be placed in a classroom with pupils of his own age (Cook 1990:6).

#### *2.7.5.2 Language instruction*

In paragraph 2.7.2 it was suggested that mother-tongue instruction is ideal in a multicultural setting, such as in the Republic of South Africa. However, if schools are

to be integrated and still maintain mother-tongue instruction, serious problems will be encountered. Mother-tongue instruction in a classroom where there are children from different ethnic groups who speak different languages, will be impossible. The situation will also have a negative influence on friendship formation across groups and may result in a new form of segregation.

As a solution, Claassen (1992:110) suggests the implementation of parallel-medium classes. Claassen's view is also supported by the African National Congress, as pointed out in paragraph 2.7.3.1.

#### *2.7.5.3 Racism*

Racism results from institutionalised prejudices and biases that perpetuate discrimination based on racial and cultural differences. Racism has been in South Africa for ages, and stereotypes are deeply rooted. Children in multicultural classrooms may endeavour to segregate themselves according to their cultural groups. This segregation will then lead to tension and conflict.

To eradicate racism, school teachers must criticise discriminatory attitudes and behaviours (Darder 1991:116). The teacher's role will be to see to it that seating is arranged in such a way that it encourages interaction and acceptance of differences (Evans 1991:23). The teacher will also have to encourage role playing which will promote the understanding of differences. This type of set-up will develop an atmosphere conducive to educating all pupils (Drake 1993:266) and to the formation of harmonious cross-cultural relationships.

#### *2.7.5.4 Teacher-training shortcomings*

Teachers pass on their own values, knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes to pupils both intentionally and unintentionally during the teaching and learning process. The problem that faces South Africa is that the majority of teachers were trained in

segregated institutions and they have little or no experience of multicultural education (Squelch 1991:64; Lemmer 1993:18). This shortcoming may influence teachers to be biased in the sense that some cultural groups may receive more attention than others. This must necessarily have a negative influence on relationship formation amongst children in the classroom because those who do not receive special attention will be subject to jealousy and feelings of inferiority.

In order to solve this problem, Squelch (1991:64) suggests that there should be specialised teacher education and training for multicultural education, and the introduction of pre-service teacher-training courses. In-service training should be organised through practice-oriented workshops, with the sole aim of enriching teachers' knowledge and broadening their professional skills (compare Narang 1986-1987:20-22).

Empowered and equipped teachers will serve as role models who accept, value, respect and show concern for all children of diverse cultural backgrounds (Drake 1993:266; Evans 1991:23).

#### *2.7.5.5 The distance factor*

If schools are open to all, distance may be a problem. Some schools may be inaccessible. Bussing of pupils will be of minimal help and may be costly. One other problem may be that not all pupils will participate in extramural activities because of the distances they have to travel (compare Open Schools 1990:8). These children will automatically be cut off from sport, cultural and social interaction with the other children and relationship formation with the peer group will become difficult.

A few of the many problems facing the new education dispensation, have been outlined. This is an indication that the implementation of multicultural classrooms (especially in state schools) in South Africa is not going to be an easy matter. A lot of patience, the input of a broad sector of educationists and much research are necessary for the country to succeed in this regard.

## 2.8 SYNTHESIS

In this chapter, focus was placed on education in a multicultural society. The nature and the aims of multicultural schooling in a multicultural environment were extensively described. The establishment of multicultural classrooms, the promotion of harmonious cross-cultural relationship formation, as well as the possible problems to be encountered, were looked into.

It is important to emphasise that in the description of a multicultural society, culture and society are interdependent and without culture there is no society; therefore, culture exists only as an aspect of society. As was stated, the term *multicultural* is applicable to a society that meets three criteria, namely cultural diversity, coexistence of groups and behavioural commitment to the values of cultural pluralism as a basis for a viable system of social organisation.

It became clear that cultural pluralism leads to the emergence of multiculturalism and this refers to a process of education that affiliates itself to the perspective nature of pluralism. Three models of education for a multicultural society were identified, namely the human relations model, the intercultural model and the human rights model.

The important principles of learning and teaching which play a role in multicultural schooling, were discussed. These were identified as the principles of differentiation, integration, continuity and assimilation. The general and specific aims of multicultural schooling were also looked into. It became very clear that multicultural education aims at providing a richer educational environment in terms of cross-cultural knowledge and understanding, the removal of artificial barriers and the creation of wider perspectives on society. Technical, human and inductive education were identified as closely interdependent aims of education in a multicultural society.

For a healthy, informative and educative classroom climate to exist, factors such as interpersonal relationships, the attitude of children, and the development of the

teacher's own abilities to interact with people from different cultures, need to be carefully considered.

South Africa became a democratic society under the Government of National Unity. Therefore, the implementation of multicultural classrooms has to be seriously looked into. In fact, many challenges lie ahead, more especially in the creation of an education system that will ensure that human resources and potentials are developed to the full. ~~AD~~

Lastly, mention was made that we should not be under any illusion that the introduction of a new multicultural education system will be without problems. Possible problems which may be encountered, were identified. For the successful implementation of the new education system in South Africa, these problems will have to be carefully scrutinised and analysed, for possible solutions to be brought to light.

The next chapter will deal with the relevant aspects of primary school children's physical, cognitive, social, moral and emotional levels of development. Attention will be focused on the extent to which these developmental aspects influence their self-actualisation in general and their ability to form harmonious relationships with children from cultures other than their own.

## Chapter 3

# The primary school child's developmental level and the educational implications of this stage for multicultural relationship formation

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter attention was focused on the nature and aims of multicultural education. The Republic of South Africa was the point of focus, and the possibility of phasing in multicultural classrooms, and resulting (foreseeable) problems were highlighted.

Child development is the subject of interest in this chapter because a strong understanding of it provides richer background information about children's behaviour and psychological growth under different environmental conditions. Knowledge about child development will also help in the efforts made to understand what can be expected of children at different ages and of various cultures. It also facilitates people's ability to critically evaluate the conditions under which children live and the social trends that affect their lives (Zigler and Finn-Stevenson 1987:3).

In child development, concentration will be focused on the primary school child. The years from ages six to twelve are often called *the years of middle-childhood* – a period of relative calm in respect of physical and emotional development, but an important period

in the child's cognitive and social development. Development of these areas enables children to achieve an increasing understanding of their world; a world stimulated by their dramatically expanding social environment (including the school, peers and the world at large), which offers them new opportunities for socialisation and for gaining new learning experiences (Louw 1991:311; Papalia and Olds 1993:371; Zigler *et al.* 1987:451; Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:120-122).

According to Le Roux (1992:92), during this period there is a rapid and significant growth of the self. The self system, constructed within the family, is modified and extended by new experiences that occur during this period. New cultural demands contribute to the increased complexity, integration and organisation of the child's self.

In order to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the subject at hand, the researcher will in this chapter briefly touch on the psychosocial developmental theory pertaining to the child's self-concept and then concentrate on the discussion of physical, emotional, intellectual and social stages and the educational implications these will have on interactions in the multicultural classrooms. It should be borne in mind that pupils in multicultural classrooms are drawn from different cultural heritages and have to learn together (compare section 2.5). However, there are various characteristics in which they are similar, namely, they are all children of human beings, they are more or less of the same chronological age, have a similar degree of immaturity and similar drives. According to Baptiste and Baptiste (1979:218), inherent to multicultural education are the following basic principles "... acknowledgement of each human being as a unique individual as well as a member of a cultural, ethnic and/or racial group". Therefore, the discussion of the developmental stages in this research will be based on the assumption that all children, as human beings, undergo these stages. It should, however, be taken into account that the rate at which children progress through one stage and into the next differs among different cultures and within cultures.

### 3.2 ERIK ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY

Erikson's theory greatly focuses on the individual's instinctive drives for his inclusion in society as well as cultural influences on the ego (Zigler *et al.* 1987:19). This theory pivots around the fact that human development consists of the progressive resolution of conflicts between needs and social demands. Erikson theorises that an individual progresses through a series of stages. During each of these stages, the individual is confronted by and must deal with specific crises before progress can be made to the next set of problems. Each crisis is brought on by the specific manner in which the individual and society interact (Louw 1991:58).

Langeveld (Mathunyane 1992:91) mentions that four principles guide the psychosocial development of the child. These principles are the

- biological moment,
- principle of helplessness,
- principle of security, and
- principle of exploration, which includes the principle of emancipation.

If, in the process of development, one principle impedes psychosocial development, then the development of the child will be disturbed.

Erikson's psychosocial development stages (confer Louw 1991:58; Perkins 1969:204; Zigler *et al.* 1987:204) begin and progress as follows:

- (1) **Stage one:** Trust versus mistrust – infancy stage. The infant is engaged here, with the trust or mistrust of the self and the environment.
- (2) **Stage two:** Autonomy versus shame – early childhood stage. The child seeks autonomy in controlling the environment or has to subordinate his/her autonomy to the will of others.

- (3) **Stage three:** Initiative versus guilt – the play age. Activity, curiosity and imagination in play may be inconsistent with adult expectations, thereby creating guilt in the child.
- (4) **Stage four:** Industry versus inferiority – the school-going stage. This stage, which lasts from the age of six until the beginning of puberty (age twelve), covers the primary school years. The tendencies of the previous stages are continued with renewed vigour. The child aims at mastering certain skills required for adult life.

Children become responsible for homework and other assignments, and they develop an awareness that tasks can either be accomplished through industry or they can be failed. Success or failure in school learning is accompanied, respectively, by feelings of adequacy or inadequacy. If parents reinforce the child's efforts with praise and reward, the child develops a sense of industry and curiosity, and becomes eager to learn (Gibson 1980:11).

At this stage, parents are only one source of influence on the child's development. The child's development is also influenced by:

- **Peers** – he wants to play with and compete against friends, preferably of the same sex. Successful mastery of the required skills leads to a feeling of efficiency or competency (Louw 1991:61).
- **Teachers** – In order to assist the child's smooth adaptation to the school environment, teachers will have to create opportunities for children to develop a sense of industry and self-efficacy.

In multicultural interactions, much more needs to be known about the lives, histories and cultures of children in order to support their development. Teachers should always be there to create a safe, warm, emotionally stable environment and also to create

situations or conditions that will encourage a sense of industry. Dedicated, unbiased teachers will be regarded as good teachers and will be trusted and respected by the community. They will be able to share freely with parents and children, their common cultural assumptions and experiential backgrounds (Perry et al. 1993:241). It is important to stress the fact that competency or efficiency and readiness to accept instructions and to win recognition and approval of being able "doers", open the way for work enjoyment in later years.

### 3.3 THE SELF-CONCEPT

The self-concept can be thought of as the image children have of themselves as a result of their interactions with people who are important in their lives (Cohen and Manion 1983:77). A sense of self-worth is of vital importance for a realistic acceptance of self and, from there, for the ability to accept and value other people who differ in some way.

Children's increased control over their environment is accompanied by an increased feeling of self-esteem. When children enjoy high self-esteem, they develop self-respect and consider themselves worthy, loved, appreciated, capable and significant. Self-esteem postulates that children have a need for a positive feeling of self-worth which is satisfied when they receive others' approval and frustrated when they earn their disdain. Through children's contacts in the community and school, there follows an extension of self, which includes the objects, people, institutions, ideas, beliefs and values with which they identify (Perkins 1969:204).

The extension of self, as described above, is often referred to as the *social self*. The social self has an important effect on children's formation of relationships. Without friends, peer groups or family to reflect their feelings, children's social lives demand that they become sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They must acquire some degree of empathy and understanding in their interpersonal relationships in order to be accepted.

Certain behaviours are dependent on the self-concept. Saunders (1982:80) describes these behaviours as

- performance in learning tasks,
- self-regard and adjustment,
- self-acceptance and acceptance of others,
- self-regard and ethnocentrism, and
- self-regard and level of aspiration.

If children have negative self-concepts, their relationship formation with others will be negative.

### **3.4 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD**

The primary school child's physical development is characterised by steady and sustained growth and by the child's increased ability to execute motor skills and master more complex and elaborate motor tasks.

Physical growth for children during this stage assumes great personal significance, and children's attitude towards themselves becomes related to their conception of their body size and shape. The fact that children become less egocentric in their outlook, enables them to develop the ability reflect on what other people think, and therefore the reactions other children show towards them, become very important (Zigler *et al.* 1987:453).

#### **3.4.1 Physical growth**

The primary school child's physical growth proceeds at a slow but fairly even pace. The child has enough opportunity to develop interests, skills and knowledge without being disturbed by these physical changes. However, it is important to note that during this

period of physical growth, children differ in various ways; as regards build, length and so on (Papalia *et al.* 1993:376).

It is at the age of twelve where girls are, as far as height and weight is concerned, about two years ahead of boys. Girls grow quickly, particularly from the age of nine to ten (Louw 1991:314).

According to Zigler *et al.* (1987:453) there are great differences among children of the same age as regards height and the rate of maturation. These individual differences are caused by factors such as race, nationality, ethnicity, heredity and the environment (Papalia *et al.* 1993:376).

### 3.4.2 Development of motor skills

The learning and refinement of a variety of psychomotor skills is one of the most prominent developmental characteristics of the primary school child. During these years, there is an increase in strength, control and coordination of fine motor skills.

When children enter school, their writing is quite clumsy, but with increased maturity their writing of letters, numbers, and words becomes progressively neater and smaller. Children learn to have control over the smaller muscles of the hands and fingers, and they can engage in such tasks as sewing and knitting, or drawing pictures in minute detail; all activities which require fine motor control (Hurlock 1993:161; Louw 1991:314; Perkins 1969:285; Zigler *et al.* 1987:454).

Girls, as a rule, surpass boys in skills involving fine muscles, such as painting, sewing, weaving and hammering, while boys are superior to girls in skills involving the grosser muscles, such as throwing a basket ball, kicking a soccer ball long distances, and doing broad jumps. Children are engaged in these activities almost on a daily basis, and therefore keep getting stronger, faster and better coordinated and they derive great pleasure from testing their bodies and learning new skills (Papalia *et al.* 1993:389).

As children progress through primary school, they become increasingly able to learn and master rather complex tasks. Physical prowess and athletic skills, swimming, roller skating and playing tennis, especially for boys, are more important now than at any other time. According to Perkins (1969:258) this is a period of rough and tumble for boys. It is important to note that all different skills contribute either directly or indirectly to children's socialisation.

Most of the motor skills are developed primarily in the context of the peer groups. It is important for children to acquire and become better at motor activities, as progress in these enables them to become active members of their society. Children can participate in many social and sports functions such as summer camps, scout groups or little league teams, and thereby learn to interact with other children and adults in a variety of settings. Failure to learn the skills which enable one to participate adequately in the games and activities of the peer group, is a grave handicap to being accepted by the group.

There is a wide range of individual differences among children in the execution of motor skills and in their ability to master complex motor tasks. However, in their ability to acquire and execute motor skills, boys and girls do not show many differences, in large part because during this period, physical differences between the two sexes are minimal. It is not gender that determines the mastery of skills, but age, as in both boys and girls the ability to execute motor skills improves as they grow older.

### **3.4.3 Development of speech skills**

Hurlock (1993:162) maintains that as children's social environment broadens, they discover that speech is an essential tool for gaining acceptance in a group. They realise that comprehension of what others say is essential to communication. If they fail to understand what others are saying to them, they not only cannot communicate, but they are likely to say something totally unrelated to what their peers are talking about and, as a result, they may not be acceptable to the peer group.

Children learn that meaningful communication cannot be achieved unless they understand the meaning of what others are saying to them. This provides the necessary incentive to improve their communication skills. Personal experience helps children to know that there are words that can hurt and that the popular children are those whose speech adds to the enjoyment of their contact with their peers.

#### **3.4.4 Physical development as the primary school child's developmental task**

Children in primary school make great strides in learning to control their bodies and direct their energies purposefully, to relate to many different kinds of people, both adults and children; and to use language to communicate and form concepts. Moreover, they develop a sense of industry and their task is to develop lasting dispositions about themselves as able "doers" (confer section 3.2).

On the whole, the primary school child aims at mastering certain skills required for adult life. Amongst others, these are

- learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games,
- gaining increased skills in using and controlling large muscles,
- gaining increased control and coordination of fine motor skills,
- learning skills required in organised games and sports,
- learning and mastering complex tasks such as swimming, roller skating and playing tennis,
- developing skills needed for writing, drawing, painting, woodworking,
- acquiring speech development skills for communication and comprehension purposes,
- accepting one's gender differences, and
- learning many new skills every day.

According to Rutter (1983:7), children must acquire the basic skills but they must also know how to apply the skills in their everyday lives. Most important is the duty of the teacher, in helping the child to develop these skills.

### **3.4.5 Implications for teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms**

In general terms, a motor skill is any activity which has to do with the human body. Motor activities enter into every sphere of human life, namely, working, playing, eating, washing, dressing and performing household chores. Without the development of motor skills, children would never be able to walk, run, jump, hop or skip. Even the basic activities of reading, writing and speaking would be impossible because these depend on motor skills.

At school motor skills are taught and classified as follows:

#### *3.4.5.1 Physical skills*

The skills taught by physical education include swimming, soccer, tennis, volley ball, hockey, netball, cricket, rugby, gymnastics, etcetera.

To help all children improve their motor skills, organised athletics programmes should offer them the chance to try a variety of sports. Emphasis should be on the improvement of skills rather than on winning games. In multicultural settings, teachers will have to structure activities which will encourage socialising. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that all children should be equally able to participate in these activities. These activities will facilitate pupil-pupil interaction and the obeying of rules will instill a sense of cooperation and respect of other children of various cultures.

#### 3.4.5.2 Communication skills

Children are taught to express themselves through gestures and facial expressions. For purposes of achieving harmony in a multicultural classroom, teachers should provide children with feedback related to their use of language. Teachers should let children know when they are using language in useful (or correct) ways and also when they are not communicating the message they think they are.

In multicultural classrooms, teachers should make an effort to understand the culture of the child and not allow this to appear inferior to the dominant culture of the school. Good language skills are essential to enable children to communicate, learn and subsequently gain a sense of self-worth.

Teachers have to create an environment where children from different language groups can develop optimal communication skills through experience and interaction with peers and teachers (compare Gibson 1980:259-273; Hurlock 1993:161; Le Roux 1992:89; Papalia *et al.* 1993:319).

### 3.5 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

Cognitive development refers to the child's mental (intellectual) functions, abilities, and skills relating to knowledge and comprehension, as well as the ability to use these intellectual skills to solve problems. According to Flavell (Zigler *et al.* 1987:226), cognition is defined as the *act of knowing*. It includes not only learning and the acquisition of knowledge, but also thinking, imagining, creating, problem solving, and other skills associated with intellectual behaviour.

Singh (1988:355) points out that there is a range of cognitive and learning styles in children of all cultural groups. Amongst others, he identifies two cognitive styles as *field-dependent* and *field-independent*. Witkin (Singh 1988:357) describes these two cognitive

styles as follows: "in a field-dependent mode of perception the organisation of the field as a whole dominates perception of its parts; an item within a field is experienced as fused with organised ground. In a field-independent mode of perception, the person is able to perceive items as discrete from the organised field of which they are a part." This only emphasises that cognitive styles affect ways of thinking, perceiving, remembering or problem solving, which are highly influenced by culture. On the other hand, learning styles are described as the methods by which one comes to know and understand the environment, the accustomed pattern used in the acquisition of information, concepts and skills.

For more clarity on this subject, the child's development of cognitive skills will be explained on the basis of Piaget's theory, who from analysing the activities and behaviour of children, postulated the theory of cognitive development.

### **3.5.1 Piaget's theory of cognitive development**

Piaget fully explored cognitive growth and concluded that it is a continuous process that begins at birth and continues over four major stages, namely the

- sensorimotor stage (birth to two years),
- preoperational stage (two to seven years),
- concrete operations stage (seven to 12 years), and
- formal operations stage (12 to 18 years).

Each stage is associated with a specific age period, that is, infancy, the preschool, the school age and adolescence.

Certain mental processes must take place within the child's cognitive framework before progressing through these stages. Piaget maintains that each child progresses from one period to the next at his or her own rate, so the age at which a child reaches any of the periods is relatively unimportant. What is important, however, is that mental growth

(combined with their surroundings) occur in an invariant order; no period is ever skipped and each lays the ground work for the next (Chance and Fischman 1987:49; Smith 1981:24; Zigler *et al*,1987:228).

According to Piaget's theory, all changes in memory, perceptual skill, learning ability and other aspects of mental development are based on the said consecutive steps.

For the purpose of this study, only the third stage, that of concrete operations, will be outlined.

### **3.5.2 The concrete operational stage**

Between the ages of seven and twelve, the child's thinking begins to take on quite a logical character. However, it still depends heavily on interacting with the concrete world and it is still different from adult thought in many interesting respects (Case 1973:22).

The child is now able to perform mental operations and is capable of a number of important logical and mathematical functions that are essential for all future thought. It is during this period that children become better able to deal with numbers, understand the concept of time and space and distinguish reality from fantasy (Papalia *et al* 1993:399; Smith 1981:25). However, it is important to note that the child is capable of performing mental operations only on concrete and tangible objects or on signs of these objects, but not on hypothetical ideas.

Piaget's ideas were borne out in many different societies, and the notion of age-related stages of growth became very popular (Chance *et al* 1987:49). However, research has proved that the rate at which different children progress through one period into the next and how the child copes with the characteristics of concrete operations, differ among the different cultures and within cultures.

Longstreet (Kendall 1983:18) points out six behavioural patterns that affect the way in which progress takes place during this period and strongly feels that such progress is influenced by culture. These patterns are

- children's manner of participating in activities,
- the attention they give to activities,
- the ways in which they process information,
- the manner in which children present their thoughts to others,
- the ways in which they ask questions, and
- the kind of questions they ask.

