CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes methods and techniques used to conduct an in-depth investigation into the learning culture of resilient schools within rural communities in Mpumalanga. Attention is given to the research design of the current study including data collection methods such as observations, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires and sampling of participants. This chapter also describes how data was analysed. I used a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of participants about the learning culture of resilient schools in the Mpuluzi circuit. In qualitative research, experience is studied holistically. Therefore, the aim was to explore the learning culture as experienced by teachers, learners and parents.

4.2 CONTEXT OF STUDY

The culture of teaching and learning is lacking in many township and rural schools in South Africa and Mpumalanga in particular. Literature studies (Dekker & Schalkwyk 1995:461) ascribe this lack of the learning culture among learners to the fact that many learners were placed at the forefront of the liberation struggle in the mid-seventies. This struggle had negative effects on the culture of teaching and learning. Daily school routine in the majority of African schools was continuously interrupted by political actions such as strikes, protest marches and the destruction of property. According to Nemukula (2002:2) little did those behind the liberation struggle know about the negative impact it would have on the culture of teaching and learning.

The Department of Education, under the new democratic government realised that steps had to be taken to restore the culture of teaching and learning, which was and is still lacking in many of the previously disadvantaged schools in South Africa (Nemukula

2002:24). The main initiative taken by the Department of Education was the CULTURE OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND SERVICE (COLTS) campaign which was officially launched by the former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela in 1997.

At the beginning of his tenure as president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki identified education as a priority in the challenge of creating a prosperous and democratic society. While on the other hand, the former minister of Education, Kader Asmal, stated that the Department of Education was facing a critical challenge of building an education and training system for the 21st century.

In an effort to build an education system which meets the demands of the 21st century, the Department of Education initiated a national 'Call to Action' programme and one of its priorities was to improve the school effectiveness and teacher professionalism. What the Department of Education would like to see happening at schools, are the following:

- Schools playing a meaningful role in the community
- Schools maintaining resources and facilities in good condition
- Schools involving parents, teachers, learners and NGOs in school governance
- Teachers and learners observing school hours
- Compulsory attendance of every school lesson
- Schools not vandalised
- Punctuality by educators and learners

Despite all these efforts, schools in the rural area of Mpumalanga do not show signs of improvement. Learners do not begin the school day on time and do not remain at the school for the entire school day. There is a lack of discipline among learners. This tendency of being undisciplined has negatively affected the learner's academic achievement. The poor matriculation results are a clear indicator of academic failure. Teachers are demotivated and parents are frustrated and grieved about the situation.

Resources and facilities are invariably and inadequately provided and those available are in a poor condition. Despite exposure to an adverse environment, some schools in the

rural communities of Mpumalanga have developed into centres of learning and teaching. (I have personally observed a number of personally schools in the Mpuluzi circuit that are unable to function well despite having adequate resources). The fact that some rural schools manage to thrive in an adverse condition whereas other schools cannot poses the main research problem (1.1).

4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

4.3.1 The choice of qualitative research for this study

In pursuing an explanation for why some schools are maintaining the culture of learning while others in the same rural community are not, I applied an approach commonly known in the social sciences as qualitative research. The absence of clarity regarding the culture of learning of resilient schools in the rural communities of Mpumalanga, dictated that an exploratory methodology that would enable the problems explored and the questions asked to become more specific be used.

Qualitative research is typically considered appropriate for this study because of the following characteristics:

4.3.1.1 The researcher works in natural settings and tries to understand people from their own frame of reference

Qualitative research is concerned with setting as it is naturally occurs and it does not manipulate it. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:30) indicate that qualitative researchers are of the opinion that the behaviour of people under investigation can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs. Thus Miles and Huberman (1994:9) concur that the data collection activities are typically carried out in close proximity to a local setting for a sustained period of time. Hence this approach is sometimes called naturalistic inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:3; Schumacher & McMillan 1993:372; Borg

& Gall 1989:385). The setting has to be understood in the context of the history of the institutions of which they are part.