Through experience, therefore, children from different cultural backgrounds will vary in the rate that they acquire various cognitive concepts. Note should be taken that, although there are variations in the rate at which children acquire cognitive skills, children of all cultural groups have been found to achieve concrete operations (Zigler *et al.* 1987:493-494).

### 3.5.3 Cognitive development as the primary school child's developmental task

One of the main developmental tasks of the child, is "to learn how to learn", how to acquire new knowledge and how to evaluate new claims and new discoveries. The primary school child strives to

- learn an appropriate symbol system and develop conceptual abilities,
- further develop intellectual skills,
- develop concrete operational thought,
- extend knowledge and develop scholastic skills,
- develop literacy as well as computational and conceptual skills,
- develop fundamental skills in reading, writing and calculating, and
- develop memory and language skills.

What the school hopes to do during this period, is to offer an environment that will maximise readiness-related experience to the child. The school can introduce the child to those activities that will produce the desired learning (Case 1973:24).

#### **3.5.4 Implications for teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms**

Learning that effects a positive change in the child's self-concept, is the most significant learning a child can acquire. In order to possess a sense of self-worth, knowledge and power, children need to feel that they have the ability to influence events in their lives. They must be given the opportunity to learn a variety of skills, make significant choices and take responsibility for their actions.

According to Jensen, Feuerstein, Rand, Kaniel and Tzuriel (Van der Horst 1993:34) the more adequate the learning experiences mediated to the child, the better the cognitive development and the higher the level of cognitive functioning of the child. Children of all cultural backgrounds can strengthen their sense of personal power and self-worth through improved decision-making and problem-solving skills, which can be augmented through classroom activities.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to guide and support the child towards mastery of the primary school developmental tasks. Therefore, knowledge of the characteristics of children's intellectual development is essential in order to help teachers determine what the level of children's cognitive development is, and also how children think and what one can expect of them. Teachers who know their class and each child's gifts or talents, capabilities and problem areas, are better able to enhance their development. Class teachers must be intensely committed to their group of children, and must have the strong wish to grow and learn with their children (Ginsburg 1982:334).

Children learn by their actions; in other words, by what they do and experience in practice. Therefore, instruction during this phase should not only continue to make visual examples, but should also be characterised by practical experience. This implies

that teaching should take place as concretely as possible. The school curriculum, teaching strategies and learning materials should be more culture-related and esteem-enhancing. The goal would be to make children function more effectively within and outside their ethnic groups (confer Kendall 1983:18).

In order to accommodate the various learning styles of the children in a multicultural classroom, teachers have a responsibility of encouraging learning by

- providing a flexible classroom environment – in this way teachers will encourage all children to learn regardless of their individual learning styles. They will become sensitive towards children's learning styles and be aware of the cultural influences on those learning styles; thus they can offer each child the opportunity to grow and learn in ways most suitable to him/her;
- helping children to identify their skills and abilities;
- directing children to develop control over thoughtless behaviour. This helps them understand how often they make decisions without thinking, and reminds them that the decisions they make control what happens in their lives;
- planning work so that children need to seek out information for themselves;
- encouraging children to work in groups, so that they develop skills in evaluating contributions towards a common aim;
- using debate and class discussions, making sure that all children feel able to contribute; and
- giving the children experience in democratic decision-making, for instance to give them the prerogative to decide where to go on class trips, how class chores are

to be shared, and so on (compare Hessari *et al.* 1990:135-136; Du Toit and Kruger 1991:116; Louw 1991:326).

To summarise, it is important to note that the child's experiences and interaction with the environment play major roles in the cognitive development of the child. The school in this case play a central role as an educational environment.

### **3.6 THE EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD**

Emotions may be defined as the physiological changes which occur in response to the psychological meaning of an event or situation (Perkins 1969:225). Primary school children show more and more understanding for the feelings of others. Their empathy and sympathy increase gradually as they grow older. It is during this stage that they learn to express their emotions according to social rules and they are also able to exert considerable control over their emotions and to hide their feelings (confer Louw 1991:346).

According to Du Toit *et al.* (1991:117), the manifestations of children's emotions do not only meet the requirements of their culture and peer group but also accord with the community's view of how a child should behave. This implies that children become aware of the social rules governing the expression of emotions; they learn to "read" facial expressions with greater accuracy; they begin to understand that emotional states can be changed psychologically; for example, by thinking of something pleasant when a feeling of unhappiness surfaces; and they realise that people can experience different emotions simultaneously. As they become older, they also become capable of identifying emotional labels such as anger, fear and happiness.

### 3.6.1 Emotions expressed by the primary school child

#### 3.6.1.1 *Love*

Children's expression of love during this period is of a more adult nature. However, they still express it physically by hugging and kissing and also gain the knowledge that love can be expressed in other ways, for example by being communicative and charitable.

Children also express love by means of cooperation, empathy and friendship. Their feelings towards friends become more and more sensitive and they try to make time spent with friends, as pleasant as possible.

Gender roles also influence the way children express their love. For instance, in most cultures boys are expected not to show too much gentleness, otherwise they run the risk of being labelled as being "like girls" (Du Toit *et al.* 1991:119; Louw 1991:347).

#### 3.6.1.2 *Joy, happiness, laughter and play*

Children laugh more often in a group, than while alone. Children who endeavour to be accepted by a group on the grounds of their behaviour, have to be seen to be more cheerful and happy.

Happiness and joy are experienced when children feel that they have achieved better than others. However, for social reasons, excitement and happiness will in most cases be expressed inwardly (Du Toit *et al.* 1991:119).

Laughter is sometimes used by children to suppress their emotions and feelings and to hide them from others. Unpleasant feelings are reduced by means of activities such as rigorous exercise and/or having a good laugh. However, it is important to note that the suppressed feelings may lead to stress, depression and discontent.

### *3.6.1.3 Fear*

Upon entering primary school, children become less fearful about their physical well-being. During this period they become less afraid of disease, injury, dogs, noises and storms. Childhood fears run parallel with the era in which children live. For instance, today there is much talk of AIDS and violence in South Africa. Most children fear being trapped into one or both of these disasters.

Children's fears are not as irrational as adults might think. Violent episodes on television and children's own exploration and discoveries can also develop fears in children (confer Louw 1991:347).

### *3.6.1.4 Aggression*

Anger is a feeling of distress that surfaces when children are restrained or blocked in their efforts to accomplish something. Aggression is a way of coping with anger, by increasing power or status. At certain times, anger can be productive and useful, but at other times it is destructive and dangerous. Learning the necessary control of both anger and aggression is an important aspect of growing up.

The fact that boys at this stage are more aggressive than girls is often attributed to a variety of factors, from biological to cultural variables (Louw 1991:347). Children's expression of aggression during this period becomes more refined as they acquire certain social skills which enable them to cope with their frustrations. Feelings of anger and rage often make children moody, negative and quarrelsome. In the absence of authority, they will use force to solve their problems.

Aggression also reveals that children are often jealous of others. They will show this by bullying other children. At the most extreme, they tend to cheat, behave destructively and express sarcasm.

### **3.6.2 Emotional development as the primary school child's developmental task**

The primary school period is marked by greater emotional flexibility and differentiation. Emotional differentiation enables children to express a variety of emotions.

The child during this stage strives, amongst others, to:

- develop a conscience,
- acquire greater self-knowledge,
- develop a positive attitude towards social groups and institutions,
- control moods and feelings,
- seek ways of expressing and hiding unpleasant feelings, and
- develop a positive self-esteem.

This is a critical time in the child's emotional development. Children not only obtain deeper insight into their own feelings but also learn to understand other children's feelings.

### **3.6.3 Implications for teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms**

The educational responsibility of teachers is to assist the child in developing a balanced emotional life.

Children between the ages of seven and eleven are usually eager to please their teachers and peer groups. Thus they respond well to praise, recognition and encouragement. Therefore, in order to maintain strong emotional stability, a comfortable emotional climate and the development of the child's self-concept, multicultural classroom teachers should provide a nurturing and supportive classroom environment (MacGregor and Moore 1991:55). In multicultural settings, the interaction that prevails, should promote a favourable learning atmosphere.

Children in multicultural classrooms need to be helped to recognise and acknowledge their feelings, both positive and negative, and to recognise that everybody has similar feelings. For instance, teachers can help children cope with emotions like fear and anger, by having an open class discussion about fears. The children should all be encouraged to talk about their fears. The teacher might discuss coping techniques with the class, though often simply knowing that he/she is not the only person in the world who is afraid, can do much to calm a fearful child; with regard to anger, teachers should try by all means to answer children's calls for help promptly. When anger and aggression are exhibited, teachers should quickly express disapproval and insist that the behaviour be stopped. It is important to teach children how to cope with aggression without resorting to violent behaviour.

The willingness of the teacher to listen to children, and to allow them the freedom to develop confidence on their own, is another way of acknowledging and recognising their feelings. Children with more favourable self-images see their teachers as expressing positive feelings towards them. The more positive children's perceptions of their teacher's feelings towards them are, the better their academic achievement and the more desirable their classroom behaviour. On the other hand, teachers who are high in self-esteem tend towards confidence and low-anxiety, thus creating a classroom atmosphere in which children's self-esteem and performance flourish.

A favourable multicultural classroom atmosphere is critical during this period, since its absence could lead to tension, frustration, depression, aggressiveness and low self-esteem; and all these have serious implications for the learning and positive development of the child.

### 3.7 THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

The child as a person has essentially human, *personal* needs and aspirations, such as a need to be esteemed, accepted and recognised, all of which can only be fulfilled within

a human context. Children have also essentially human *social* needs, such as human togetherness, communication and belonging. As individual persons, they grow up in a particular family, society, civilization and culture. They are subject to all the possibilities and limitations inherent to these groups (Schmidt 1973:38; Du Toit *et al.* 1991:60).

Social development consists of changes over time in the child's understanding of, attitude towards, and actions with others. According to Le Roux (1992:91), social development implies an ethnic as well as international understanding, an understanding of the immediate environment (home, community), as well as holiday celebrations and cooperative group living (rights of others, courtesy, importance of sharing and friendship). In fact, relevant concerns during this stage are age-related changes in social activity that are characteristic of most children world-wide individual differences among children from various cultural backgrounds (Cantor, Spiker and Lipsitt 1991:1).

### 3.7.1 Facets inherent to social growth

#### 3.7.1.1 *Awareness of others*

Primary school children gradually change their perception of other people. Children realise that perceptions and thoughts differ from one person to another. Most importantly, they realise that there is a difference between what persons intend to do and what they actually do, and also that different people's experience of the same or a similar event could vary. In this way they develop the ability to empathise with others and develop sensitivity towards other people. They take other people's needs and feelings into account and they show a need to help others (Hessari *et al.* 1990:127; Louw 1991:360).

Sensitivity towards other people causes children to become aware that other people form perceptions of them and on the basis of these perceptions other people reach certain conclusions that could influence their behaviour towards them. Children realise that

their behaviour can cause other people to react in a certain way. This leads to children being much better equipped to deal with the demands arising from social participation.

### 3.7.1.2 *Friendship*

Friends are seen as people who help one another. Self-interest that prevails during the primary school years is evidenced by the collapse of friendships, if they differ on ideas or argue. Popular children are friendlier, more extrovert, more cooperative and generally more pleasant than unpopular children (Louw 1991:366).

Hurlock (1993:167) points out that the social grouping of children is often referred to as *children's gangs*. Hurlock says these children's gangs are formed for purposes of having fun, not to engage in misdemeanours. Amongst others, the following have been identified as characteristics of children's gangs:

- At first gangs consist of three or four members, but this number increases as children grow older and become interested in sports.
- Members of a gang are of the same sex.
- Boys' gangs more often engage in socially unacceptable behaviour than girls' gangs do.
- Popular gang activities include games and sports, going to the movies, and getting together to talk or eat.
- The gang has a central meeting place, usually away from the watchful eyes of adults.
- Most gangs have insignia of belonging; the members may wear similar clothes.

- The gang leader represents the gang's ideal and is superior in most respects to the other members.

It is clear children's gangs (or friends) play a vital role in satisfying children's social needs and also as socialising agent.

### 3.7.1.3 *Humour*

Telling humorous anecdotes and playing practical jokes develop a great feeling of enjoyment and a sense of humour in children. Their ability to appreciate humour increases as their intellectual development progresses. Louw (1991:370) points out that children can only really enjoy and laugh about something when they understand it and are cognitively stimulated by it.

Discussions on the facets inherent to social development will be curtailed at this point, since this subject and the various interactions in the child's social world will be the theme of Chapter Four.

### 3.7.2 **Social development as the primary school child's developmental task**

In school, the child is exposed to new information and important, new adult models, as well as increased contact with peers. Collins (1984:286) indicates that schools can be seen as "cultural systems" of social relationships among family, teachers, children and peers. In the social environment (the school) in which children find themselves, they will by all means endeavour to

- learn to relate to adults outside the family,
- achieve some degree of independence from the family,
- gain acceptance, roles and prestige as a member of the peer group,
- further learning of and adherence to the expectations of the culture,
- accept their sex role,

- extend social participation,
- learn to get along with age-mates,
- develop concepts necessary for everyday living, and
- achieve personal independence.

Collins (1984:285) interprets school environments as providing “similar educational experience for all students ... schools are for the most part equally effective in influencing most learning outcomes”. It is in this spirit that section 3.7.3 outlines guidelines for teachers (the school) towards children's social development and effective learning in a multicultural setting.

### **3.7.3 Implications for teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms**

The healthy growth and development of all children as they enter school depend in large part upon the continuity of socialisation between family life and school life. The quality of children's educational life in school is determined by how well the socialisation in school matches, fortifies and builds on their experiences in the home.

According to Martin (1990:62), for an educational situation to arise it is necessary for the teacher and the child to interact and have social contact. If this relationship is sound, then it indicates that the *child-image* is respected and that within the education situation the relationship between the teacher and child is sound. The role the teacher has to play in this relationship is to facilitate learning, help the child to acquire social skills, stimulate self-actualisation and expand the child's environment.

It has been pointed out that alongside a developing understanding and valuing of self, children are able to extend outwards into an understanding of, and sensitivity towards others (section 3.7.1.1). It is during this stage that teachers should create opportunities to participate in activities that will encourage the whole question of awareness of others. For instance, a variety of work can be done to help children to get to know others at school, both children and adults with whom they will come into either regular or

infrequent contact, such as those they meet during school meals, other staff or the school nurse. Introducing people who visit the classroom, is a start. This can be expanded by having lots of stories, songs, poems, pictures and posters that highlight up points of variation in lifestyle, work, religion, age and appearance, and referring to these as normal features of life. If many ethnically diverse resources are used throughout the whole school, children will easily absorb information about others and be able to adjust and control their life environment.

Children's increased control over their environment is accompanied by an increased feeling of self-esteem. Their contacts in the school and community extend their "selves", to include the objects, people, institutions, ideas, beliefs and values with which they identify. These and the reflected appraisals of the significant people in their lives, form their self-images.

Clemes and Beans (Abbey *et al.* 1990:15-19) address the cultural relevance of self-esteem in children by pointing out that positive self-esteem can be attained when children experience positive feelings in the following fields:

- (1) **Connectiveness:** This relates to the feelings children have when they derive satisfaction from the company of others. Satisfaction can be derived from identifying with a group of people; feeling connected to a past heritage; feeling that they belong to something or someone, feeling good about their relations or affiliations, knowing that the people or groups they are related to, are considered in a positive light by others and feel important to others.
- (2) **Uniqueness:** This is the special sense of self children feel when they can acknowledge and respect qualities or attributes that make them special and different and when they receive respect and approval from others for these qualities. Children feel unique by being aware that others think they are special, they are able to express themselves in individual ways, they respect themselves

as individuals, and they enjoy the feeling of being different without having to make others uncomfortable.

- (3) **Models:** These are reference points that provide children with human, philosophical and operational examples that help them establish meaningful values, goals, ideals and personal standards.

Teachers should emphasise visible, everyday role models. Parents, as well as community leaders, can provide models of strength and accomplishment in situations relevant to children in multicultural classrooms. Bringing leaders from diverse cultural and ethnic groups into the classrooms for presentations, will also expose models worth emulating.

Honesty, faithfulness, empathy, and generosity should mark the teacher's life. The way teachers cope with their emotions, within a social context, will also influence the child. Teachers in multicultural classrooms can help children to

- experience pride in the connection they feel with their family, friends, ethnic group, community and school,
- promote a sense of connection among children by developing a climate of mutual respect,
- foster mutual trust by using "get-acquainted" activities early in the course,
- help children to see their culture as a source of value and pride, and
- encourage children to see the influence their culture has on the positive aspects of who they are (positive self-image and self-identity).

Du Toit *et al.* (1991:126) emphasise that teachers should give children the opportunity to choose their friends independently and must also create ample opportunity for social contact on the part of the child. Further, teachers should utilise children's prosperity for social interactions in their daily programmes, for instance, by holding group competitions such as class quizzes and debates.

Cohen *et al.* (1983:77); Baptiste and Baptiste (1979:219) emphasise that children's development of a positive self-image as a result of their interaction with children and teachers of various cultural groups, will have a positive impact on their learning, becoming, self-esteem and social development.

### 3.8 SYNTHESIS

In this chapter, the developmental stages of the primary school child were discussed. The physical, emotional, intellectual and social stages as well as the effects on the child's learning and self-esteem within multicultural classrooms were also looked into.

In section 3.2, it was mentioned that Erikson's psychosocial development theory greatly focuses on the individual's instinctive drives for his/her inclusion in society, as well as cultural influences on the ego. Erikson theorises that an individual progresses through a series of stages and during each of these stages, the individual must deal with specific crises before progressing to the next set of problems. These stages are the *trust versus mistrust* (during infancy), *autonomy versus shame* (during early childhood), *initiative versus guilt* (the play age) and *industry versus inferiority* (the school age period). It is during the fourth stage that the child develops an awareness that tasks can either be accomplished through industry or that they can be failed. Success or failure in school learning is accompanied, respectively, by feelings of adequacy or inadequacy.

In section 3.4 the physical development of the child was discussed. Mention was made that during the period of physical growth, children differ in various ways, as regards physical build, length and so on. There are great differences among children of the same age (in size and in the rate of maturation) due to factors such as race, nationality, ethnicity, heredity and the environment.

The primary school child's motor and language skills development were also discussed. Mention was made that there is an increase in strength, control and coordination of fine motor skills during this stage. When children enter school, their writing is quite clumsy,

but with increased maturity, their writing of letters, numbers and words becomes progressively neater and smaller. Children learn to control the smaller muscles of the hands and fingers, and they can perform various tasks. Further, as children's social environment broadens, they discover that speech is an essential tool for gaining acceptance in a group. They learn that meaningful communication cannot be achieved unless they understand the meaning of what others are saying to them. This provides the necessary incentive to improve their communication. To help all children improve their motor skills and to boost their self-esteem, organised athletics programmes should offer them the chance to try a variety of sports. In multicultural settings, teachers will have to structure activities which will encourage socialising. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that all children should be allowed equal opportunity to participate in these activities. These activities will facilitate interaction amongst pupils and the obeying of rules will instill a sense of cooperation and respect for other children of various cultures.

For purposes of achieving a multicultural classroom harmony, teachers should provide children with feedback related to their use of language. Teachers should let children know they are using language in useful (or correct) ways or that they are not communicating what they think they are. Good language skills are essential, as they enable children to communicate, learn and subsequently to gain a sense of self-worth.

In section 3.5, the cognitive development of the child was described as the child's mental (intellectual) functions, abilities and skills relating to knowledge and comprehension, and the ability to use these intellectual skills to solve problems. Mention was made that between the ages seven and twelve, children's thinking begins to take on a logical character. Children are then able to perform mental operations and are capable of a number of important logical and mathematical functions that are essential for all future thought. It is during this period that they become better able to deal with numbers, understand the concept of time and space and distinguish reality from fantasy. It is, however, important to note that children are capable of performing mental operations only on a concrete and tangible object or on signs of these objects, but not on hypothetical ideas. What the school can hope to do during this period, is to offer an

environment that will maximise readiness-related experience to the child. Learning that effects a positive change in the child's self-concept, is the most significant learning children can acquire. In order to possess a sense of self-worth, knowledge and power, children need to feel that they have the ability to influence the events in their lives. They must be given the opportunity to learn a variety of skills, make significant choices and take responsibility for their actions. Children learn by their actions, in other words, by what they do and experience in practice. Therefore, instruction during this phase should not only be based on visual examples, but should also be characterised by practical experiences. This implies that teaching should take place as concretely as possible. The school curriculum, teaching strategies and learning materials should be more culture-related and esteem-enhancing. The goal would be to make children function more effectively within and outside their ethnic groups.

In section 3.6, the emotional development of the primary school child was discussed. It was mentioned that the manifestations of children's emotions not only meet the requirement of their culture and peer groups but also accord with the community's view of how a child should behave. Thus children become aware of the social rules governing the expression of emotions; they learn to "read" facial expressions with greater accuracy; they begin to understand that emotional states can be changed psychologically; for example, by thinking of something pleasant when a feeling of unhappiness surfaces, and they realise that people can experience different emotions simultaneously. During this period, the educational responsibility of teachers is to assist the child in developing a balanced emotional life. In order to maintain strong emotional stability, a comfortable emotional climate and the development of the child's self-concept, multicultural classroom teachers should provide a warm and supportive classroom environment.

Children in multicultural classrooms need to be helped to recognise and acknowledge their feelings, both positive and negative, and to recognise that everybody has similar feelings. Note has to be taken that the creation of a favourable multicultural classroom atmosphere is critical during this period, since its absence could lead to tension,

frustration, depression, aggression and low self-esteem; and all these have serious implications for the child's learning.

In section 3.7, the social development of the primary school child was discussed. Children have essentially human social needs, such as human togetherness, communications and belonging. As individuals, children grow up in a particular family, society, civilization and culture. They are subject to all the possibilities and limitations inherent to these groups. Social development also implies an ethnic as well as international understanding, and understanding of the immediate environment (home, community), as well as national or religious holiday celebrations and cooperative group living. For an educational situation to arise, it is necessary for the teacher and the child to be together and have social contact. If this relationship is sound, then it indicates that the child's image is respected and that within the education situation the relationship between the teacher and child is positive. The role the teacher has to play in this relationship is to facilitate learning, help the child to acquire social skills, stimulate self-actualisation and expand the child's environment. Children's increased control over their environment is accompanied by increased feelings of self-esteem. Their contacts in the school and community extend their "selves", to include the objects, people, institutions, ideas, beliefs and values with which they identify.

These and the reflected appraisals of the significant people in a child's life form his/her self-image. Further, it is also important to note that children's development of a positive self-image as a result of their interactions with children and teachers of various cultural groups, will have a positive impact on their learning, self-esteem, social development and total becoming.

The next chapter will focus on the social interactions experienced in multicultural primary school classrooms.

## Chapter 4

# Social interactions in multicultural classrooms: Guidelines from the literature

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the developmental stages of the primary school child were discussed. Close scrutiny was focused on the effects these stages have on the child's learning within multicultural classrooms.

In this chapter, the researcher will focus his attention on relationship formation within multicultural classrooms. The study of the formation of various relationships within multicultural settings is essential since these have a positive or negative influence on the child's social development. Kochanska (1992:149) points out that children grow up in the world of relationships. He says children are, at first, mostly involved with their immediate caregivers, but later in childhood their world extends to include peers and unrelated adults. In support of the latter statement, Hartup (Perlmutter 1984:178) indicates that relationships constitute the "principal nexus within which the child adapts to the world, and that ontogeny cannot be conceived except in terms of the dyadic processes that are involved in those close and enduring encounters ..."

During the years between six and twelve/thirteen, children typically are open, exploring and reaching out. The diversity of the environment excites and exposes them to many social learning experiences (De Coker and Roche 1990:51). Children in their life-worlds are involved in assigning meaning to their relationships. Their involvement is manifested by the formation of positive or negative relationships with other people. Involvement means engaging themselves totally in what they are doing and by assigning meaning (positively or negatively) to what they experience, they gradually establish self-concepts. Children's self-concepts determine the degree of success in their forming of relationships. The greater the scope for total involvement, the greater the likelihood of successful interactions. The accumulation of experiences, in a variety of life situations, helps children to gather more information about things and people. The more children

are exposed to a wide variety of life situations to which they can attribute positive meaning, the more they become successful in their formation of relationships.

Children in multicultural settings experience the fact that relationships differ; their interactions with parents are distinct from those with peers, teachers and material objects. For a deeper understanding of the differing relationships experienced by children in multicultural classrooms, the researcher will concentrate on the study of parent-child, peer group, child-teacher and child-content/environment relationships.

## 4.2 PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

The family is regarded as the pre-eminent socialisation context because the child's earliest experiences occur within this situation and much time is consumed in family interactions (Hartup and Moore 1990:1). Relationships within families offer a wide variety of interactions and are vehicles for understanding social and cultural issues.

The parent-child relationship is assumed to be the most important one for transmission of cultural standards, values and rules to the child (Deković 1992:1). As part of their integration into society, children have to acquire certain norms and values of their culture through the process of socialisation. According to Baumrind (Deković 1992:22), socialisation is an adult-initiated process by which young persons, through education, training and imitation, acquire their culture as well as the habits and values congruent with adaptation to that culture.

Parents exert an enormous influence on their children's emerging self-esteem, and provide them with guidance and support while allowing them to do things on their own and to think for themselves. A warm and nurturing relationship between the child and the parents is similarly important and helps the child achieve independence and social competence. When parents are warm and accepting of their children, are able to appropriately discipline them and direct their behaviour and activities while at the same time recognising their need for independence, then those children feel secure and sociable in their relations with other adults and children (Zigler *et al.* 1987: 557).

Children feel sufficiently confident if their relationship with parents is sound. Thus confidence allows them to move out from the parents' secure base to engage in new situations and relationships (Denham, Zahn-Waxler, Cummings and Iannotti 1991:39). According to Burns (1986:161), children's adjustment to life depends on their subjective interpretation of their family's treatment of them and on conditions within the family. Therefore, it is evident that the psychological atmosphere of the home plays a very

important role in the formation of a basis for other institutions in which children will be involved in later life. In school, children are exposed to new situations, information, adult models as well as increased interactions with peers. In these new situations, children learn that they are expected to behave not only in ways that are approved by their parents, but also in ways that are valued and approved by their teachers and friends.

The social influence that emanates from the parent-child relationship manifests itself, amongst others, in the following ways:

- Children's relationships with family members greatly influence their school work and attitude towards the school.
- Family relationships affect social adjustment outside the home.
- Role-playing in the home sets the pattern for role-playing outside the home.
- Home training is responsible for gender-role typing. What gender-role stereotypes children learn and how well they learn to perform them outside the home is greatly influenced by the home training they have received.
- Family relationships develop children's personalities. What older children think of themselves is a direct reflection of what they believe different family members think of them, as judged by the way they are treated by members of the family (Hurlock 1993:184).
- Parents influence children's emotional growth - the emotional link between children and parents is strong and appears to have a considerable influence on children's social adjustment.
- Children learn socially acceptable behaviour from parents. Cooperation, obedience, responsibility and neatness are examples of behaviours which are observed and adopted by children. The verbal and non-verbal behaviour of parents is inculcated in children and results in well-adjusted children.
- The traditions and habits of the family are transmitted to children by parents. These are learnt by children through imitation. Good and acceptable habits assist children to adjust well outside the home.

Since the family relationships form the basis for subsequent interactions, the following discussion will focus on the various interactions that are influenced by the home and family atmosphere.

### 4.3 PEER GROUP RELATIONSHIPS

#### 4.3.1 Friendship and peer group formation

Socialisation in the peer context varies from culture to culture. Between the ages six and thirteen, socialisation becomes a central issue in children's lives. During these years children spend increasingly more time with peers, and they seek to be with them not only when they are in school but at other times as well.

Primary school children select their friends mainly from among children of their own age and they associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers (Collins 1984:247; Hallinan and Kubitschek 1990:507). Children's interaction with their age-mates and their engagement in a number of social activities, prepare them for their eventual independence from family life, allowing them to learn at the same time about other people's perspectives, opinions and values and about themselves and how others view them. When children begin school, they enter a new culture – the school culture. They are expected to learn how to participate in routine activities, how to use particular areas of the classroom, to follow rules governing behaviour, and to participate in rituals such as birthday celebrations and goodbye songs (Ramsey 1991:64).

On the other hand, gender interactions indicate that boys' interactions are commonly oriented towards independence, competition and dominance. Girls' interactions are generally based on closeness, cooperation and interpersonal harmony. Girls are more likely than boys to display language strategies that demonstrate attentiveness, responsivity and support. Boys use strategies that demand attention, give orders and establish dominance (Leaper 1991:798).

Children often select friends on the basis of proximity and similarity. The presence of different gender, racial, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the classroom may affect grouping patterns. In any group, members are expected to conform to the ideas, values and to the culture of childhood, which consists of children's play.

Play provides children with opportunities for acquiring information and skills that lay a foundation for learning. Play enables children to advance to new developmental stages and to deal with life experiences, which they attempt to respect, master or negate. Play

also involves self-teaching and self-healing, for in the play situation, children can make up for frustrations and defeats in the real world (compare section 3.6.1.2). According to Hartley (Wakefield 1979:14) through play children learn what no one can teach them.

The study of boys and girls in play (Erwin 1993:162) revealed differences between the play of boys and girls. It was found that boys play outdoors more often than girls; the social play of boys is based on larger groups than that of girls; the social groups of boys are more diverse in age than those of girls; girls are more likely to play predominantly male games than boys are to play girls' games; boys play competitive games more often than girls do and tend to control the larger spaces designated for such activities; boys' games last longer than girls' games. The proportion of child-child interactions spent in play, varies from culture to culture. Cultural traditions greatly influence their willingness to engage in certain types of play.

Vold (1992:54-56) mentions that children's play functions as a resource for multicultural education. He describes the multicultural aspects of play as follows:

- (1) **Play is symbolic and meaningful.** This means that play represents reality. The symbols and values attributed to play are a reflection of the child's culture. Playing materials in a classroom also reflect the symbols of different cultures. Therefore, for classrooms to maintain multicultural harmony, playing materials will have to be changed on a regular basis, to reflect diversity. The varying of materials initiates new ways of learning about others.
- (2) **Play is active and pleasurable.** This means that children engage in an activity with others and enjoy themselves. Children at play exchange feelings and interact freely to an extent that a sense of belonging is developed. What is of significance here, is that the social context in which children find themselves, affects their selection of activities.
- (3) **Play is episodic.** Children's roles and goals change and develop, based upon their experiences in society. When teachers share captivating stories with children and invite them to act such stories, the dramatisation is carried over into play. Teachers can make abstract ideas such as *social equity* concrete to children through dramatisation of non-fictional and fictional books. Play will, therefore, enable children to grow out of their egocentric and ethnocentric picture of the world.

### 4.3.2 Peer group functions

Belonging to a peer group, is very important to the child. Children will by all means struggle for their emancipation and attempt to conform to their peers in every respect. According to Louw (1991:364-365) and Vrey (1979:104-106), children's peer groups play a very important role in their lives:

- (1) The peer groups fulfil their need for camaraderie and friendship. Children make friends with other children and engage in play, talk and general passing of the time. The peer group fulfils an even more important function, especially for children who do not find much affection or comradeship at home, possibly because of an unpleasant atmosphere in the home.
- (2) The peer group offers children the security that they previously experienced from their parents. They, therefore, gradually shift their security base from the parental home to the peer group.
- (3) The peer group gives children the opportunity to practise social skills and to experiment with new ideas, behaviours and attitudes.
- (4) The peer group facilitates the transfer of knowledge and information, through activities ranging from informal tasks such as the training of a friend in the use of a computer, to jokes and games; and also helps the child to adapt and obey social rules and regulations.
- (5) The peer group helps to reinforce gender roles. The peer group expects each member of the group to conform to the group's norms and standards.
- (6) The peer group is a group of equals. Therefore, children are able to give their opinion within the group and hold their own. In other words, competition within a group takes place on an equal footing.
- (7) Acceptance in the peer group enables the child to form a positive self-concept, which in turn develops into self-dignity.

It is important to note that peer group formation is of great significance to the child's social development. Children's success or failure to adjust within their peer groups may respectively indicate that the emotional bond between themselves and their parents has been solidified or weakened.

### 4.3.3 Obstacles to inter-ethnic friendships in multicultural classrooms

It has been pointed out that inherent to multicultural education is the basic principle of acknowledgement of each human being as a unique individual, who is a member of a cultural, ethnic and/or race group (confer section 3.1). On the basis of this principle, it is justifiable to assume that children will always prefer to interact with certain children and not with others. In multicultural classrooms this is likely to happen to a great extent because of the diverse composition of the class. It is, therefore, imperative to look at some of the factors that could possibly inhibit the formation of relationships.

- **Inter-racial contacts.** The limited contact children have outside the school results in poor relationships between children of various races or cultural groups. Residential areas that are far apart contribute to the fact that children are unlikely to encounter one another in the neighbourhood. Meeting only at school in the classroom, does not contribute much to meaningful interactions.
- **Gender.** It is assumed that the child's acceptance of others is more gender-related than race-related. That is, gender is a more potent determinant of friendship choice, than race. Henderson (Cohen *et al.* 1983:119) found that while ethnic origin was clearly a factor in determining both friendships and rejection patterns, gender appeared to be even more significant.
- **Language.** Language is a barrier to communication and understanding between children from various language groups. Lack of communication reduces children's chances of interacting. Brown (Cohen *et al.* 1983:122) in his study of interaction amongst children of various cultural groups, found that the differences in verbal contact within and between groups were indicative of a language barrier.
- **Behavioural style.** During the middle childhood stage, children have already learned identities and styles of acting and interacting that can serve to derail the development of *cross-social-race* friendship. The identities and styles of interacting with children of various cultural backgrounds tend to be only partially familiar. The differences that prevail, although they are not overwhelming and do not affect all children equally, frequently embroil and confuse children's interaction, mitigating against the establishment of close relationships. Although children make attempts to engage one another in interaction and even to form friendships, cross-ethnic, cross-racial, cross-cultural attempts are seldom successful for the abovementioned reasons (Cohen *et al.* 1983:122).

Numerous classroom conditions influence child-child interactions. It has been noted that child-child interactions revolve around equal exchanges between individuals. Children with friends are more socially competent than children without friends (compare Collins 1984:242; Hartup *et al.* 1990:4). Troubled children commonly have difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships.

#### 4.4 CHILD-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

##### 4.4.1 The teacher as a classroom leader

The teacher in a multicultural classroom serves as a coherent force that binds or creates unity amongst children and helps them achieve the goals they share. Teacher by virtue of their positions, assume a leadership role. In broad terms, the task of teachers as classroom leaders is defined to a large extent by the teacher's personality, by his or her attitude towards children, and by the constraints and demands of the teaching situation itself. Their leadership role is further explained as a "conglomeration of subroles that emerge on the basis of interaction between the group leader's personality and philosophical orientation and the needs of the group" (Miller, Belkin and Gray 1982:279).

In every classroom there are children from different cultures and heritages. Children bring to the classroom talents, language, customs and religion. It is the task of the teacher to make use of these as resources for multicultural classroom harmony. Children learn better when their teachers know them as individuals. Teachers will have to engage children in a number of activities which will promote interaction between children and teachers and among children themselves.

There are practical strategies the teacher can adopt in order to secure and develop a healthy child-teacher relationship in the multicultural classroom. Amongst others, for the realisation of this goal, the teacher should

- accept children as they are – with the culture and language they have. Encourage them to talk by providing them, for the first few days, with friends who speak their language and as time goes by children will begin to interact freely even with children who speak a different language;
- support children in their acquisition of a second language. Children may be able to communicate on the playground, they may be able to understand the language of the classroom routine and still not have enough facility in the skills

of listening, speaking, reading and writing to function well. Therefore, the teacher should assist children in this respect;

- help children maintain an awareness of their cultural identity. It is an integral part of their self-concept; for example, everyone in the class (including the teacher) can learn to greet and say goodbye in other languages. This is a step for all children towards understanding the cultural heritage of their country;
- develop (in the curriculum) a global concept so that all children learn that peoples of the world depend on one another and have more similarities than differences;
- translate songs, stories and poems in the multicultural classroom into all the different languages spoken in the class. Sharing and appreciating material also expand the horizon for all children, while at the same time fostering pride in their cultural heritage (Wakefield 1979:14).

#### **4.4.2 The major task of the multicultural classroom teacher**

Teachers are faced daily with evidence of the interrelationship of the world community, as reflected in the heterogeneity of their classrooms. The relationships prevailing in these classrooms are complex and vary from harmony to extreme disharmony. It is the task of the classroom teacher to develop and maintain a classroom environment that addresses order and discipline, structure, teaching modalities, curriculum content and classroom ambience.

Teachers are the ones that determine what is allowable and acceptable within the classroom. They should, therefore, establish an atmosphere of acceptance, since acceptance shapes the learning environment into a place in which culturally different children can participate. Interpersonal behavioural taboos can create tensions between teachers and children. Some cultures, for example, consider it taboo to look directly at someone who is older or who has greater authority. Thus a child may be uncomfortable looking at the teacher when addressed. It is, therefore, the task of the teacher to understand various social customs and in a pedagogical manner, expose these to the children in the classroom (Lambert 1989:274).

#### **4.4.3 The teacher's behaviour as an aspect that influences interpersonal relationships**

Teachers greatly influence children's social orientations and skills by modelling positive social behaviours to children. Children need to see teachers as role models who accept and value diversity. Something that can affect their perceptions is the tone of a teacher's voice when he or she responds to certain children and the eye contact that the teacher makes or does not make with children. The teacher's own belief about the value of cultural differences is reflected in such verbal and non-verbal communication.

Teachers need to be honest and sincere with their children. This does not mean trying to become their friend by using their language and attempting to imitate their behaviour. There should always be social distance between teacher and children. Teachers must remember that it is far better to respect children's differences than to pretend that there are no differences.

Teachers should display their positive classroom behaviour at different times during the course of their classroom interaction with the children. Such positive behaviour and tone of voice can especially be seen at the beginning and at the end of the school day, during the changing of periods, when responding to different children during lessons and when exercising discipline.

A teacher who wants to establish a harmonious multicultural classroom environment concurrently and thoughtfully, will design ways of greeting and saying goodbye to his or her children each day. A smile, a touch and eye contact make a big difference to children. A sense of welcome and comfort at the start of the day and a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction at the end of the day will make school a more acceptable and comfortable place for all children.

Children move from lesson to lesson, generally experiencing regular transit throughout the day. The appropriate teacher tone during transitions is one of congratulation, encouragement, empathy or understanding. Transitions provide opportunities for brief children-enhancing interactions.

Every classroom has a heterogeneous mix of individual abilities. The classroom with a multicultural setting must provide daily opportunities for all children to be engaged in a positive way. Teachers can design activities in ways that ensure equal engagement of all children. They can show consistency in the way they call on and respond to children – meeting every answer with a nod or a smile and positive verbal reinforcement

of some kind. Even when answers are incorrect, teachers can reinforce the attempt, try to explain the error, and return to the children later in the lesson to provide an opportunity for success. They can also provide every child with equitable prompting, waiting time and encouragement. Some children exhibit consistent cooperative behaviour, while others are a daily challenge to the patience of teachers. The multicultural classroom transmits the message each day to each child that the opportunity exists to change and to improve under the direction of an understanding teacher. All children should receive the same warnings, the same clearly expressed expectations, the same encouragement to meet expectations, and the same opportunity to save face and improve behaviour after a reprimand or punishment. When a child misbehaves, he needs to be told exactly what he or she has done wrong; what the teacher expects; and that the teacher believes he or she is capable of successful cooperation (Drake 1993:266; Vold 1992:73-76).

#### **4.4.4 The teacher's role in supporting and facilitating social interactions and relations**

The teacher must provide children with an atmosphere that includes a variety of learning opportunities by presenting information that is relevant to their environment and culture, and by adapting the curriculum to make it appropriate to individual family concerns.

In the process of creating a conducive environment, the teacher has to move within the following guidelines:

- Teachers should be genuine in their interactions with children and should not feel that they have to feign emotions. At the same time, they need to protect themselves from becoming too entangled or consumed by children's emotional issues.
- In supporting children's social interactions, teachers should be available, but not intrusive or overbearing.
- In establishing and setting limits, teachers should maintain an authoritative role by establishing and enforcing clear expectations, yet involving children in discussions about rules and consequences.
- Teachers should model caring and respect for all people in their interactions with children (Ramsey 1991:125-126).

The most effective teacher-child relationship is one where teachers and children have come together in a spirit of cooperation and joint responsibility for maintaining a pleasant environment. Teachers play a significant role in setting behaviour expectations and enforcing limits. Children feel safer when they know what behaviours are expected and feel sure that they will be protected from others' misbehaviour. In order to create a democratic environment, teachers need to involve children in establishing the behavioural rules and norms of the classroom.

## 4.5 CHILD-CONTENT RELATIONSHIP

### 4.5.1 The multicultural curriculum

Hughes (*Policy for Racial Justice* 1989:52) mentions that a multicultural curriculum is imperative for a multicultural society. This immediately raises the question as to what makes a curriculum multicultural. Vold (1992:11) points out that a curriculum is multicultural when "it recognises diversity in experience ... the relationships between differences in experience and the ways children acquire or construct new knowledge ... and when it draws upon two or more traditions and ways of viewing the world, thus enabling children to recognise their prior knowledge in what is being taught". According to Asia Hillard III (Drake 1993:265) the primary goal of the multicultural curriculum process is to present a truthful and meaningful rendition of the whole human experience. The emphasis here is that the study material used, should reflect individuals from different cultural groups engaging in similar occupations and social roles (Branch, Goodwin and Gualtieri 1993:58).

Multiculturalism permeates the curriculum through a literature approach that incorporates culturally appropriate children's literature in teaching the various areas of the curriculum. Multicultural literature is very important because the materials used meet the needs of children and help them grow in understanding themselves and others. If the materials used ignore the existence of a child's ethnic profile, children get the message that people of that ethnic group have no contributions to make to the development of their country. Therefore, when teachers select materials they should include some ethnic-specific magazines, music and audiovisuals.

A well-designed multicultural curriculum benefits children by

- assisting them to understand the totality of the experiences less of ethnic groups;
- assisting them to understand that there is always conflict between ideals and realities in human societies;

- exploring and clarifying ethnic alternatives and options within society;
- promoting values, attitudes and behaviours that support ethnic pluralism; and
- assisting them to develop the skills necessary for effective interpersonal and inter-ethnic group interactions (Baruth *et al.* 1992:180).

The incorporation of the multicultural perspective in the curriculum should aim at all times to equip children with a knowledge of differences in a diverse society, particularly when they finally have to go out working in the world and have to relate to other people in this diverse society.

#### 4.5.2 Designing a curriculum that facilitates learning in a multicultural classroom

Multiculturalism reinforces the importance for children to respect and accept cultural differences and the vitality and strength inherent to those differences, in the same way as they are now taught to understand and accept individual differences (Chau 1990:126).