Johnson and Christensen (2000:312) argue that while observing, qualitative researcher tries not to draw attention to himself or herself. The researcher therefore tries to be unobstrusive so that he/she has little influence on the naturally occurring behaviour being studied. The researcher therefore tries to understand reality as others experience it. The researcher therefore includes personal experience and empathic insight as part of the relevant data. Qualitative research is therefore considered appropriate for the current study where the situation is specific to the area under investigation.

4.3.1.2 The researcher is the key instrument

The researcher is regarded as the key instrument for collection of data and that much depends on the researcher's ability to observe and to listen. In this research it became necessary for me to develop interpersonal skills and also to build a relationship of reciprocal trust and rapport with the key informants as the quality of the data depends on this rapport. Bogdan and Taylor (1975:46) indicate that if qualitative researcher wants his or her subjects to be open with him or her, he/she must be willing to reciprocate on the same level. This was also done in the current study.

4.3.1.3 Qualitative research aims to study the behaviour holistically

Qualitative research stresses a holistic view, that is, it attempts to gain a complete view of what is being studied. In accordance with Rudestam and Newton (1992:32) qualitative researchers seek to understand phenomena in their entirety in order to gain a complete understanding of a person, program or situation. This is in contrast to the experimental paradigm, which aims to isolate and measure narrowly defined variables and where understanding is tantamount to prediction and control.

4.3.1.4 Qualitative research is descriptive

Qualitative research is descriptive and analytic of people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:372). Qualitative research therefore relies primarily on the non-numerical data such as words and pictures (Johnson & Christensen 2000:19). The data is detailed, thick description, using quotations to capture people's personal perspectives and experiences (Patton 1990:40). Bogdan and Biklen (1992:30) concur that the written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. This makes qualitative research appropriate in this study especially where the salient issues are not sufficiently visible at the onset.

4.3.1.5 Small samples are used

Lemmer (1992:294) argues that although qualitative research does not exclude the use of large samples, most qualitative research use small samples hence such research focuses on the details and quality of individual or small group's experiences. This was also done in the present study.

4.3.1.6 Qualitative researcher is concerned with process rather than outcomes

Qualitative researchers are concerned with the process whereby certain behaviour is realised rather than merely with outcomes of behaviour.

4.3.1.7 Qualitative researcher analyses the data inductively

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:31) argue that qualitative researchers do not search out data or evidence to prove or disaprove hypotheses they hold before entering the study rather the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together. Nonyane (1996:61-65) maintains that this openness to find whatever there is to find permits the researcher to discover reality without having to fit into a preconceived

theoretical perspective. In this research I immersed in the details and specifics of the data to discover important categories, dimensions and interrelationships and this was done by exploring genuinely open questions rather than testing theoretically derived hypotheses.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

The methods I used for collecting data for this study are observation, questionnaires, focus groups and in-depth interviews with the key informants such as principals, teachers, learners and parents. These informants were considered to be likely knowledgeable about the culture of learning of their schools in the rural area of Mpumalanga.

4.4.1 Observation

In accordance with Becker and Geer (in Ackroyd & Hughes, 1981:98) participant observation is that method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study. Bogdan and Taylor (1975:5) maintain that participant observation refers to research characterised by a period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects.

With reference to the above-mentioned definitions I spent five months at the two selected schools observing, learning about daily behaviour of teachers and learners and recording my observations. My immersion in the natural setting allowed me to hear, see and begin to experience reality as the participants do.

During the first few days of observation I remained somewhat detached and my role as a researcher remained concealed. I remained as an observer and participated adequately to gain rapport with the teachers, learners and principals. Thus developing a better understanding of the group's functions and relationships

During the observation I recorded my observations in the notebook for analysis. The observations recorded were descriptive details about who, what, where, how and why an

activity occurred. These questions helped me to develop a focus. As a result, it became clear what to observe.