There are various areas to be taken into account in curriculum development, if it has to facilitate learning in a multicultural classroom. Areas of great relevance are:

- **Content familiarity.** The provision of familiar content and relevant context play a role in building a bridge between old information and new concepts. The teacher's point of departure should always be exploring and reviewing what children already know and should know and thereafter promoting the value of the new information.
- **Organisation of information.** In a multicultural classroom, it is important and fruitful to reinforce vital points clearly and repeatedly, and illustrate those points through examples that are relevant and varied.
- **Presentation of information.** The use of various teaching methods helps children to become familiar with a variety of information and ensures greater equity of educational opportunity in a culturally diverse environment.
- **Responses.** A clear communication to children about which responses are appropriate, provides opportunities for them to use different ways of responding in class, encourages them and gives them time to learn (Idahosa 1993:28).

Efforts to support children's appreciation of diversity need to occur throughout the curriculum and in any physical setting. The appropriateness of curriculum materials, curriculum content, and classroom practices are instrumental in determining a child's predisposition to learning.

## 4.6 CHILD-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTIONS

The school environment includes all experiences with which children come into contact, namely the physical structure, materials, instructional method, learning process, the professional staff, other staff members, all of which influence the social dynamics of the classroom (Baruth *et al.* 1992:214; Ramsey 1991:68). A multicultural classroom environment that reflects the diverse nature of the multicultural society includes a variety of multicultural and self-awareness materials, updated consistently and provided as part of the daily learning environment, human resources that serve as role models, instructional material that shows individuals from diverse cultural groups working in different occupational and social roles, and flexible scheduling that provides ample time and space for children to share their uniqueness through role play, art, conversations and games.

According to Kendall (1983:59), what children experience in a school environment gives them the opportunity to increase their understanding of and sensitivity to other peoples' lives as well as playing a supportive role towards school learning and socialisation in general.

Having discussed the child-curriculum interactions in section 4.5, it is appropriate and relevant to point out the impact of the physical classroom environment on patterns of interaction.

### 4.6.1 The classroom structure

The physical design of a school building or a classroom communicates expectations and has functional consequences for children's scholastic performance, communication, play and relationships. Classroom structure is an important determinant of classroom climate and the child's social experience of school (Erwin 1993:197).

Any classroom space is divided into fixed and semi-fixed spaces. The fixed space includes aspects of the building such as doors, windows and room size; the semi-fixed space includes items such as furniture and equipment. The semi-fixed space available

for children influences the size of groups that gather and also maximises children's opportunities for interaction (Erwin 1993:194).

When children are in enclosed spaces, they are more likely to engage in cooperative play, probably because children are in closer contact with each other and less distracted by external events. On the other hand, the classroom structure or organisation of seating accommodation has the advantage of helping children to appreciate their interpersonal connectedness and the value of cooperative interdependence.

Children who occupy the front rows in the classroom are seen to be paying attention to academic matters and are viewed as being dependent on teachers, while children in the back rows have fewer opportunities for paying attention to academic matters but have greater freedom for peer interaction. In the same vein, children who sit in rows or around separate tables do not feel a sense of connectedness with others and are therefore more wary of contributing their ideas. These types of arrangements allow children to conduct side conversations, either verbally or non-verbally, which keep them from focusing on the group, and also change the social climate of the classroom (Ramsey 1991:109).

#### **4.6.2 The classroom materials**

The choice of posters and bulletin board displays, gives children a sense of ownership and ensures that the classroom reflects their lives and values. The type of materials available influences the quality of children's social interactions in that they affect children's autonomy to access and use materials. They encourage different types of peer interactions, and the social and cultural content of materials influence children's awareness and appreciation for people from diverse backgrounds and also foster an appreciation of their own backgrounds (Ramsey 1991:114; Evans 1991:22).

The available materials in each area stimulate different kinds of play. Complex materials and areas, such as well-equipped block corners and role-playing areas, are often the locations of more interactive and imaginative play.

The classroom environment that is orderly and aesthetically pleasing has a positive effect on the child's learning. According to Rutter (Collins 1984:288), there is a positive relationship between decoration and care of the building and children's achievement.

It must be pointed out that materials that reflect a wide variety of racial, cultural and class backgrounds and abilities, greatly promote interaction within multicultural

classrooms. School materials that convey respect for all people, and reflect a sensitivity to the particular social history and circumstances of children in the classroom, are mostly successful in improving relationships within multicultural settings.

#### 4.7 PARENTS/PEOPLE-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Multicultural education is, of necessity, community based. Parents, as members and representatives of the community, should play a role in the formal education of their children. Parents are knowledgeable people and the school's responsibility is to incorporate that knowledge and its bearers into the formal education programme. When parents participate in schools in meaningful, well conceived and structured ways, they come to identify with the school's academic concerns (Baruth *et al.* 1992:283; Collins 1984:301).

Parents participating as members of the school governance and management teams or working as classroom assistants, endorse a positive message about the prevailing home-school relationships, and provide children with immediately recognisable adult models.

Parents-school relationships are also greatly improved by schools that take it upon themselves to have teachers visit parents at home. Visiting in the home may be one of the most effective ways of getting to know children, their immediate and extended families, and their home environment and culture. These visits help children and their families to see that teachers care, and are interested in all children. On the other hand, making available school buildings for religious services, may also greatly improve home-school relationships.

It is important to note that while teachers endeavour to promote home-school relationships, their efforts may be frustrated by the very parents they want to involve. Culturally diverse parents may harbour distrust and negative feelings towards teachers of other cultural groups. This type of distrust makes it difficult for parents and children to believe that teachers from different cultural groups will have their interests at heart. Parents with such feelings will shun the teacher's efforts to build a working relationship with the school.

Some parents views the child's failure in either school achievement or behaviour as being a negative reflection upon them and their parenting skills. Therefore, they will be hesitant to associate themselves with the school because they will feel exposed.

Language differences (between home language and the language spoken in the school) also contribute to parents shunning the school. That is why it is important for schools to organise parent meetings where communication should be encouraged by using their own language and using interpreters where necessary (Baruth *et al.* 1992:257).

In order to achieve a more positive home-school relationship, parental attitudes towards multicultural schools should be changed. The change can be facilitated by teachers who display democratic attitudes and values; teachers who have the ability to view events and situations from a diverse ethnic perspective; and teachers who possess an understanding of the complex and multidimensional nature of ethnicity in society. The ultimate goal of improving parent-school relationships is the creation of an interactive social climate that makes the school a desirable place to be and to associate with.

#### 4.8 SYNTHESIS

This chapter focused on the social interactions experienced in the primary school classrooms. It became clear in what way the various social interactions differ from situation to situation and how these relationships and diverse activities promote the aims of multicultural education.

In section 4.2, it was mentioned that relationships within families offer a wide variety of interactions and are vehicles for understanding social and cultural issues. Mention was also made of the fact that socialisation is an adult-initiated process by which children, through education, training and imitation, acquire their culture as well as habits and values congruent with adaptation to that culture. Children become more confident if their relationships with their parents are sound. Confidence allows them to move out from the parents' secure base to engage in new situations and relationships. The parent-child relationships also greatly influence the children's school work and attitude towards school. Eventually, this relationship develops children's personalities.

In section 4.3, mention was made that socialisation in the peer context varies from culture to culture. Between the ages of six and twelve the child spends increasingly more time with peers, and he seeks to be with them not only when he is in school but at other times as well. The child's interaction with his age-mates and his engagement in a number of social activities, prepare him for his eventual independence from family life, learning at the same time about other people's perspectives, opinions and values and about himself and how others view him. Children select their friends mainly from among children of their own age and they associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers. Boys' interactions are commonly oriented around

independence, competition and dominance. Girls' interactions are generally based on closeness, cooperation and interpersonal harmony. Children also often select friends on the basis of proximity and similarity. The different gender, racial, cultural, ethnic and socio-economic groups present in the classroom, may affect grouping patterns. In any group, members are expected to conform to the ideas, values and to the culture of childhood, which is manifested in children's play. The proportion of child-child interactions spent in play, varies from culture to culture. Cultural traditions greatly influence their willingness to engage in certain types of play. Child-child interactions provide the child with the opportunity to practise social skills and to experiment with new ideas, behaviours and attitudes and also facilitate the transfer of knowledge and information.

In section 4.4, mention was that in every classroom, there are children from different cultures and heritages. Children bring to the classroom talents, language, customs, and religion. It is the task of the teacher to make use of these resources to achieve multicultural classroom harmony. Teachers will have to engage children in a number of activities which will promote interaction between children and teachers and among children themselves. The task of the teacher is to maintain a classroom environment that addresses order and discipline, structure, teaching modalities, curriculum content, and classroom ambience. Teachers greatly influence children's social orientation and skills by modelling positive social behaviour to children. Children need to see teachers as role models who accept and value diversity. Some things that can affect their perceptions are the tone of a teacher's voice when he or she responds to other children and the eye contact that the teacher does or does not make with children. The teacher's own belief about the value of cultural differences is reflected in such verbal and non-verbal communications.

In section 4.5, attention was focused on the child-content relationship. A curriculum is multicultural when it recognises diversity in experience, and the relationships between differences in experience, and the ways children acquire or construct new knowledge, and when it draws upon two or more traditions and ways of viewing the world, thus enabling children to recognise their prior knowledge in what is being taught. A well-designed multicultural curriculum benefits children; assisting them to understand the totality of the experiences of ethnic groups and to understand that there is always conflict between ideals and realities in human societies. Such a curriculum aims to develop the skills necessary for effective interpersonal and inter-ethnic group interactions; explores and clarifies ethnic alternatives and options within society; and promotes values, attitudes and behaviours that support ethnic pluralism. The

appropriateness of the curriculum content and classroom practices, is instrumental in determining a child's predisposition to learning.

Section 4.6 concentrated on the child-environment interaction. The school environment can be described as including all experiences with which children come into contact, namely the physical structure, content material, instructional method, learning process, the professional staff and other staff members. What children experience in a school environment gives them the opportunity to increase their understanding of and sensitivity to others people's lives, while playing a supportive role in school learning and socialisation in general. The physical design of a school building or a classroom communicates expectations and has functional consequences for the children's scholastic performance, communication, play and relationships. Classroom structure is an important determinant of classroom climate and the child's social experience of school. In the classroom, the choice of posters and bulletin board displays gives children a sense of ownership and ensures that the classroom reflects their lives and values. The type of materials available in the classroom influences the quality of children's social interactions in that they affect children's autonomy to access and use materials, they encourage different types of peer interactions, while the social and cultural content of materials influence children's awareness and appreciation for people from diverse backgrounds. It also fosters an appreciation of their own backgrounds. The classroom environment that is orderly and aesthetically pleasing has a positive effect on the child's learning. Materials that reflect a wide variety of racial, cultural and class backgrounds and abilities greatly promote interactions within multicultural classrooms.

Section 4.7 briefly concentrated on home-school relationships. Culturally diverse parents and families play a very important role in all phases of the teaching-learning process in multicultural schools. Parents who participate in meaningful, well conceived and structured ways, greatly improve home-school relationships. The dialogue that exists between the parents and schools, helps parents and children to feel that teachers care, and that they are interested in all children.

The next chapter will deal with the design of an empirical study and the resultant procedures.

## Chapter 5

# Empirical research design

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters a review of literature on the nature and quality of relationships formation in the primary school classrooms was done. This research specifically aims to evaluate the influence of each identified independent variable has on relationship formation in the multicultural classroom. The outcome will be used to devise strategies to improve and stimulate relationship formation amongst children from different ethnic and cultural origins.

The empirical data which is obtained through the use of the measuring instruments will give scientific support to certain findings made in the literature study.

### 5.2 SUPPOSITIONS FROM THE LITERATURE

Research findings indicate that the formation of relationships implies involvement in a positive activity, with other children. Friendships are characterised by the sharing of activities and ideals. In order to maintain the relationship, friends must agree, either implicitly or explicitly, to continue interacting in a positive manner (Rubin and Ross 1982:292).

If a group forms, children to some degree influence one another, choose one another, reject one another, or ally themselves with one another on the basis of similar or complementary qualities. Newcombs (Hartford 1971:194) mentions that the basis of peer group formation may be common interests, values and similar characteristics such

as self-concept, age, gender, intelligence, personality traits, family environment and race (compare sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2).

### **5.2.1 Gender as a factor influencing relationship formation**

Socialisation in the peer context varies from culture to culture. Children's interaction with their age-mates and their engagement in a number of social activities, prepares them for their eventual independence from family life, allowing them to learn, at the same time, about other people's perspectives, opinions and values and about themselves and how others view them. The peer group interactions also offer them the opportunity to practise social skills and to experiment with new ideas, behaviours and attitudes and also facilitate the transfer of knowledge and information (compare section 4.3.2).

Research has found that a child's friendship choices at primary school level are positively related to being of the same gender as the other child (Cohen *et al.* 1983:119). Boys' interactions are commonly oriented around independence, competition and dominance. They are more aggressive than girls (Fein 1978:399). Girls' interactions are generally based on closeness, cooperation and interpersonal harmony. Girls typically prefer playing in pairs, while boys usually play in larger groups (compare section 4.3.1). Children's experiences in a school environment give them the opportunity to increase their understanding of and sensitivity towards other people. These communication situations also give them the opportunity to play supportive roles towards school learning and socialisation in general (compare section 4.6).

### **5.2.2 Family background as a factor influencing relationship formation**

In scrutinising social interactions in depth, it has been found that relationships within families offer a wide variety of interactions and are vehicles for understanding social and cultural issues. Children become more confident if their relationships with their parents are sound.

Burns (1986:161) maintains that a child's adjustment to life depends on his subjective interpretation of his family's treatment of him and conditions within the family. Once his interpretations are positive, he gains confidence. Confidence allows the child to move out from the parents' secure base to engage in new situations and relationships (compare section 4.2).

### **5.2.3 The self-concept as a factor influencing relationship formation**

In section 3.3, the self-concept is explained as the image children have of themselves as a result of their interactions with important people in their lives. The self-concept is strongly influenced by one's experience and socialisation, as well as by the strength of one's identification with and feelings about one's culture.

Children's increased control over their environment results in an increased feeling of self-esteem. When children enjoy high self-esteem, they develop self-respect and consider themselves worthy, loved, appreciated, capable and significant. Self-esteem postulates that children have a need for positive feelings of self-worth which is satisfied when they receive others' approval and frustrated when they earn their disdain (Cohen *et al.* 1983:78).

Children's social selves have an important effect on their formation of relationships. Children social lives demand that they become sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They must acquire some degree of empathy and understanding in their interpersonal relationships. This can only be done from the basis of an own positive self-concept, which gives the necessary security and preparedness to become involved with others.

### **5.2.4 Personality as a factor influencing relationship formation**

Literature reveals that some group members are attracted to others because of personality needs. Acceptability in the peer group is enhanced by characteristics such

as friendliness, cooperation, emotional stability and trustworthiness (Hartford 1971:200; Mussen, Conger and Kagan 1969:56; Vrey 1979:102).

Within groups, children are chosen as friends or workmates if they are able and willing to help others. Extroverts enjoy the company of others and usually take the initiative in organising activities, while the introverts have the tendency to keep away from other children and to keep themselves busy.

Literature reveals that primary school children gradually show more and more understanding for the feelings of others: Their empathy and sympathy increase as they grow older. During this time, they realise that people can experience different emotions simultaneously and they also become capable of identifying emotional experiences such as anger, fear, love and happiness.

#### **5.2.5 Scholastic achievement as a factor influencing relationship formation**

Research has found that children tend to choose friends from among other children who are on the same intellectual level as they are. According to Cohen *et al.* (1983:117) and Vrey (1979:101) peer groups are formed by children having a similar achievement level and interest range.

#### **5.2.6 Race and culture as factors influencing relationship formation**

Children in multicultural classrooms are aware of race and cultural differences (compare section 2.7.5.3). They ask frequent questions, most of them related to their own physical characteristics and those of others – about matters such as skin colour and hair colour. According to Goodman (Kendall 1983:20), the recognition of colour differences is part of the children's process of establishing their identity, and determining what they are and what they are not.

Literature emphasises the awareness of colour differences and the consequences thereof for friendship choice and social relations in multicultural classrooms. It has been noted that children often sit and interact in culturally and racially segregated patterns when they have an opportunity to choose where to sit and with whom to interact (Sleeter 1989:190).

Most researchers are in agreement that race and culture are important factors in determining sociometric choices in elementary school children, even if their classrooms are integrated. However, it is important to mention that many researchers, amongst whom Silberman and Spice (Cohen *et al.* 1983:113), have produced evidence that no racial and cultural discrimination is evident in the choice of friends.

### 5.3 SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF VARIABLES

It is clear from the literature study that the variables (as mentioned in section 5.2) have an explicit influence on relationship formation. A more scientific procedure will have to be followed in order to evaluate the influence these variables have on the formation of relationships in the South African multicultural primary school classroom context.

The variables will be discussed under two main headings, namely *dependent* and *independent variables*.

#### 5.3.1 The dependent variable

The dependent variable in this research will be group membership. A sociogram will be used to determine the choice of friends and the formation of friendship groups.

### 5.3.2 The independent variables

#### 5.3.2.1 *The self-concept*

The self-concept develops as a result of one's interactions with parents, peers, teachers and experiences of various kinds in and out of school. Hessari *et al.* (1990:118) mention that a sense of self-worth is of vital importance for a realistic acceptance of self and, from there, for the ability to accept and value other people who differ in any way from the self.

Self-regard and adjustment, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, have been described as behaviours dependent on the self-concept. It is evident that since the self-concept influences behaviour, it also plays a very important role in the child's formation of relationships. It is on these grounds that the SSPS (Self-concept Scale for Primary School Pupils) will be used to evaluate the influence the quality of the self-concept has on the formation of relationships in the multicultural primary school classroom.

#### 5.3.2.2 *Personality*

According to Berne (Hartford 1971:193) there is a tendency for "people with similar or complementary attitudes, interests and responses to seek one another out and stay together". This statement implies that some group members are attracted to others because of personality needs.

It is on the basis of the above statement that the researcher would like to evaluate the influence of personality on the formation of relationships within multicultural primary school classrooms, in a scientific manner.

#### *5.3.2.3 Scholastic achievement*

Scholastic achievement, which is normally the outcome of intellectual ability, can be described as the aggregate percentage obtained by a child in any subject test, mid-year or end of year examination. The test results indicate whether the child's performance is below average, average or above average.

According to Richardson (Hartford 1971:200), children tend to seek out others whom they perceive to have what they think are their own positive personality traits. Therefore, peer groups are formed by children of similar achievement level and intellectual abilities.

It is the purpose of this research to evaluate the influence scholastic achievement has on the formation of relationships in a multicultural setting.

#### *5.3.2.4 Home background*

Literature revealed that the positive attitude of the parents towards other people, cultures, races, and open, free relationships with children, play a positive role in relationship formation outside the home situation.

The researcher would like to evaluate the quality of the child's relationship with his parents and the influence this relationship has on the child's ability to adjust in the South African multicultural setting.

#### *5.3.2.5 Gender and social behaviour*

Children associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers (Cohen *et al.* 1983:119). On the one hand literature has revealed that the presence of different race and cultural groups in the classroom, may affect grouping patterns. On the other

hand, literature has also indicated that other researchers have produced contradictory evidence, namely no racial and cultural discrimination is evident in the choice of friends.

It is from this background information that the researcher, for the purpose of this investigation, is interested in evaluating if gender, racial and cultural differences play a role in the formation of relationships in the South African multicultural primary school classrooms.

#### 5.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

The research sample consisted of 121 Standard five (5) pupils: 62 boys and 59 girls. Since race and culture, amongst others, are identified as variables that influence relationship formation, three (3) multicultural English medium schools situated in the Pretoria area, were selected.

The schools were selected on the basis that their populations/enrolments were considered to be highly representative of the various cultural groups present in South Africa. All three schools are registered with the Department of Education.

The pupils were grouped on the basis of the following criteria:

- scholastic level
- gender
- language/cultural groups.

The details of the schools used in the research sample, are shown in Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

**Table 5.1: Details of the research sample according to gender and standard**

Schools	Standard	Gender		Total
		Boys	Girls	
1	5	45	7	52
2	5	17	25	42
3	5	-	27	27
-	-	62	59	121

**Table 5.2: Details of the research sample according to language/cultural groups**

School	Zulu	English	Afri-kaans	S. Sotho	Ndebele	Swati	Asian	N Sotho	Other	Total
1	1	18	3	3	-	1	-	2	24	52
2	4	23	-	-	-	-	3	3	9	42
3	2	12	-	-	1	2	-	3	7	27
Total	7	53	3	3	1	3	3	8	40	121

**5.4.1 Scholastic level of pupils**

Standard five (5) pupils were selected.

**5.4.2 Gender of pupils**

Both boys and girls were included in the sample.

**5.4.3 Language/cultural groups of pupils**

Pupils from various cultural groups were included in the sample.

## 5.5 THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

### 5.5.1 The development and structure of the researcher's own instrument

The researcher developed a questionnaire which consists of two sections, namely *section A* requesting biographical information and *section B* consisting of 46 statements related to socialisation. Copies of the questionnaire and the answer sheet may be found in the addendum.

Children were requested to respond to each of the given statements by noting their answers on a two-point scale.

The two points of the scale are as follows:

- False = 1
- True = 2

One of these numbers had to be written down in the appropriate square, on the answer sheet provided.

The instructions for answering the questions in section B, were as follows:

Carefully consider each of the undermentioned statements, numbered 10-55. Your answer for each statement must be indicated with a number 1 or 2 on the answer sheet, to show the extent to which each statement is relevant to you. Write your answers on the answer sheet.

**Example**

My book is neatly covered.

False	True
1	2

1
---

If you write 1 in the given block as shown, it will mean your answer is *false*. Complete the following statements in the same way.

Remember to write your answer in the block next to the corresponding numbers on the answer sheet.

The statements in section B of the questionnaire have the following characteristics:

- Statements are related to the formation of relationships within the family, school and classroom.
- All statements are based on the formation of relationships as found in the literature study (compare sections 4.2 - 4.6).
- The 46 statements are divided as indicated in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Statements covering the formation of relationships**

	<b>Relationships</b>	<b>Statements numbers</b>
1	Within the family	11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55
2	School and classroom	10, 15, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 50

As indicated, of the 46 statements, 27 concern the relationships within the family and 19 concern the formation of relationships in the school and classrooms.

#### **5.5.2 The self-concept scale for primary school pupils (SSPS) (Standard 3-Standard 5)**

The self-concept scale for primary school pupils set out in Le Roux (1983), was used. This scale was developed in order to gauge the nature of the self-concept of primary school pupils, since it was mentioned that certain behaviours are dependent on the self-concept (compare section 3.3).

A total of 60 different items are included in the self-concept scale. These items represent different components of the self-concept, namely physical, academic, social, value, family and psychic self.

The instrument takes about 30 minutes to administer. However, the average pupil is capable of completing the test within 25 minutes.

The instructions for answering the questions are as follows:

You are requested to identify with either person A or person B.

On the following pages of this questionnaire person A and person B give an opinion of themselves. If you feel more like person A feels, then draw a cross in block A. If you feel more like person B feels, then draw a cross in block B.

*(The SSPS has all rights reserved and may not be reproduced. However, the pupils' responses were translated into numbers and incorporated into the researcher's own instrument answer sheet (numbers 56 -115).*

**Example**

Person A: I always finish my homework quickly.

Person B: I always find it difficult to get through my homework.

A	B
---	---

A	BX
---	----

If you put in a cross in block B, then it means that you feel like person B.

The following table indicates the classification of the items under the various components.

**Table 5.4: Allocation of items to the various components of the self-concept scale.**

Subtests	Items according to numbers in the self-concept scale
Physical self	6, 7, 17, 27, 37, 38, 49, 51, 53, 59
Academic self	5, 8, 16, 18, 26, 28, 39, 40, 48, 54
Social self	4, 9, 15, 19, 21, 29, 36, 41, 47, 55
Value self	3, 10, 14, 20, 24, 30, 35, 42, 46, 56
Family self	2, 11, 13, 23, 25, 31, 34, 43, 45, 57
Psychic self	1, 12, 22, 32, 33, 44, 50, 52, 58, 60

- **Reliability**

Ebel (Le Roux 1983:12-13) reports the following reliability coefficients for the SSPS:

**Table 5.5: Reliability coefficient for the SSPS**

	Standard 3	Standard 5
k-R20	0,842	0,816
Reliability k-R14	0,842	0,816
RXSJ	0,132	0,124

RXSJ = Reliability index

- **Validity**

Emphasis has been on the calculation of the internal consistency of the SSPS. The point-biserial correlation of an item with a test total (RX) indicates the internal consistency of the test. The point-biserial correlation of the Standard 3s and Standard 5s were reported as 0,314 and 0,291 respectively.

### 5.5.3 The children's personality questionnaire (CPQ)

This is a personality questionnaire developed by the American authors Porter and Cattell. It was adopted and translated for use in South African schools by the Institute for Psychometric Research of the Human Sciences Research Council and was standardised for children in the age range of eight (8) to 13 years.

Its purpose is to measure the fourteen distinct personality dimensions or factors involved in most comprehensive descriptions of individual differences in personality.

The questionnaire consists of two separate test booklets, form A and form B, each in two parts. For the purpose of this study, only the form A booklet was used. Each personality factor or dimension is represented by five items in each part of the questionnaire. (The test is confidential and may not be reproduced. *Responses were translated into numbers and incorporated into the researcher's own instrument answer sheet numbers 116-129.*) Children were requested to answer questions on the given answer sheet. The instructions were as follows:

Decide which answer to each question fits you better and mark it on the answer sheet. If you decide that A is the better answer to question 1, blacken the space between the dotted lines across A, next to number 1 on your answer sheet.

**Example:**                    1        A        B

If you decide that B is the better answer to question 1, blacken the space across B, next to number 1 on your answer sheet.

**Example:**                    1        A        B

## ■ Reliability

### (i) *Split-half reliability*

The corrected split-half reliability coefficient for the fourteen personality factors of the CPQ for boys and girls together, are reported in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Corrected split-half reliability for the 14 personality factors of the CPQ for boys and girls together (N = 2760)**

Factor	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Rtt	0,535	0,696	0,594	0,657	0,578	0,673	0,559	0,625
Factor	I	J	N	O	Q <sub>3</sub>	Q <sub>4</sub>		
Rtt	0,634	0,405	0,630	0,581	0,722	0,710		

(ii) *Test-retest reliability*

The test-retest reliability coefficient found for a sample of boys and girls separately, are reported in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7: Test-retest reliability coefficients (retesting after 14 days) for the 14 personality factors of the CPQ for boys (N=89) and girls (N=89) separately**

Factor	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Boys	0,738	0,748	0,641	0,772	0,791	0,713	0,588
Girls	0,673	0,705	0,609	0,779	0,741	0,705	0,661
Factor	H	I	J	N	O	Q <sub>3</sub>	Q <sub>4</sub>
Boys	0,736	0,699	0,492	0,689	0,707	0,619	0,620
Girls	0,719	0,730	0,652	0,774	0,587	0,661	0,735

■ **Validity**

Validity coefficients, derived from equivalence for boys and girls together, are reported in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Validity coefficient (derived from equivalence) for the 14 personality factors of the CPQ for boys and girls together (N=2760)**

Factor Co-efficient	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	0,604	0,731	0,650	0,699	0,637	0,712	0,623
Factor Co-efficient	H	I	J	N	O	Q <sub>3</sub>	Q <sub>4</sub>
	0,675	0,681	0,504	0,678	0,640	0,752	0,742

(HSRC 1972:1-11)

#### 5.5.4 Scholastic achievement

The aggregate percentage obtained by each child in the most recent examinations was used to measure scholastic achievement. The tests and examinations in Standard five (5) differ from school to school because different teachers are responsible for the setting of their own papers. Therefore, it must be kept in mind that the aggregate percentage only gives a rough indication of the child's achievement level.

#### 5.5.5 The sociogram

Children with similar interests and responses have the tendency to seek out each other and stay together. In group formation, children have some degree of influence on each other and choose each other on the basis of various attractions.

The sociometric technique is used as a method for evaluating both the social acceptance of individual children and the social structure of a group (Hartford 1971:195; Grondlund and Linn 1990:403).

One aspect of sociometric procedures is the construction of sociograms. The sociogram is a graphic representation of the choices or association of group members, using

symbols for individuals and their interactions. They are useful in locating group members in relation to one another.

In this research, a sociogram technique was used to determine friendship groups in multicultural classrooms (compare Fox 1969:592-595). Children were requested to write down the names of four classmates they would choose as friends. (A copy of the sociometric form may be found in the addendum. *Pupils' choices were translated into numbers and incorporated into the answer sheet of the researcher's own questionnaire – numbers 130-133.*)

The sociometric results will be presented in sociograms plotted directly from the data recorded in the matrix tables.

## 5.6 COLLECTION OF DATA

### 5.6.1 Administration procedures: Preliminary arrangements

Visits were made to the selected schools, to explain the nature of the research to be undertaken to the principals. Arrangements on the date and time of the tests were finalised during these visits.

Dates were chosen to fit in with the programmes of the schools. The administering of the tests was scheduled for September 1995. It was reasoned that pupils in Standard five (5) during this time of the year have advanced far along the road of relationship formation in the primary school and are ready to start with new relationships in the secondary school.

### **5.6.2 Administering the tests**

The tests were administered to 121 Standard five (5) pupils in multicultural schools. In all three schools involved, the researcher administered the tests personally to ensure that tests were administered in the most efficient manner.

The tests were divided into four (4) sessions. At the beginning of each session the researcher read through all instructions with the pupils, in order to make sure that each pupil understood what was expected of him or her. Pupils were requested to ask questions if they did not understand any statement in the tests.

The self-concept and personality scales were scored by the researcher and he was assisted by colleagues who are registered with the South African Medical and Dental Council as psychologists. Scoring stencils had been made available by the Human Sciences Research Council and the University of South Africa. The scoring was done with great care.

The questionnaire on social skills and family background was thoroughly checked by the researcher and errors were corrected before submitting the final set of items for computerised analysis.

## **5.7 DATA PROCESSING**

### **5.7.1 Item analysis**

Items can be analysed qualitatively, in terms of their content and form, and quantitatively in terms of their statistical properties. High reliability and validity can be built into a test in advance, through item analysis.

In this research the Cronbach coefficient alpha will be used to determine whether each of the items made a contribution to its particular category, and to the total of the questionnaire. The Cronbach coefficient alpha will also be used to calculate the reliability-coefficient. A better analysis results if an item making no contribution (or one which contributes very little) to the total is removed from the analysis (compare Frane and Hill 1976:493).

### **5.7.2 Validity**

In this research the validity of the measuring instrument will be based on content validity.

The test items of the measuring instrument (compare section 5.5.1) were systematically analysed in order to make certain that all major aspects are covered by the questionnaire. The relevant content was obtained from the literature.

### **5.7.3 Reliability**

The Cronbach coefficient alpha will be used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire.

## **5.8 SYNTHESIS**

The questionnaires/tests were administered to 121 Standard five (5) pupils in multicultural South African schools.

All procedures followed, were fully explained beforehand.

The next chapter will present the data, as well as an analysis and interpretation of the results.

# Chapter 6

## Results of the investigation

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In sections 1.4.2 and 5.3 it was mentioned that the researcher aimed to determine the influence that independent variables such as home background, social skills, gender, scholastic achievement, race, culture, self-concept and personality had on the formation of relationships in the primary school classrooms.

The data collected by means of the researcher's own questionnaire, the self-concept scale for primary school pupils (SSPS) (Standard 3 - Standard 5), the children's personality questionnaire (CPQ) and the sociometric method, will be analysed by means of various statistical techniques. The item-analysis will be explained and the reliability coefficient of the researcher's own questionnaire will be determined. Stepwise discriminant analysis will be used to establish the specific variables that influence relationship formation. All results will be presented, analysed and interpreted in this chapter.

### 6.2 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCHER'S OWN INSTRUMENT

The instrument consists of two categories, namely relationship within the family and relationship with friends (compare section 5.5.1). An item analysis was done for both categories as well as for the whole questionnaire, in order to establish whether each of the items made a contribution to its particular category, and to the total of the questionnaire. In instances where an item made no contribution, or contributed negatively to the total, the item was omitted.

The Cronbach coefficient alpha was used to calculate the reliability-coefficient. The reliability-coefficient was calculated for each category of the questionnaire, as well as for the total questionnaire. Details with regard to these calculations are indicated in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

**Table 6.1 Item analysis of the category: Relationships within the family**

Number of pupils	121	
Number of items	27	
Reliability (alpha)	0,798	
Item	Item-correlation with total	Alpha
11	0,234	0,797
12	0,110	0,799
13	0,156	0,803
14	0,406	0,788
16	0,408	0,788
18	0,226	0,798
21	0,216	0,799
22	0,445	0,785
24	0,481	0,790
26	0,450	0,785
28	0,335	0,792
29	0,302	0,793
30	0,428	0,786
32	0,239	0,798
33	0,226	0,796
36	0,355	0,790
39	0,386	0,790
41	0,180	0,799
44	0,131	0,798
46	0,488	0,786
48	0,464	0,785
49	0,359	0,790
51	0,347	0,791
52	0,426	0,787
53	0,269	0,794
54	0,460	0,786
55	0,381	0,789

All 27 items show a positive correlation with the total. The alpha reliability coefficient (r) for each item is greater than 0.7 and this signifies a high positive correlation. Therefore, all 27 items will be retained and used.

**Table 6.2 Item analysis of the category: Relationships with friends**

Number of pupils	121
Number of items	19
Reliability (alpha)	0,745

Item	Item-correlation with total	Alpha
10	0,224	0,744
15	0,405	0,726
17	0,183	0,743
19	0,310	0,735
20	0,170	0,743
23	0,461	0,720
25	0,205	0,742
27	0,428	0,729
31	0,320	0,735
34	0,634	0,706
35	0,312	0,735
37	0,433	0,725
38	0,095	0,756
40	0,241	0,742
42	0,426	0,725
43	0,415	0,726
45	0,279	0,739
47	0,309	0,735
50	0,253	0,739

All 19 items show a positive correlation with the total. The alpha reliability coefficient (r) of each item is greater than 0,7 and this signifies a high positive correlation. Therefore, all 19 items will be retained and used.

All 46 items in the questionnaire have a significant positive correlation with the total of the questionnaire. Calculations clearly indicate that the reliability coefficient will not change drastically if any of the items were to be omitted. Hence, all calculations and interpretation of data have been based on the 46 items.

### 6.3 VALIDITY

Validity refers to the degree to which a test succeeds in measuring what it has set out to measure (Mulder 1989:215).

It was mentioned in section 5.7.2 that the validity of the researcher's questionnaire is based on content validity. On the basis of the procedures followed as mentioned, one can accept the content validity of the questionnaire.

### 6.4 RELIABILITY

The closer the reliability of a measuring instrument is to one (1), the smaller the difference between the variance of the actual and the observed scores. When an instrument is developed, an attempt is made to determine the reliability of the instrument as close to one (1) as possible.

The reliability of the questionnaire was arrived at by calculating the alpha coefficient for each of the categories, as well as the total for the questionnaire.

As can be seen from Table 6.3 the reliability coefficient for the whole questionnaire is 0,840. This value is close to one (1) and therefore the questionnaire can be considered to be a reliable measuring instrument.

**Table 6.3 Reliability of the measuring instrument**

Category	Alpha coefficient	Number of items
Relationship within the family	0,798	27
Relationship with friends	0,745	19
Questionnaire in totality	0,840	46

## 6.5 DETERMINING THE NORMS

A norm is an objective standard whereby the scores which a testee receives on a measuring instrument, are interpreted.

Stanines (standard scores divided into nine categories as in table 6.4) were used to determine the norms. To calculate the stanines for each of the categories of the questionnaire, the cumulative percentages for each of the categories were obtained.

The stanines obtained, are set out in Tables 6.5, 6.7 and 6.9.

**Table 6.4 Limits and areas of stanines**

Stanines	Limits	% of area
9	$+\infty$ to $+1,75z$	4
8	$+1,75z$ to $1,25z$	7
7	$+1,25z$ to $+0,75z$	12
6	$+0,75z$ to $+0,25z$	17
5	$+0,25z$ to $-0,25z$	20
4	$-0,25z$ to $-0,75z$	17
3	$-0,75z$ to $-1,25z$	12
2	$-1,25z$ to $-1,75z$	7
1	$-1,75z$ to $-\infty$	4

(Mulder 1989:205)

**Table 6.5** Converting scores into stanines: Family relationship category

Scores	<i>f</i>	Cumulative percentage	Stanines
2	1	0,8	1
8	1	1,7	1
11	1	2,5	1
12	1	3,3	1
14	1	4,1	2
15	1	5,0	2
16	1	5,8	2
17	4	9,1	2
18	3	11,6	3
19	4	14,9	3
20	8	21,5	3
21	6	26,4	4
22	18	41,3	5
23	15	53,7	5
24	14	65,3	6
25	9	72,7	6
26	19	88,4	7
27	8	95,0	8
28	6	100,0	9

**Table 6.6** Classification of scores (family background (FB)) into categories

Scores	Levels
0 - 20	Below average (BA)
21 - 25	Average (A)
26 - 28	Above average (AA)

**Table 6.7** Converting scores into stanines: Friends category

Scores	<i>f</i>	Cumulative percentage	Stanine
6	1	0,8	1
8	1	1,7	1
9	3	4,1	2
10	4	7,4	2
11	3	9,9	2
12	3	12,4	3
13	5	16,5	3
14	8	23,1	4
15	6	28,1	4
16	17	42,1	5
17	20	58,7	5
18	28	81,8	7
19	15	94,2	8
20	7	100,0	9

**Table 6.8** Classification of scores (friendship skills (FS)) into categories

Scores	Levels
0 - 13	Below average (BA)
14 - 17	Average (A)
18 - 20	Above average (AA)

Table 6.9 Converting scores into stanines: Scholastic achievement

Scores	<i>f</i>	Cumulative percentage	Stanine
31	1	0,8	1
38	1	1,7	1
40	1	2,5	1
41	1	3,3	1
42	3	5,8	2
43	1	6,6	2
44	3	9,1	2
46	2	10,7	2
47	3	13,2	3
48	2	14,9	3
49	1	15,7	3
50	4	19,0	3
51	1	19,8	3
52	5	24,0	4
53	2	25,6	4
54	2	27,3	4
55	2	28,9	4
56	7	34,7	4
57	2	36,4	4
58	4	39,7	4
59	8	46,3	5
60	1	47,1	5
61	1	47,9	5
62	7	53,7	5
63	3	56,2	5
64	4	59,5	5
65	7	65,3	6
66	7	71,1	6
67	3	73,6	6
68	3	76,0	6
69	2	77,7	7
70	2	79,3	7
71	2	81,0	7
72	1	81,8	7
73	2	83,5	7

**Table 6.9 (continued)**

Scores	<i>f</i>	Cumulative percentage	Stanine
74	1	84,3	7
75	2	86,0	7
77	4	89,3	8
78	3	91,7	8
79	2	93,4	8
81	2	95,0	8
82	1	95,9	8
85	1	96,7	9
86	1	97,5	9
87	1	98,3	9
90	1	99,2	9
92	1	100,0	9

**Table 6.10 Classification of scores (scholastic achievement (SA)) into categories**

Scores	Levels
0 - 51	Below average (BA)
52-68	Average (A)
69-92	Above average (AA)

**Table 6.11 Personality factors: Interpretation of scores**

There is a tendency for people with similar or complementary attitudes, interests and responses to seek out one another and stay together. This implies that some group members are attracted to others because of personality needs. It is on these grounds that the children's personality questionnaire (CPQ) was used: It deals with important personality dimensions about which insightful psychological conclusions can be drawn. The psychological meaning of the factors is presented as a bi-polar continuum, and the two extreme poles of the continuum are described as follows: A high stanine score (7-9) corresponds to the description given on the right-hand side and a low stanine score (1-3) corresponds to the description given on the left-hand side.

<b>Factor E (submissive versus dominant)</b>	
<b>Low score (L) (1-3)</b>	<b>High score (H) (7-9)</b>
submissive dependent kind, soft-hearted expressive conforming obedient	dominant independent hard, stern solemn rebellious disobedient
<b>Factor Q<sub>3</sub> (undisciplined versus controlled)</b>	
undisciplined self-conflict lax, prone to undisciplined self-conflict careless of protocol uncontrolled emotionality excitability	controlled self-controlled socially precise ambitious to do well considerate of others

The reader should guard against assuming that high scores are "good" and low scores are "bad". According to the performance and purpose being considered, either the low or high scores may be advantageous (HSRC 1972:2, 5 & 9).

**Table 6.12 Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	
Boys	1
Girls	2

## 6.6 THE SOCIOGRAM

In group formation, children have some degree of influence on each other and choose each other on the basis of various attractions. The sociometric technique is used as a method for evaluating the social acceptance of individual children and the social structure of a group. One aspect of sociometric procedures is the construction of sociograms. Sociograms are useful in locating group members in relation to each other.

In this research, children were requested to write down the names of four classmates they would choose as friends. The sociometric results tabulating the children's choices, appear in matrix tables 6.13 to 6.16. Children in the classroom were given numbers for identification purposes. These numbers were listed down the side on the tables. The same numbers were also placed across the top of the table, so that each child's choices could be recorded in the appropriate column. The choices were recorded in the appropriate column in terms of first, second, third and fourth choices. For example, in Table 6.13, child number seven chose child number four as his first choice, child number 18 as his second choice, child number nine as his third choice and child number one as his fourth choice.

As indicated, each child chose four friends as requested. The encircled numbers in the tables indicate mutual choices: That is, children who chose each other. For example, in Table 6.13, child number two has chosen number 15 and vice versa. The bottom rows on the sociometric tables indicate the number of mutual choices for a particular child. Mutual choices were used as a indication of children's social acceptance by peers. However, the sociometric tables do not depict the social structure of the groups. In order to obtain the children's social structure, the sociometric results were presented in sociograms. The sociograms 6.1 to 6.4 were plotted directly from the data recorded in the matrix tables (compare Grondlund *et al.* 1990:404-407).