For example, in this study the factors, which make the culture of learning possible, were observed. These were as follows:

- Punctuality
- Observance of full school hours
- Compulsory attendance of every school lesson
- Sufficient work and regular assessment
- Morning and afternoon study
- Regular visits to schools by Circuit manager and Curriculum implementors
- Role of Governing Bodies in terms of school governance
- Safety of learners in the school
- Discipline
- Interaction among teachers and learners
- Handling of school assets.

4.4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were part of the instruments used for data collection for this study. This instrument was used to obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of participants of the learning culture of resilient schools in the rural areas of Mpumalanga.

4.4.3 Interviews

I conducted interviews with the principals, teachers, learners and parents who are serving on the School Governing Body. The purpose of the interviews was to find out what was in and on the principals, teachers, learners and parents' mind regarding the learning culture of resilient schools in the rural area of Mpumalanga. Thus interviews allowed me to enter into the participant's perspective and managed to make it explicit. These

interviews were semi-structured to allow participants to talk about whatever they considered important and relevant to the study.

The interviews were classified according to the extent to which enable me to vary the content and the order of questions to allow the participants to express their perceptions as much as possible. The types of interviews used were semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus group interviews. These types of interviews are briefly discussed as follows:

4.4.3.1 Semi-structured interview

In this study, semi-structured interviews with the two principals, six teachers and four parents were conducted to explore their perceptions of the culture of learning of their schools. In this regard, I developed an interview schedule to help me to consider the aspects which should be taken care of. Questions were open -ended to provide flexibility in terms of responses and the questions asked and to respond to circumstances at hand.

This flexibility helped me to delve deeply into the subjective areas of the participant's mind in an attempt to discover their real perceptions of the learning culture of resilient schools. Their responses were recorded on the tape recorder to ensure the reliability and transcription of actual data during the data analysis.

4.4.3.2 Focus group interview

I conducted one focus group interview with three teachers in each selected secondary schools and also one focus group interview with the two parents at School B. No focus group interview was conducted with parents at school A. Thus, a total of three focus group interviews were conducted.

Facilitating and conducting a focus group interview requires considerable group process skills. It is important to know how to manage the interview so that one or two people do

not dominate it and that those participants who tend not to be verbal are able to share their views. This factor was taken care of. Each participant was allowed to express his or her views equally.

Their responses were recorded on tape recorder and later transcribed for closer examination. Field notes were also accumulated. Data analysis and interpretation of the findings took place simultaneously and not only after data had been collected.

The focus group interviews with all these participants were less than an hour. I was able to gather much information from a number of people instead of only one person. It was enjoyable to all participants.

4.5 STATEMENT OF SUBJECTIVITY

The researcher in qualitative research is the instrument and the validity of the research depends on the competence, skills and rigour of the researcher (Patton 1990:14). As a researcher in this study, the characteristics of my own background could constitute important point of difference between me and the participants. On the other hand, my background could also facilitate data gathering. I adopted a stance of disciplined subjectivity with regard to factors such as my status and the different languages spoken. For the purpose of this study, I would like to describe my own background.

4.5.1 Status

As a principal of a school and the chairperson of the Mpuluzi Principal Council, I thought that my high status would assist my participants to speak freely. I began this study by observing the participants at the two selected secondary schools in order to develop a closer relationship with them. This approach assisted the teachers, principals, learners and parents as participants in this study to speak freely and provided me with greater insights concerning the learning culture of resilient schools. As a result, I spent some time with the participants before I began with the interview process. When the interview process

began, I had already developed good relationships with all participants. We knew each other well and my status did not affect the study because of the rapport which I developed with them.

4.5.2 Language

The participants and I are of the same cultural background. We all speak the same language. The cultural background that prevailed between the participants and me contributed enormously toward the open conversations during the interviews. This was the case especially with the parents because they were unable to speak English. The fact that I spoke the same language as participant had eliminated most of the problems that could have emerged during the interview process.