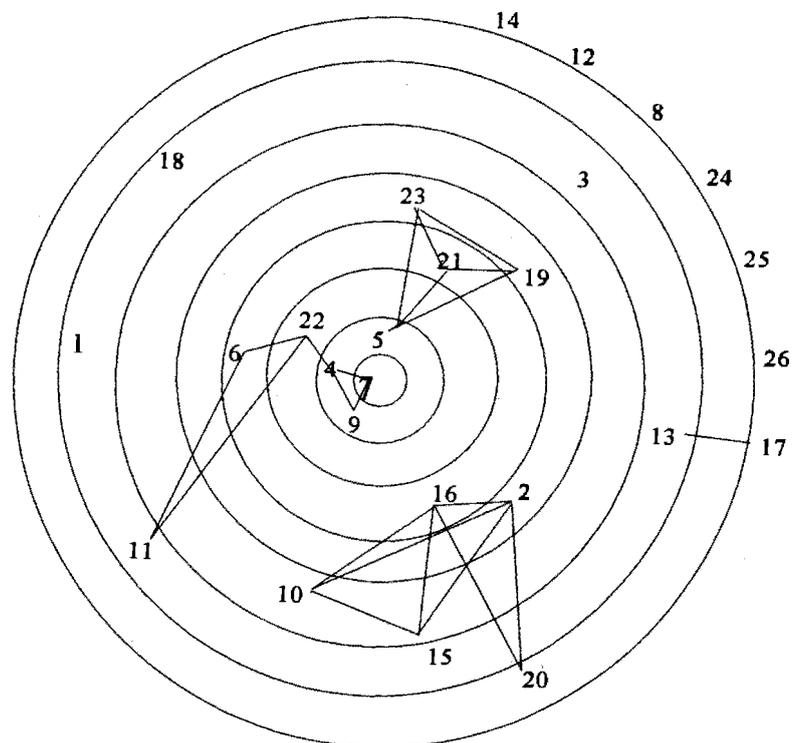
Table 6.13

Sociometric table

School 1 (Standard 5X)

Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
1					1			(2)	3									(4)								
2										(1)					(2)	(3)				(4)						
3	2															4		(1)						(3)		
4							(1)		(2)	(3)												(4)				
5																			(1)		(2)		(3)			(4)
6							1				(2)		(3)									(4)				
7	4			(1)					(3)									(2)								
8	(3)			2	4				1																	
9				(2)		3	(1)									4										
10		(3)		(4)											(1)	(2)										
11				2		(1)	3															(4)				
12				2			3														(1)	4				
13		1				(2)											(3)						4			
14						2	3						4										1			
15		(2)			4					(3)						(1)										
16		(1)								(4)					(2)					(3)						
17						1		3				(2)											4			
18	(2)		(1)				(3)	4																		
19			1		(2)																(3)		(4)			
20		(1)		4				2								(3)										
21					(1)						(3)									(4)			(2)			
22				(1)		(4)	3				(2)															
23					(2)														(1)		(4)				(3)	
24			(3)				2	1										4								
25					1														3		2		(4)			
26					(1)														3		2		4			
MUTUAL CHOICES	2	4	2	4	4	3	3	1	2	4	2	1	2	0	3	4	1	3	3	2	4	3	4	1	1	1

**Graph 6.1 Sociogram of school 1 (Standard 5X)**



Three groups were formed in this classroom.

**Group 1:** {5, 19, 21 and 23} = this group consisted of children from various cultural groups (multicultural group).

- Child 5: English
- Child 19: English
- Child 21: Afrikaans
- Child 23: Shangaan

**Group 2:** {6, 11, 22, 4, 7 and 9} = multicultural group

- Child 6: English
- Child 11: Tswana
- Child 22: Shangaan
- Child 4: English
- Child 7: Tswana
- Child 9: Portuguese

**Group 3:** {2, 10, 15, 16 and 20} = multicultural group

- Child 2: English
- Child 10: Tswana
- Child 15: English
- Child 16: Portuguese
- Child 20: Northern Sotho

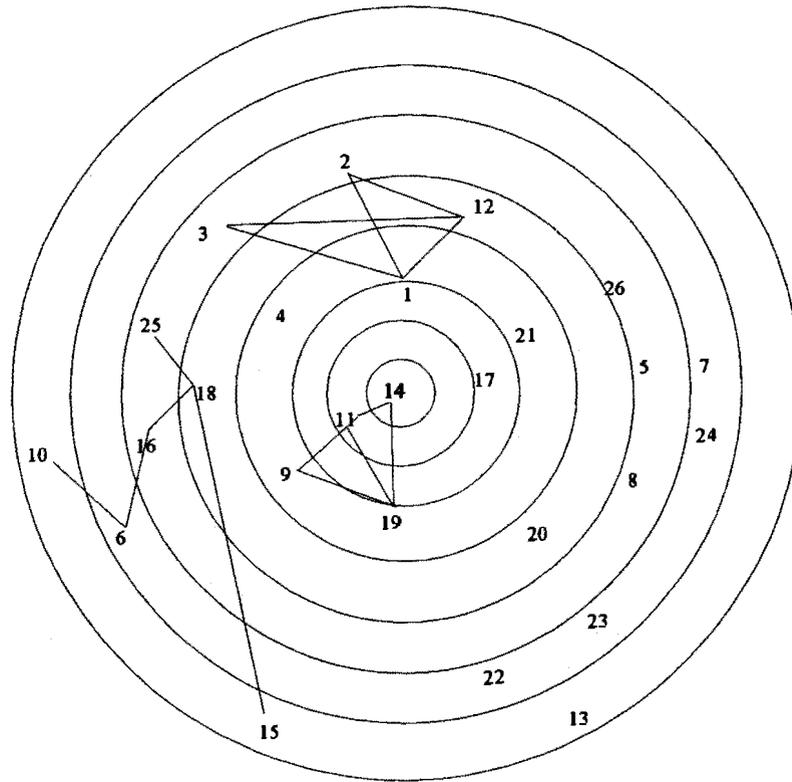
Table 6.14

Sociometric table

School 1 (Standard 5Y)

Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
1		(4)	(3)					2				(1)															
2	(4)		3									(2)					1										
3	(3)											(4)		2							1						
4		2			(3)		4										1										
5				(3)			(2)						1				(4)										
6										(3)						(2)		4								1	
7	2				(1)									3											4		
8													2	(3)						4		(1)					
9											(2)			4					(3)		(1)						
10						(2)					(1)					3		4									
11									(2)					(1)					(3)		4						
12	(2)	(4)	(3)														1										
13	1																				3		4			2	
14								(2)			1								(4)							(3)	
15						4								3				(1)							2		
16						(2)					4							(1)							3		
17					(1)						2								3						(4)		
18											3				(4)	(2)										(1)	
19									(2)		(4)			(3)							1						
20				4													1					(2)	(3)				
21	2								(1)					4					3								
22				1				(3)													(2)					4	
23	2										4	1									(3)						
24											2			3				(1)	4								
25										4	2					3		(1)									
26				1					2					(4)			3										
MUTUAL CHOICES	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	3	1	3	3	0	4	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1

**Graph 6.2 Sociogram of school 1 (Standard 5Y)**



**Group 4:** {11, 14, 19 and 9} = multicultural group

Child 11: Tswana

Child 14: Tswana

Child 19: Portuguese

Child 9: English

**Group 5:** {1, 2, 3 and 12} = homogeneous group (white)

Child 1: English

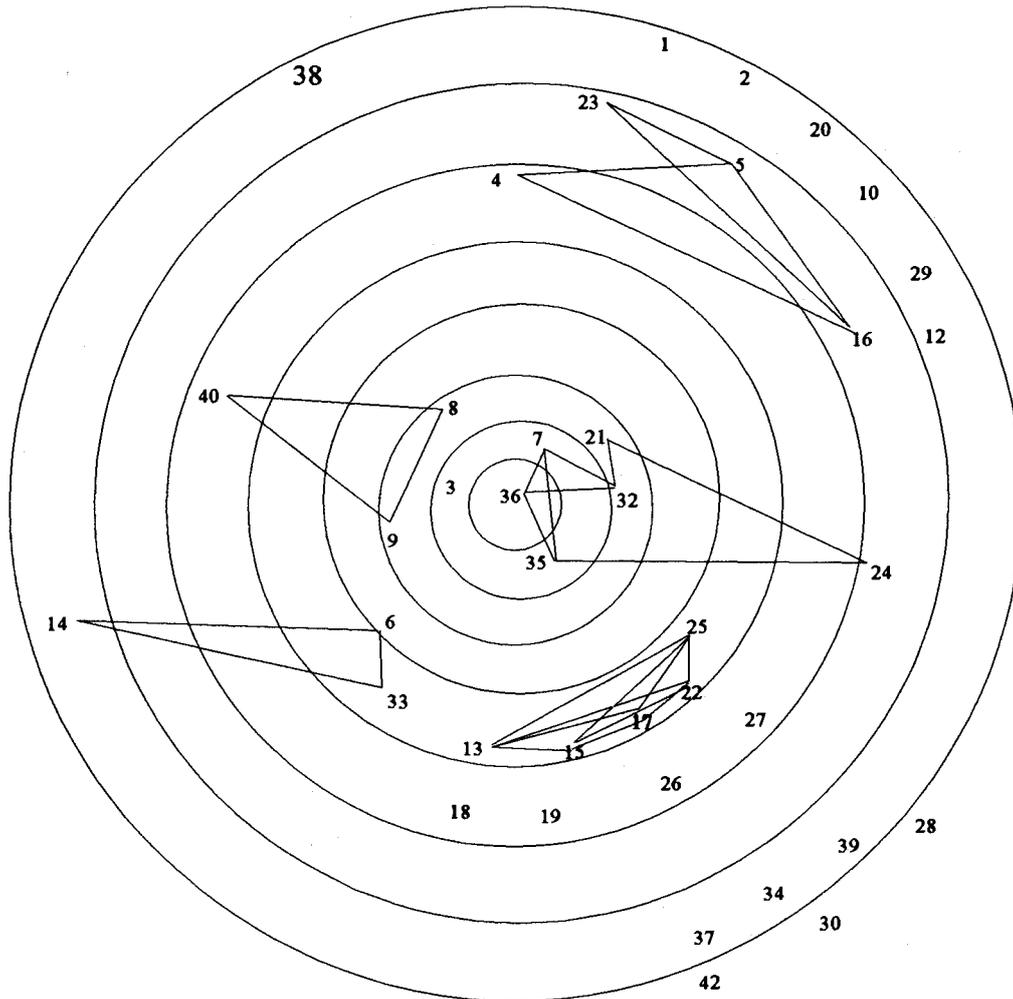
Child 2: Chinese

Child 3: English

Child 12: English



Graph 6.3 Sociogram of school 2 (Standard 5)



**Group 6:** {4, 5, 16 and 23} = multicultural group

- Child 4: Tswana
- Child 5: English
- Child 16: Tswana
- Child 23: English

**Group 7:** {13, 15, 17, 22 and 25} = homogeneous group (black)

- Child 13: Tswana
- Child 15: Shangaan
- Child 17: Northern Sotho
- Child 22: Zulu
- Child 25: Tswana

**Group 8:** {7, 36, 35, 32, 21 and 24} = homogeneous group (white)

Child 7: English

Child 36: English

Child 35: English

Child 32: English

Child 21: English

Child 24: English

**Group 9:** {8, 9 and 40} = homogeneous group (white)

Child 8: English

Child 9: English

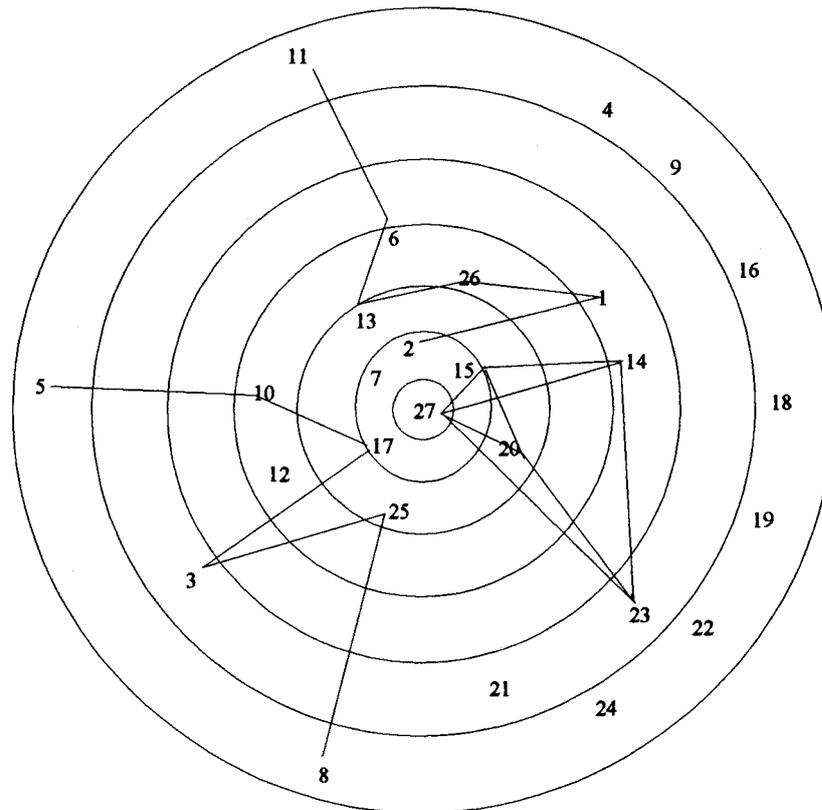
Child 40: English

Table 6.16 Sociometric table

School 3 (Standard 5)

Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
1		1					2																		3	4		
2	3						2								1													4
3								3				4					2								1			
4						4				1											3						2	
5			3							1	2																4	
6										1		3		2													4	
7												2	3									4			1			
8		1					3														4				2			
9		3					2					1										4						
10					1	3							4															
11						1					2				4		3											
12						4				2							1										3	
13	1					4																				2	3	
14		4													2								3			1		
15													3								4				2	1		
16				3								4									1						2	
17		2	3				1			4																		
18					3					1	2																	
19	4	1					2																				3	
20														3	2								4			1		
21		2					1					3															4	
22		4													3						2						1	
23													3	4							2						1	
24											4						3	1							2			
25			1					3									2										4	
26	1	2					3					4																
27													3	2							1			4				
MUTUAL CHOICES	2	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	3	3	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	2	2	4

Graph 6.4 Sociogram of school 3 (Standard 5)



**Group 10:** {14, 15, 20, 23 and 27} = multicultural group

- Child 14: Swati
- Child 15: Northern Sotho
- Child 20: Swati
- Child 23: English
- Child 27: Zulu

**Group 11:** {11, 6, 13, 26, 1 and 2} = multicultural group

- Child 11: English
- Child 6: Xhosa
- Child 13: English
- Child 26: English
- Child 1: English
- Child 2: English

## 6.7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES AND GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The preceding sociograms depict friendship groups in the various classrooms. However, they do not indicate why a particular group evolved. A stepwise discriminant analysis was used to determine which variables contributed to the formation of multicultural and/or homogeneous groups (compare Kerlinger and Pedhazur 1973:337).

The 25 independent variables under investigation, were:

- 6.7.1 Family background (relationships)
- 6.7.2 Language/culture
- 6.7.3 Scholastic achievement
- 6.7.4 Friendship skills
- 6.7.5 Gender
- 6.7.6 Physical self
- 6.7.7 Academic self
- 6.7.8 Social self
- 6.7.9 Value self
- 6.7.10 Family self
- 6.7.11 Psychic self
- 6.7.12 Personality

Personality is divided into 14 factors, namely:

- *A = Reserved versus outgoing*
- *B = Less intelligent versus more intelligent*
- *C = Emotionally unstable versus emotionally stable*
- *D = Phlegmatic versus excitable*
- *E = Submissive versus dominant*
- *F = Sober versus happy-go-lucky*
- *G = Expedient versus conscientious*
- *H = Shy versus venturesome*
- *I = Tough minded versus tender minded*
- *J = Vigorous versus doubting*
- *N = Naive versus shrewd*
- *O = Placid versus apprehensive*

- $Q_3 = \text{Undisciplined versus controlled}$
- $Q_4 = \text{Relaxed versus tense}$

**Table 6.17 Stepwise discriminant analysis of the independent variables  
Preliminary steps towards the identification of variables that  
accounts for group formation**

*Step 1*

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Prob>F	Tolerance
Family background	0,020	1,162	0,286	1,000
Language/culture	0,055	3,332	0,073	1,000
Scholastic achievement	0,113	7,242	0,009	1,000
Friendship skills	0,011	0,607	0,439	1,000
Gender	0,012	0,705	0,405	1,000
Physical self	0,004	0,209	0,649	1,000
Academic self	0,095	5,982	0,018	1,000
Social self	0,039	2,286	0,136	1,000
Value self	0,030	1,739	0,193	1,000
Family self	0,001	0,032	0,858	1,000
Psychic self	0,043	2,581	0,114	1,000
A	0,066	4,049	0,049	1,000
B	0,000	0,000	0,995	1,000
C	0,018	1,058	0,308	1,000
D	0,075	4,599	0,036	1,000
E	0,068	4,143	0,047	1,000
F	0,047	2,825	0,098	1,000
G	0,013	0,733	0,396	1,000
H	0,000	0,013	0,910	1,000
I	0,064	3,907	0,053	1,000
J	0,023	1,336	0,253	1,000
N	0,081	5,042	0,029	1,000
O	0,017	0,997	0,322	1,000
$Q_3$	0,137	9,053	0,004	1,000
$Q_4$	0,036	2,136	0,149	1,000

The variable  $Q_3$  was entered:  $R^2 = 0,137$ ;  $F(1,57) = 9,053$  and  $p < 0,01$ .

## Step 2

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Prob>F	Tolerance
Family background	0,059	3,521	0,066	0,954
Language/culture	0,048	2,845	0,097	0,993
Scholastic achievement	0,148	9,729	0,003	0,997
Friendship skills	0,001	0,078	0,781	0,966
Gender	0,020	1,113	0,296	0,997
Physical self	0,000	0,005	0,942	0,965
Academic self	0,057	3,388	0,071	0,936
Social self	0,023	1,307	0,258	0,976
Value self	0,013	0,752	0,390	0,967
Family self	0,003	0,146	0,704	0,964
Psychic self	0,005	0,277	0,601	0,839
A	0,027	1,537	0,220	0,907
B	0,100	0,557	0,459	0,943
C	0,004	0,201	0,656	0,952
D	0,015	0,822	0,369	0,777
E	0,010	0,572	0,453	0,768
F	0,011	0,648	0,424	0,889
G	0,009	0,516	0,475	0,739
H	0,006	0,329	0,569	0,978
I	0,016	0,895	0,348	0,844
J	0,009	0,502	0,482	0,969
N	0,007	0,375	0,543	0,631
O	0,000	0,019	0,892	0,904
Q <sub>3</sub>	-	-	-	-
Q <sub>4</sub>	0,001	0,039	0,845	0,793

Q<sub>3</sub> and scholastic achievement variables were entered: R<sup>2</sup> = 0,264; F(2,56) = 10,084 and p<0,01.

## Step 3

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Prob>F	Tolerance
Family background	0,064	3,776	0,057	0,952
Language/culture	0,001	0,028	0,867	0,719
Scholastic achievement	-	-	-	-
Friendship skills	0,004	0,212	0,647	0,963
Gender	0,021	1,174	0,283	0,994
Physical self	0,004	0,225	0,637	0,949
Academic self	0,004	0,208	0,650	0,709
Social self	0,019	1,079	0,303	0,971
Value self	0,000	0,009	0,923	0,898
Family self	0,001	0,036	0,849	0,959
Psychic self	0,000	0,004	0,949	0,805
A	0,010	0,538	0,467	0,873
B	0,012	0,638	0,428	0,723
C	0,002	0,105	0,748	0,890
D	0,012	0,641	0,427	0,773
E	0,014	0,752	0,390	0,766
F	0,008	0,436	0,512	0,883
G	0,010	0,561	0,457	0,738
H	0,011	0,606	0,440	0,974
I	0,019	1,064	0,307	0,842
J	0,004	0,207	0,651	0,960
N	0,006	0,335	0,565	0,629
O	0,001	0,028	0,868	0,894
Q <sub>3</sub>	-	-	-	-
Q <sub>4</sub>	0,002	0,127	0,723	0,792

Variables Q<sub>3</sub>, scholastic achievement and family background were entered: R<sup>2</sup> = 0,312; F(3,55) = 8,315 and p<0,01.

## Step 4

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Prob>F	Tolerance
Family background	-	-	-	-
Language/culture	0,000	0,017	0,898	0,701
Scholastic achievement	-	-	-	-
Friendship skills	0,039	2,208	0,143	0,772
Gender	0,009	0,509	0,479	0,912
Physical self	0,001	0,032	0,860	0,841
Academic self	0,009	0,475	0,494	0,700
Social self	0,028	1,565	0,216	0,934
Value self	0,006	0,332	0,567	0,847
Family self	0,008	0,447	0,507	0,789
Psychic self	0,002	0,117	0,733	0,770
A	0,034	1,900	0,174	0,802
B	0,027	1,502	0,226	0,696
C	0,000	0,003	0,959	0,855
D	0,030	1,660	0,203	0,738
E	0,040	2,243	0,140	0,710
F	0,020	1,092	0,301	0,856
G	0,000	0,001	0,971	0,613
H	0,001	0,052	0,820	0,868
I	0,019	1,028	0,315	0,807
J	0,011	0,610	0,438	0,930
N	0,014	0,741	0,393	0,619
O	0,005	0,264	0,610	0,791
Q <sub>3</sub>	-	-	-	-
Q <sub>4</sub>	0,003	0,179	0,674	0,768

Variables Q<sub>3</sub>, scholastic achievement, family background and E were entered:  
R<sup>2</sup> = 0,339; F(4,54) = 6,937 and p<0,01.

## Step 5

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Prob>F	Tolerance
Family background	-	-	-	-
Language/culture	0,001	0,035	0,853	0,670
Scholastic achievement	-	-	-	-
Friendship skills	0,044	2,448	0,124	0,709
Gender	0,021	1,147	0,289	0,677
Physical self	0,001	0,071	0,790	0,707
Academic self	0,015	0,810	0,372	0,688
Social self	0,032	1,729	0,194	0,709
Value self	0,005	0,286	0,595	0,709
Family self	0,001	0,033	0,857	0,628
Psychic self	0,004	0,218	0,623	0,655
A	0,035	1,903	0,174	0,710
B	0,026	1,438	0,236	0,695
C	0,002	0,084	0,773	0,692
D	0,012	0,648	0,424	0,617
E	-	-	-	-
F	0,004	0,194	0,661	0,573
G	0,006	0,318	0,576	0,526
H	0,001	0,059	0,808	0,710
I	0,009	0,480	0,492	0,671
J	0,008	0,449	0,506	0,705
N	0,002	0,113	0,739	0,533
O	0,005	0,261	0,612	0,710
Q <sub>3</sub>	-	-	-	-
Q <sub>4</sub>	0,001	0,049	0,826	0,667

Variables Q<sub>3</sub>, scholastic achievement, family background, E and friendship skills were entered: R<sup>2</sup> = 0,368; F(5,53) = 6,188 and p<0,01.

## Step 6

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Prob>F	Tolerance
Family background	-	-	-	-
Language/culture	0,000	0,004	0,952	0,666
Scholastic achievement	-	-	-	-
Friendship skills	-	-	-	-
Gender	0,042	2,288	0,136	0,672
Physical self	0,000	0,015	0,905	0,664
Academic self	0,016	0,846	0,362	0,681
Social self	0,010	0,527	0,471	0,639
Value self	0,001	0,042	0,838	0,707
Family self	0,004	0,186	0,668	0,617
Psychic self	0,007	0,354	0,555	0,645
A	0,017	0,888	0,351	0,702
B	0,028	1,481	0,229	0,695
C	0,000	0,008	0,929	0,692
D	0,008	0,440	0,510	0,614
E	-	-	-	-
F	0,004	0,180	0,673	0,572
G	0,001	0,054	0,817	0,500
H	0,001	0,053	0,813	0,668
I	0,005	0,260	0,612	0,668
J	0,007	0,359	0,552	0,704
N	0,008	0,410	0,525	0,515
O	0,002	0,114	0,737	0,671
Q <sub>3</sub>	-	-	-	-
Q <sub>4</sub>	0,004	0,216	0,644	0,652

Variables Q<sub>3</sub>, scholastic achievement, family background, E, friendship skills and gender were entered: R<sup>2</sup> = 0,395; F(6,52) = 5,664 and p<0,01.

*Step 7*

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Prob>F	Tolerance
Family background	-	-	-	-
Language/culture	0,001	0,072	0,790	0,635
Scholastic achievement	-	-	-	-
Friendship skills	-	-	-	-
Gender	-	-	-	-
Physical self	0,000	0,001	0,976	0,661
Academic self	0,015	0,795	0,377	0,662
Social self	0,007	0,333	0,567	0,597
Value self	0,000	0,007	0,933	0,667
Family self	0,000	0,007	0,933	0,573
Psychic self	0,003	0,134	0,716	0,643
A	0,025	1,298	0,266	0,672
B	0,020	1,023	0,317	0,669
C	0,000	0,009	0,923	0,657
D	0,003	0,167	0,685	0,567
E	-	-	-	-
F	0,031	1,652	0,205	0,544
G	0,008	0,401	0,529	0,469
H	0,012	0,608	0,439	0,657
I	0,035	1,823	0,183	0,628
J	0,004	0,189	0,665	0,664
N	0,008	0,413	0,523	0,515
O	0,000	0,018	0,894	0,669
Q <sub>3</sub>	-	-	-	-
Q <sub>4</sub>	0,000	0,023	0,881	0,649

No variables could be entered and no further steps were possible.

Seven stepwise selections were made and in the process certain variables were entered. Table 6.18 indicates which variables were entered and explains the percentages of the variance in group membership.

**Table 6.18 Variables entered in various steps**

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Q <sub>3</sub> (Undisciplined versus controlled)	0,137	F(1,57) = 9,053	p<0,01
Scholastic achievement (SA)	0,264	F(2,56) = 10,084	p<0,01
Family background (FB)	0,312	F(3,55) = 8,315	p<0,01
E (Submissive versus dominant)	0,339	F(4,54) = 6,937	p<0,01
Friendship skills (FS)	0,368	F(5,53) = 6,188	p<0,01
Gender	0,395	F(6,52) = 5,664	p<0,01

In the first step, the variable Q<sub>3</sub> (*undisciplined versus controlled behaviour*) was entered. This variable accounted for 13,7% of the variance in group membership.

The next variable to be entered was *scholastic achievement*, which accounted for an additional 12,7% of the variance in group membership. The variables Q<sub>3</sub> and *scholastic achievement* jointly accounted for 26,4% of the variance in group membership.

In the third step, the variable *family background* was entered. This variable accounted for an additional 4,8% of the variance in group membership. The three variables, namely Q<sub>3</sub>, *scholastic achievement* and *family background* together accounted for 31,2% of the variance in group membership.

In the fourth step, the variable E (*submissive versus dominant*) was entered. This variable accounted for an additional 2,7% of the variance in group membership. The four variables, namely Q<sub>3</sub>, *scholastic achievement*, *family background* and E together accounted for 33,9% of the variance in group membership.

In the fifth step, the variable *friendship skills* was entered. This variable accounted for an additional 2,9% of the variance in group membership. The five variables, namely Q<sub>3</sub>, *scholastic achievement*, *family background*, E and *friendship skills*, together accounted for 36,8% of the variance in group membership.

In the sixth step, the variable *gender* was entered. This variable accounted for an additional 2,7% of the variance in group membership. The six variables, namely *Q<sub>3</sub>*, *scholastic achievement*, *family background*, *E*, *friendship skills* and *gender* collectively accounted for 39,5% of the variance in group membership.

No other variables could be entered. These results clearly indicate that there are independent variables other than the remaining 19 variables mentioned in this research, which account for the remaining 60,5%. However, it is most important to note that language/culture does not (as against the presumption that it does) contribute to the variance in group membership which concurs with Silberman and Spice who maintained that there is no cultural discrimination in the choice of friends (compare section 5.2.6).

#### 6.8 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS IN TERMS OF THE IDENTIFIED SIX (6) VARIABLES

On the basis of the friendship groups obtained from the sociogram, a multiple discriminant function was used, which is a mathematical procedure for determining how closely the individual's scores on a whole set of tests approximate the scores typical of children in a given group (compare Anastasi 1990:190).

The scores of individual children in each of 11 groups in terms of the six identified variables as in Table 6.18 were brought together in order to check if they resembled each other closely. A close resemblance would enable one to deduce that the variables strongly influenced the formation of that particular group. Tables 6.19 to 6.29 indicate the groups with their respective scores.

Table 6.19: Group 1: Multicultural group

Variable	Children			
	5	19	21	23
Q <sub>3</sub>	H	H	H	H
SA	A	A	BA	BA
FB	A	A	A	A
E	L	L	H	L
FS	AA	A	AA	AA
GENDER	2	2	2	2

This is a multicultural group of four (4) girls. They are all self-disciplined, emotionally stable and have a strong understanding of the feelings of others. They are all brought up in more or less the same family background. Prominent variables of this group are *self-control, similar family background* and *gender*.

Table 6.20 Group 2: Multicultural group

Variable	Children					
	6	11	22	4	7	9
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	H	H	L	L	L
SA	A	A	A	A	A	A
FB	AA	A	AA	BA	A	BA
E	L	L	L	L	L	L
FS	A	BA	AA	BA	BA	AA
GENDER	1	1	1	1	1	1

This is a multicultural group of six boys. Their scholastic achievement is average. It is a group of obedient boys. Prominent variables of this group are *scholastic achievement, obedience* and *gender*.

Table 6.21 Group 3: Multicultural group

Variable	Children				
	2	10	15	16	20
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	H	L	L	H
SA	AA	A	A	A	BA
FB	A	AA	A	AA	BA
E	H	L	L	H	L
FS	A	A	BA	A	BA
GENDER	I	I	I	I	I

This is a multicultural group of five (5) boys. The prominent variable is *gender*.

Table 6.22 Group 4: Multicultural group

Variable	Children			
	11	14	19	9
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	L	H	H
SA	A	A	A	A
FB	A	BA	A	AA
E	L	L	L	L
FS	AA	BA	A	A
GENDER	I	I	I	I

This is a multicultural group of four (4) boys. Their scholastic achievement level is similar. Prominent variables are *scholastic achievement*, *obedience* and *gender*.

Table 6.23 Group 5: Homogeneous group

Variable	Children			
	1	2	3	12
Q <sub>3</sub>	H	L	H	H
SA	AA	AA	AA	A
FB	AA	BA	BA	A
E	L	L	L	H
FS	AA	A	BA	A
GENDER	1	1	1	1

This is a homogeneous group (white) of four (4) boys. They are on the whole obedient, self-disciplined and their scholastic achievement is above average. The prominent variable is *gender*.

Table 6.24 Group 6: Multicultural group

Variable	Children			
	4	5	16	23
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	L	L	L
SA	A	BA	BA	A
FB	A	BA	BA	A
E	L	H	H	L
FS	AA	BA	AA	A
GENDER	2	2	2	2

This is a multicultural group of four (4) girls with uncontrolled emotions. They get excited easily. Prominent variables are *a lack of discipline, conflict and gender*.

**Table 6.25 Group 7: Homogeneous group (black)**

Variable	Children				
	13	15	17	22	25
Q <sub>3</sub>	H	H	H	H	H
SA	BA	A	A	AA	A
FB	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA
E	L	L	L	L	L
FS	A	AA	A	AA	AA
GENDER	2	2	2	2	2

This is a homogeneous group (black) of five (5) girls. They are all self-disciplined and emotionally stable. They all come from open and free families. They are also an obedient group.

Prominent variables are *self-discipline, family background, obedience and gender*.

**Table 6.26 Group 8: Homogeneous group (white)**

Variable	Children					
	7	36	35	32	21	24
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	H	L	H	H	H
SA	AA	AA	A	AA	A	A
FB	BA	AA	A	BA	BA	AA
E	H	L	H	L	L	L
FS	A	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA
GENDER	2	2	1	2	1	1

This is a group (white) of three (3) boys and three (3) girls. They are on the whole free, open and make friends easily. Their scholastic achievement is also on the whole above average.

Table 6.27 Group 9: Homogeneous group (white)

Variable			
	8	9	40
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	H	L
SA	AA	AA	AA
FB	BA	AA	A
E	H	L	L
FS	BA	AA	AA
GENDER	1	1	1

This is a homogeneous group (white) of three (3) boys. Their scholastic achievement level is above average. Prominent variables are *scholastic achievement* and *gender*.

Table 6.28 Group 10: Multicultural group

Variable	Children				
	14	15	20	23	27
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	L	L	L	H
SA	A	AA	A	A	AA
FB	A	A	A	AA	AA
E	L	H	L	L	H
FS	A	AA	AA	AA	AA
GENDER	2	2	2	2	2

This is a multicultural group of five (5) girls. They are free, open and make friends easily. They are, however, on the whole undisciplined and prone to uncontrolled emotionality and are careless of protocol.

The prominent variable is *gender*. However, there is a distinct possibility that sociability and excitability played a major role in the formation of this group.

**Table 6.29 Group 11: Multicultural group**

Variable	Children					
	11	6	13	26	1	2
Q <sub>3</sub>	L	L	L	L	L	L
SA	A	A	A	A	AA	A
FB	A	A	BA	A	AA	A
E	L	L	L	L	L	L
FS	A	A	A	A	A	AA
GENDER	2	2	2	2	2	2

This is a multicultural group of six (6) girls. This group is, on average, sociable, obedient and conformist. Their scholastic achievement is average. Prominent variables are *obedience, gender and a lack of diligence*.

### 6.8.1 Generally observed tendencies

#### 6.8.1.1 Multicultural groups

Boys who are obedient and have the same scholastic achievement level, form groups. Girls' groups are divided into categories. Those who are self-disciplined and obedient have the same scholastic achievement level and are being brought-up in more or less

similar family backgrounds, form groups. Those who are undisciplined, with uncontrolled emotions, are inclined to form groups.

#### 6.8.1.2 Homogeneous groups

The pattern is the same with the multicultural group formation. Boys with similar scholastic achievement levels, group together. Girls who are self-disciplined form groups, while those who are undisciplined also tend to group together.

### 6.9 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The general pattern obtained in this research is that children separated themselves into groups of boys and girls. This correlates with the literature study findings that children's friendship choices at primary school level are positively related to their being of the same sex.

Boys in multicultural and homogeneous groups form friendship groups in terms of their scholastic achievement. Girls in multicultural and homogeneous groups are divided into categories: Those who are self-disciplined, obedient and have the same scholastic achievement level form groups, and those who are undisciplined with uncontrolled emotions, also form groups.

The observed tendency concerning the formation of these groups, concurs to a large extent with the literature study findings. According to Hartford (1971:194), children choose each other or ally themselves with each other on the basis of similar qualities. It has been observed that scholastic achievement and two personality factors, namely factors E (*submissive versus dominant*) and Q<sub>3</sub> (*undisciplined versus controlled*) play a significant role in this regard.

In the study of the effects of achievement on school children's friendship, Tuma and Hallinan (Cohen *et al.* 1983:117) found that children's friendship choices are positively

associated with similar achievement level (compare Hartford 1971:200 and Vrey 1979:101). In this research, it was found that various groups were formed on the basis of scholastic achievement. For example, groups four (4) and nine (9).

Literature also revealed that peer group formation is based on similar personality traits (Hartford 1971:199). According to Mussen et al. (1969:56) and Vrey (1979:102) peer group formation is enhanced by characteristics such as friendliness and emotional stability. The observations in this research are that children who are self-disciplined and obedient (for example groups 2, 7 and 11) grouped together and those who are undisciplined with uncontrolled emotions (groups 6 and 10), grouped together.

There are strong indications that groups one (1) and seven (7) also formed on the basis of their family backgrounds. Children in these groups came from open families. This concurs with the literature study findings: Sound relationships within families are vehicles for adjustment to life. Sound relationships within the family allow the child to move out from a secure base to engage in new relationships.

The next chapter will deal with the résumé of findings, implications, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

# Chapter 7

## Résumé of findings, recommendations, implications and suggestions for future research

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters paid special attention to relationship formation in South African multicultural primary school classrooms.

In this chapter a résumé will be made of the research undertaken. Findings derived from both the literature study and the empirical research, will be outlined. This will be followed by conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research.

### 7.2 THE AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE AIMS HAVE BEEN MET

The researcher stated in chapter one that the investigation was generally aimed at analysing and evaluating the nature and quality of interactions in multicultural primary school classrooms. Specific aims were outlined in question form, as follows:

- Does the quality of the child's relationship with the parents influence the child's ability to adjust in multicultural classrooms?

- Does gender play a role in the formation of peer groups in the senior primary school phase?
- Do the school, classroom environment and scholastic achievement influence the child's ability to form relationships?
- What role is played by the self-concept and personality in the formation of relationships?
- Do primary school children's language/culture and racial identity influence their ability to become friends with children from different cultural/race groups?

Table 7.1 indicates the extent to which these aims were met.

Table 7.1 General and specific aims

Aims	The extent to which aims have been met - findings from the literature study and the empirical research
<p>1. <b>General aim</b></p> <p>1.1 To analyse and evaluate the nature and quality of interactions in multicultural primary school classrooms</p>	<p>1.1 In multicultural classrooms, both homogeneous and multicultural groups are formed.</p> <p>1.2 These groupings are influenced specifically by six variables, namely family background, scholastic achievement, social skills, gender, and personality (factors E and Q<sub>3</sub>).</p>
<p>2. <b>Specific aims</b></p> <p>2.1 To verify if the quality of the child's relationship with the parents influences the child's ability to adjust in multicultural classrooms</p> <p>2.2 To evaluate the role of gender in the formation of peer groups in the primary school classrooms</p>	<p>2.1.1 Nurturing relationships within the family help the child to achieve independence and social competence.</p> <p>2.1.2 Children's relationship with family members greatly influence their school work and attitude towards the school.</p> <p>2.1.3 Family relationships affect social adjustment outside the home.</p> <p>2.1.4 Role-playing in the home sets the pattern for role-playing outside the home (compare section 4.2).</p> <p>2.2.1 Children associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers.</p> <p>2.2.2 Boys' interactions are commonly oriented around independence, competition and dominance.</p> <p>2.2.3 Boys usually play in larger groups.</p> <p>2.2.4 Girls' interactions are generally based on closeness, cooperation and interpersonal harmony.</p> <p>2.2.5 Girls typically prefer playing in pairs (compare section 4.3.1).</p>

Aims	The extent to which aims have been met - findings from the literature study and the empirical research
<p>2.3 To evaluate if the school, classroom environment and scholastic achievement influence the child's ability to form relationships</p>	<p>2.3.1 The school and classroom environment influence the social dynamics of the classroom (compare section 4.6).</p> <p>2.3.2 What children experience in a school environment gives them the opportunity to increase their understanding of and sensitivity towards other people's lives, while playing a supportive role towards socialisation in general.</p> <p>2.3.3 The physical design of a school building has functional consequences for the children's formation of relationships, and the classroom structure or organisation of seating accommodation has the advantage of helping children to appreciate their interpersonal connectedness and the value of cooperative interdependence.</p> <p>2.3.4 Classroom materials that reflect a wide variety of racial, cultural and social class backgrounds and abilities, greatly promote interactions within multicultural classrooms (compare section 4.6).</p> <p>2.3.5 Peer groups are formed by children having a similar achievement level (compare section 5.2.5).</p>
<p>2.4 To evaluate the influence of the self-concept and personality in the formation of relationships</p>	<p>2.4.1 Self-regard and adjustment, self-acceptance and acceptance of others are behaviours dependent on the self-concept. A positive self-concept gives the child security and preparedness to become involved with others (compare sections 5.2.3 and 5.3.2.1).</p> <p>2.4.2 Acceptability in the peer group is enhanced by personality characteristics such as friendliness, cooperation, emotional stability and trustworthiness (compare section 5.2.4).</p>

Aims	The extent to which aims have been met - findings from the literature study and the empirical research
2.5 To evaluate the influence of racial and cultural differences in the formation of relationships	2.5.1 Children are aware of race and colour differences. They frequently ask questions, most often related to their own physical characteristics and those of others, about matters such as skin colour and hair colour. According to Sleeter (1989:190), within multicultural classrooms pupils often sit and interact in racially and culturally segregated patterns when they have the opportunity to choose where to sit and with whom to interact (compare sections 2.7.5.4 and 5.2.6). Some researchers, however, are of the opinion that no racial and cultural discrimination is evident in the choice of friends.

### 7.3 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY

Relevant literature (such as books, articles in subject-related publications and newspaper articles) was studied to investigate relationship formation in multicultural primary school classrooms.

Table 7.2 summarises the literature study findings with regard to the formation of relationships.

**Table 7.2 Relationship formation in multicultural primary school classrooms**

Factors that influence relationship formation	Outcome in the practical situation
Family background	A warm and nurturant relationship between the child and the parents helps the child to achieve independence and social competence.
Gender	Children in the senior primary phase associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers. Boys are more aggressive than girls.
Self-concept	Self-regard and adjustment, self-acceptance and acceptance of others are behaviour patterns dependent on the self-concept. A positive self-concept gives the child security and preparedness to become involved with others. Positive self-concept formation helps children to become sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.
Personality	Children with similar personality traits seek out each other and stay together. Acceptability in the peer group is enhanced by personality characteristics such as friendliness, cooperation, emotional stability and trustworthiness. The primary school child's empathy and sympathy increase gradually with time. As he grows older, he realises that people can experience different emotions simultaneously and he also becomes capable of identifying emotions such as anger, fear, love and happiness. Extroverts always enjoy the company of others and usually take the initiative in organising activities. Introverts have the tendency of keeping away from other children (compare section 5.2.4).
School and classroom environment	School and classroom environments that are orderly and aesthetically pleasing have positive effects on the children's learning, communication, play and relationships (compare section 4.6.1).
Scholastic achievement	Peer groups are formed by children of similar achievement levels and intellectual abilities (compare section 5.2.5).
Race and culture	The presence of different race and cultural groups in the classroom affects grouping patterns. In contrast, other researchers maintain that there is no racial and cultural discrimination in the choice of friends (compare section 5.2.6).

## 7.4 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

After having gone through the literature, the researcher undertook an empirical study. A questionnaire and a sociometric form, both developed by the researcher, the self-concept scale for primary school pupils (SSPS) and the children's personality questionnaire (CPQ) were administered to 121 primary school pupils in multicultural classrooms.

The Cronbach coefficient alpha, the stepwise discriminant analysis and the multiple discriminant function were used to interpret and analyse the gathered data. Table 7.3 indicates the empirical research findings.

Table 7.3 Empirical research findings

Independent variables that influence relationship formation	Outcome of the research
Family background	Children from similar family backgrounds formed groups of their own.
Gender	Children separated themselves into groups of boys and girls.
Self-concept	The self-concept played no role in the formation of peer groups.
Personality	<p>Only two out of 14 factors played a role in the formation of peer groups.</p> <p>Factor E - Children who are submissive, dependent, conforming and obedient grouped together, and those who are independent and/or disobedient formed their own groups.</p> <p>Factor Q<sub>3</sub> - Children who are undisciplined, who have uncontrolled emotions and who are easily excitable form their own groups, and those who are self-controlled and considerate of others form their own groups.</p>
Scholastic achievement	Children with similar scholastic achievement levels formed groups of their own.
Race and culture	Race and culture played no role in the formation of friendship groups. Children across the various racial and cultural lines formed friendship groups.

The combination of literature study and empirical research findings can be summarised as follows:

**Table 7.4 Summary of the outcome of the literature study and empirical research**

Variables	Literature study	Empirical study
Family background	The child's social competence is influenced by the family relationships.	Children from similar family backgrounds formed groups of their own
Gender	Children associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers.	Children separated themselves into groups of boys and girls.
Self-concept	Self-regard and adjustment, self-acceptance and acceptance of others are behaviours dependent on the self-concept. A positive self-concept gives the child the preparedness to become involved with others.	The self-concept played no role in the formation of peer groups.
Personality	Children with similar personality traits seek each other out and stay together.	Only two out of 14 factors played a role in the formation of peer groups. Factor E – children who are submissive, dependent, conforming and obedient grouped together, and those who are independent and/or disobedient formed their own groups. Factor Q <sub>3</sub> – children who are undisciplined, uncontrolled and emotionally easily excitable, formed their own groups, and those who are self-controlled and considerate of others, formed their own groups.
Scholastic achievement	Peer groups are formed by children of similar achievement level and intellectual abilities.	Children with similar scholastic achievement levels formed groups of their own.
Race and culture	The presence of different race and cultural groups in the classroom affects grouping patterns. Some researchers maintain that there is no racial and cultural discrimination in the choice of friends.	Race and culture played no role in the formation of friendship groups. Children formed friendship groups across racial and cultural lines.

## 7.5 CONCLUSIONS OF THIS STUDY

The literature study investigated relationship formation in multicultural primary school classrooms. It was clearly pointed out that the formation of friendship groups was influenced by various variables.

- (1) The literature study points out that relationships within families offer a wide variety of interactions and are vehicles for understanding social issues. A warm and nurturant relationship between the child and the parents helps the child to achieve independence and social competence.
- (2) The literature points out that children associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers.
- (3) Peer groups are formed by children of similar achievement level and intellectual abilities.
- (4) Self-regard and adjustment, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, are behaviours dependent on self-concept. A positive self-concept gives the child security and preparedness to become involved with others.
- (5) Children with similar personality traits seek each other out and stay together.
- (6) Literature points out that the presence of different racial and cultural groups in the classroom affects grouping patterns. In contrast, other researchers maintain that there is no racial and cultural discrimination in the choice of friends.

It is on the basis of the literature study findings that the empirical research was conducted. The following results emanated from the empirical study:

- (1) The empirical research found that children from similar family backgrounds form groups of their own. This supports the literature study finding that a warm and nurturant relationship between the child and the parents helps the child to achieve independence and social competence.
- (2) The empirical research also found that children separated themselves into groups of boys and girls. This finding concurs with the literature study findings: Children at primary school level associate more with members of the same sex than with cross-sex peers, when choosing friends.
- (3) The empirical research found that the self-concept of the primary school child plays no role in the formation of peer groups in multicultural classrooms. This finding differs from the literature study which mentions that a positive self-concept gives the child preparedness to become involved with others.
- (4) The empirical research found that the personality factors, E – *submissive versus dominant* and Q<sub>3</sub> – *undisciplined versus controlled*, played a role in the formation of peer groups. This confirms the literature study findings that peer group formation is based on similar personality traits.
- (5) The empirical research found that children with similar scholastic achievement levels formed groups of their own. This finding concurs with the literature study findings that children's friendship choices are positively associated with similar achievement levels and intellectual abilities.
- (6) The empirical research found that the racial and cultural differences in primary school classrooms played no role in the formation of peer groups. These findings concur with those of researchers who pointed out that there is no racial and cultural discrimination in the choice of friends in multicultural classrooms.

Finally, the empirical research findings concur with the literature study findings on only six out of 25 independent variables, namely *family background, gender, scholastic achievement, personality factors E and Q<sub>3</sub>, race and cultural differences*, as aspects which influence peer group formation in multicultural primary school classrooms.

## **7.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **7.6.1 The relationship between teachers and children**

In this research project the relationship between teachers and children was not empirically studied. However, it is worth noting that teachers greatly influence children's social orientations by modelling positive or negative social behaviours to them. Teachers' attitudes towards the different groups in their classrooms, and their personalities, can have a determining influence on the children's preparedness to form friendships across racial and cultural lines.

### **7.6.2 The schools used in this research**

The three Pretoria schools where the research was conducted, have been multicultural for quite some time. Most of the children who took part in the research started their schooling together, approximately six years ago. Therefore, these children's relationship formation will differ completely from the formation of relationships in a situation where children from different cultural backgrounds are suddenly brought together without the necessary preparation and orientation. In order to promote positive relationship formation, multicultural education has to be introduced gradually. For purposes of smooth integration, the first step would be to bring children of various cultural backgrounds together informally in sports activities, youth leadership workshops and seminars. These encounters will help them to understand each other and in a way prepare them for multicultural classroom interactions.

## 7.7 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The majority of South African parents and teachers have a common stereotyped opinion that race, culture and/or language play a determining role in the formation of relationships among children. This type of opinion influences them to keep children separate and deny them (the children) the opportunity to interact freely. It is the aim of multicultural education to free people of different cultures from their cultural boundaries. In an attempt to extend the cultural boundaries of all, it is recommended that art, music and cultural festivals should be organised on a regular basis. Parents should be encouraged (by various means) to attend these festivals. Video tapes of these occasions should be kept at schools for them to be viewed by governing bodies and parents during school meetings. This will, in the long run, enable parents to embrace other cultures and accept them. The sense of tolerance and trust developed by parents will affect relationship formation positively, because parents will allow and encourage their children to interact freely across racial and/or cultural lines.
  
- (2) Political statements pertinent to the envisaged new education system are sending an odd mixture of messages into our society. Interpretations thereof develop fears, uncertainties and tensions. A lot of time is wasted when parents oppose one another instead of working together to reach a common goal. These arguments and tensions affect relationship formation negatively. To remedy the situation, it is recommended that educationists take the lead and make an attempt to settle and redirect the minds of parents towards understanding change. It is the task of educationist to be engaged in capacity-building programmes on multicultural school governance. Governing bodies, principals and teachers should be exposed to modules on the management of change in education, and the management of challenge. If these modules are handled properly, people will be able to view the whole changing situation in South Africa differently and harmonious relationships will be promoted.

- (3) From a very young age, children recognise colour and cultural differences. In order to assist children to view these differences positively, teachers should provide opportunities for them to accept one another as individuals and develop mutual respect. Sports activities are an integral part of education. These enable children to grow out of an egocentric and ethnocentric picture of the world. The promotion of sports amongst children makes them happy in their hearts and thus promotes peace. Sports is rule-governed. When children encounter rules that are different from the ones they have experienced, it causes them to reflect and this raises their level of awareness. Awareness is one of the aims of multicultural education. For the new South Africa to become what it should be, by means of a process of harmonious social development, parents and teachers should encourage participation in sports at all levels.
- (4) Mother-tongue instruction in a multicultural society such as that of the Republic of South Africa is the ideal. However, it is recommended that for the purpose of smooth integration, a language of wider communication should be used in the classroom. In the case of South Africa it should be English. If English is not the mother-tongue of the children, it should be introduced gradually. When children cannot communicate with one another, because of a language barrier, it has an extremely detrimental influence on the formation of relationships across cultural and ethnic lines. Educators must be aware of this fact and must go out of their way to promote language proficiency in English, in all multicultural schools in South Africa.
- (5) In order to help children to optimise their learning and to enhance their self-esteem, teachers in multicultural classrooms may also consider the use of the following teaching strategies:
- Interactive pairs: Children could be frequently paired off for learning tasks in class. Refining this form of grouping into teaching and learning, requires that the teacher provide each pair with tasks of mutual instruction. If pairings are

made on the basis of ability, thought given to the ethnic backgrounds of the children can lead to enhanced feelings of self-esteem in children from ethnic minorities.

- Unstructured tutoring: Considerable freedom is given to older children in their efforts to help others. The benefits of this method is that children gain high self-esteem. It is the duty of the teacher to see to it that no one ethnic group dominates classroom activities. This role should be distributed evenly among children from different cultural groups.
- (6) Teachers, through their control, direction, and influence, have to create opportunities for children to develop a sense of industry and self-efficacy and at the same time, they will have to ensure that the climate in their classrooms remains observably multicultural at all times. In order to achieve this, teachers will have to be equipped with skills and expertise to handle multicultural classrooms. It is a well known fact that most South African teachers were trained in segregated colleges of education which did not focus on multicultural education at all. Therefore, it is recommended that pre-service and in-service teacher development programmes emphasising multicultural education, be designed and implemented. In order to facilitate learning and positive relationship formation in multicultural classrooms, prospective and in-service teachers will have to be equipped with classroom strategies that will foster equality, fairness and cooperation among children.

## 7.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- (1) This study focused its attention on relationship formation in multicultural primary school classrooms.

It is vital that further research be conducted on relationship formation in multicultural secondary schools in order to confirm the fact that secondary

school children usually organise themselves into cliques comprising five or six individuals who play a vital role in structuring their social activities.

- (2) Research indicates that the interest that parents show in the school, creates an interactive social climate that makes the school a desirable place to be and to associate with. Research has also established the fact that every person in the classroom - teacher or child - influences the behaviour of every other individual in that environment. Therefore, it is suggested that the parent-school relationship and the teacher's influence on children as well as the children's influence on the teacher in multicultural classrooms be determined empirically.
- (3) Literature indicates that socio-economic status plays a significant role in determining how a person acts, lives and relates to others. In fact, socio-economic status is related to social friendship choices. This research did not pay attention to the influence of this variable on relationship formation in multicultural primary school classrooms. It will be necessary to conduct further research in order to determine in what way socio-economic status can be directed or controlled to influence relationship formation in a positive way.
- (4) Attempts should be made to change the prejudices prevalent in parents and teachers as regards race and culture being viewed as factors influencing relationship formation in South African primary school classrooms. The outcome of such attempts would help parents to:
  - combat discrimination,
  - display democratic attitudes and values,
  - view events and situations from a diverse ethnic perspective,
  - understand the complex and multidimensional nature of ethnicity in society,
  - create home environments which are warm and nurturant, which will in turn assist the child to achieve social competence, and
  - achieve co-responsibilities with the state for the provision of education.

## 7.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this research, independent variables that influence relationship formation were evaluated. It is hoped that the general attitude and assumption made by the South African society, namely that race and culture play a determining role in relationship formation in the multicultural primary school classrooms, have been cleared. Research points out clearly that children (especially young children) have few prejudices and show little intolerance towards children of other race and cultural groups. It remains the responsibility of all adult South Africans to see to it that the spirit of respect, tolerance and hope is inculcated and preserved in children of all ages, for the sake of a better South Africa for all.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Pupils like you are very important. That is why you are chosen to take part in this research project.
2. You are requested to respond to statements freely and honestly.
3. This is not a test, and therefore you will not fail or pass as a result of the response given.
4. Respond to all statements.
5. If you do not understand a statement, ask your teachers or the tester to explain it to you.
6. Follow the instructions carefully.

SECTION A:

Your personal information is very important. Choose the appropriate answer and write it in the block next to the corresponding number on the answer sheet.

SECTION B:

Instructions on how to answer the questions.

1. Carefully consider each of the undermentioned statements 10 - 55.
2. Write your answer on the answer sheet.
3. Your answer for each statement must be indicated with a number 1 or 2 on the answer sheet to show the extent to which each statement is relevant to you. You will be able to choose between statements which you believe are:

false = 1

true = 2

4. Example:

My book is neatly covered

False	True
1	2

1
---

If you write 1 in the given block as shown, it will mean your answer is false.

Complete the following statements in the same way.

Remember to write your answers in the block next to the corresponding number on the answer sheet provided.

False	True
1	2

--

10. I make friends easily

11. My parents expect me to be friendly towards other people.

12. My parents allow me to mix with children who speak different languages.

False	True
1	2



13. My parents want me to behave like they do.
14. I love to spend time with my parents and family.
- ✓ 15. I often entertain my friends at home.
16. I like the way my parents talk to my friends.
- ✓ 17. I compliment my friends when they achieve.
18. My parents want me to go to church with them.
- ✓ 19. I respect other children in class.
- ✓ 20. I am a good friend to others.

False	True
1	2

--

- 21. As a family we often tidy the house together.
- 22. My parents attend most school functions.
- 23. I can confide in my friends when I have problems.
- 24. My parents make me feel secure.
- 25. My friends feel free to air their opinions.
- 26. I feel comfortable to discuss problems with my parents.
- 27. I try to communicate well with other children in my class.
- 28. My parents allow me to choose my own friends.
- 29. My parents make me feel like someone who can do things on my own.
- 30. My parents like to listen to stories from other cultural groups.
- 31. I specifically try to make other children feel accepted.

False	True
1	2

--

32. I am happier at home than in any other place.
33. My parents want me to be considerate towards children of other cultural groups.
- ✓ 34. I know that when I am in trouble my friends will help me out.
- ✓ 35. My friends can always trust me with their secrets.
36. My parents help me to understand children of other cultural groups.
- ✓ 37. My classmates like me.
38. I try never to feel angry.
39. My parents want me to take part in school activities.
- ✓ 40. My friends know what I like and dislike.
41. My parents dislike hanging pictures of different cultures in our house.
- ✓ 42. I am lonely

False	True
1	2

--

43. My friends always support one another, even when it is tough.
44. My parents do not want me to play with children of other cultural groups.
45. I don't have to respect the feelings of other children if they don't respect mine.
46. If I could choose I would choose the same parents that I have now.
47. My friends are always helpful when making personal decisions.
48. My parents think I am smart.
49. My parents are only interested in my friends who speak my language.
50. I shall go to a lot of trouble to help a friend who is in need.
51. My parents often talk to me about everyday things.

False	True
1	2

--

52. My parents trust me.

53. My parents do not want me to sing songs taken from other languages.

54. My parents encourage me to learn other languages.

55. My parents want me to play games that children from other cultural groups teach me.

The End

Thank you

ANSWER SHEET

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHY

1. Name of school: .....  K 1

2. Your name: .....   K 2  
K 3

3. Standard: 5A or 5B: .....  K4

4. Age in years: 09, 10, 11, 12, 13   K 5  
K6

5. Sex: Boy = 1  K 7  
Girl = 2

6. Position in the family:  K 8  
Youngest = 1  
Middle = 2  
Eldest = 3

7. Home language: Zulu = 1   K 9  
English = 2  
Afrikaans = 3  
S. Sotho = 4  
Ndebele = 5  
Swati = 6  
Asian = 7  
N. Sotho = 8  
Other = 9

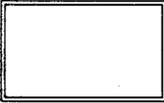
If other, specify: .....

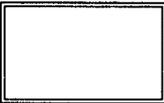
8. School marks: English = <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> K 10 K 11
Afrikaans = <input type="text"/>	
Maths = <input type="text"/>	
General Science = <input type="text"/>	
9. Aggregate % <input type="text"/>	

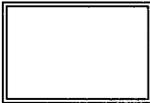
SECTION B:

10.  K 12

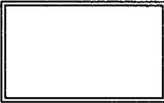
11.  K 13

12.  K 14

13.  K 15

14.  K 16

15.  K 17

16.  K 18

17.  K 19

18.  K 20

19.  K 21

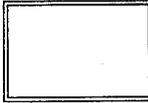
20.  K 22

21.  K 23

22.  K 24

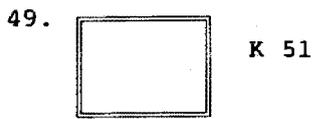
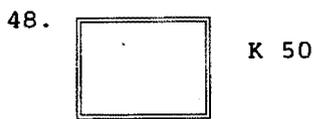
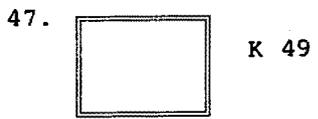
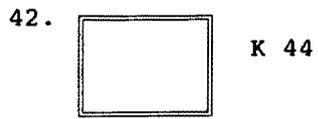
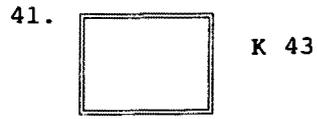
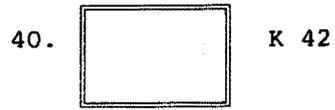
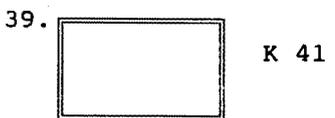
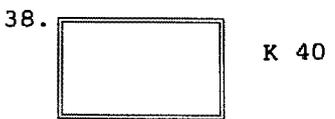
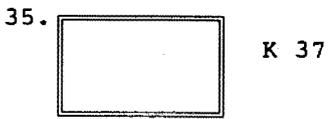
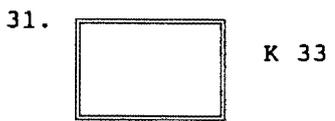
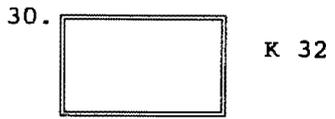
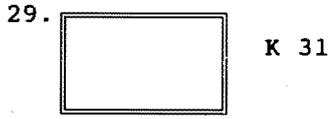
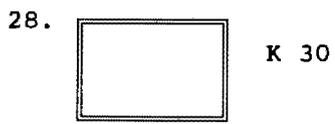
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24.  K 26

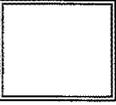
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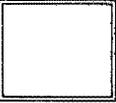
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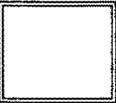
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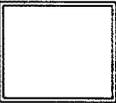


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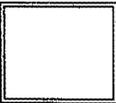
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54.  K 56

55.  K 57

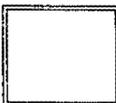
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57.  K 59

58.  K 60

59.  K 61

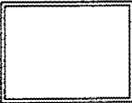
60.  K 62

61.  K 63

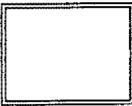
62.  K 64

63.  K 65

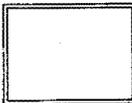
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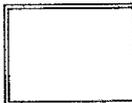
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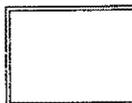
66.  K 68

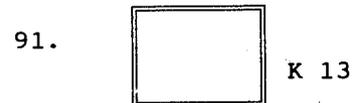
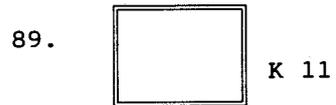
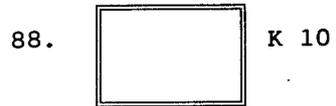
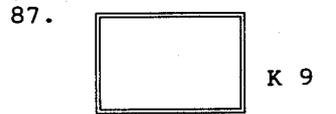
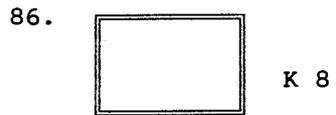
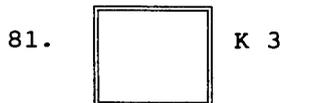
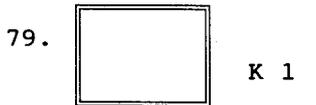
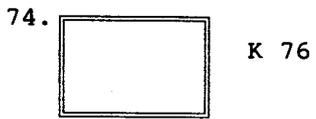
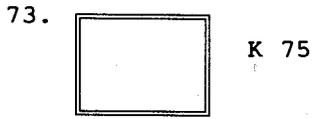
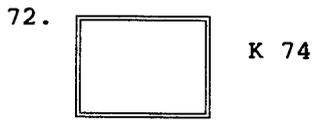
67.  K 69

68.  K 70

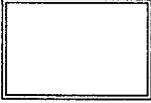
69.  K 71

70.  K 72

71.  K 73

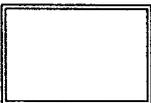


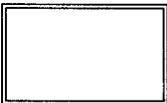
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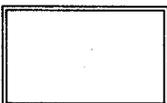
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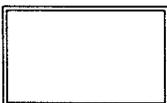
94.  K 16

95.  K 17

96.  K 18

97.  K 19

98.  K 20

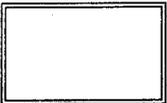
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100.  K 22

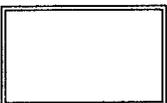
101.  K 23

102.  K 24

103.  K 25

104.  K 26

105.  K 27

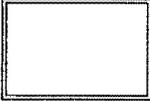
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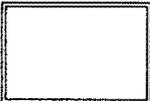
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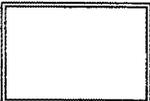
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109.  K 31

110.  K 32

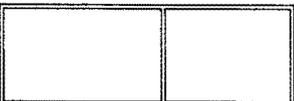
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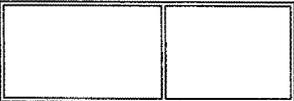
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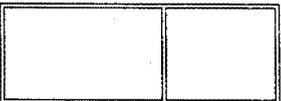
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114.  K 36

115.  K 37

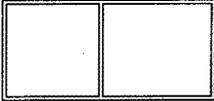
116.  K 38 - K 39

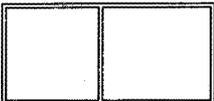
117.  K 40 - K 41

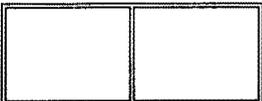
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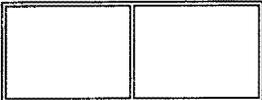
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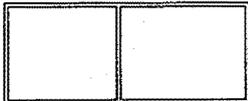
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K 47

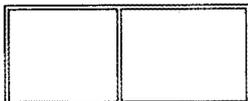
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K 49

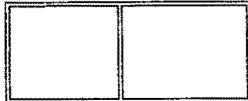
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K 51

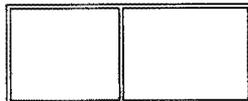
123.  K 52 -  
K 53

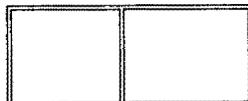
124.  K 54 -  
K 55

125.  K 56 -  
K 57

126.  K 58 -  
K 59

127.  K 60 -  
K 61

128.  K 62 -  
K 63

129.  K 64 -  
K 65

130.



K 66 - K 67

131.



K 68 - K 69

132.



K 70 - K 71

133.



K 72 - K 73

1. Your name [Surname and names in full] .....
2. School:.....
3. Class: 5A or 5B: .....
4. Sex: Boy or Girl .....

We have spent some time together in this class. I hope we all know each other by names.

In the given spaces write the names of four [4] classmates you would choose as friends.

Remember: Write only names of children in your classroom.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....