4.6 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

4.6.1 Background to this study

Before I embarked on the actual data collection process, three explorative meetings were held with the two principals of secondary schools and the circuit manager of Mpuluzi circuit. These officials of the Department of Education are all stationed in the Mpuluzi area in Mpumalanga. The meetings aimed at exploring issues such as how and why certain schools in the Mpuluzi circuit are functional while similar schools in the same rural community fail and also how to make schools become more functional. The interviews with these three officials were conducted separately in their respective offices. Several questions in the form of semi-structured interviews were posed. While the interviews were in progress, their responses were recorded in writing.

These explorative meetings with the officials provided me with valuable background information and understanding of resilient schools and its learning culture at the local level.

Furthermore, I piloted the interview guide at one of the secondary school in the Mpuluzi circuit prior to going to the selected schools. During the pilot study, it became clear to me that the learners were unable to communicate freely with me in English. As a result, I compiled questionnaires, which were later distributed among the two learners.

This exercise provided me with the art of interviewing and questionnaire construction. It helped me to identify which questions were difficult for participants to interpret correctly and those difficult to understand were redesigned prior to the actual data collection process. I then developed the final interview guide and questionnaires after the pilot study had been completed.

4.6.2 Selection of schools and negotiation of access

The research was conducted at two secondary schools in the Mpuluzi circuit. There are eleven secondary schools in the Mpuluzi circuit. For in-depth study, only two secondary schools were selected. The selection criteria were as follows:

- Resiliency
- Geographical position of the schools
- Matric results of previous years.

These schools were selected according to criteria of resiliency. They managed to withstand rural hardships and histories to ensure that the culture of learning occurs. These secondary schools are situated in different areas. Therefore, the geographical position of these schools was considered to locate the study in typical rural communities. The matric results of previous years were considered in terms of performance and the schools were selected as follows:

- The highly performing school (70% as cut-off mark)
- The average performing school (between 40 –50% as cut-off mark)

At each of the two secondary schools, a principal, three teachers, twelve learners and two parents were interviewed. Thus, a total of 34 participants were interviewed. The parents and learners as participants were selected through snowball sampling.

The circuit manager granted me the permission to conduct this study in the two selected schools in the Mpuluzi circuit after I had forwarded my application for this project. I also wrote letters to the selected schools requesting for permission to observe them during working hours. The selected schools were provided with copies of the letter from the circuit manager on arrival.

4.6.2.1 School A

I chose to conduct research in School A because of the following reasons. It is situated in the area where I live and is walkable. No financial implications were incurred. The school is in the rural area of Mpumalanga and appeared to be functional despite exposure to all sorts of adversities and rural background. I have been a long time resident of Mpuluzi and have observed the functionality of the school on a daily basis. As a result, the residents as well as teachers of this community know me very well. I was therefore accepted and welcomed at this school. The school was also selected because of its good performance in producing good matric results and is selected according to criteria of resiliency, therefore classified as highly performing school and also excels in extra mural activities such as sports and music in this circuit and provincially. I also considered the geographical position of the school. The Mpuluzi circuit is divided into three areas. School A is situated in area 'one'. In this area there are three secondary schools including School A and School A is the best among the two schools in area 'one' in terms of matric results (Table 3.4 first from bottom).

4.6.2.2 School B

Out of five schools in the Mpuluzi area 'two', I chose to conduct research in School B because of the following reasons: The school is the oldest school in the area and has thrived under difficult circumstances. I observed the functioning of the school while I was teaching in one of the secondary schools in the area for the past fifteen years. During those years I gained a lot of experience of what transpired in the school as some of my colleagues were attached to the school. Despite exposure to limited and inadequate resources and facilities, the school produced good matric results when compared to other schools in the area. The distance from my place of residence to the school is less than ten kilometres. Therefore, it was easier to reach the school.

4.7 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

I decided to choose principals, teachers, learners and parents who are serving on the School Governing Body (SGB) in the current study because these individuals were likely considered to be knowledgeable and informative about the learning culture of their schools in the rural area of Mpumalanga. These participants were chosen from two secondary schools in the Mpuluzi circuit and consisted of two principals, six teachers, twenty four learners and four parents.

The principals identified parents and teachers after I indicated to them that I preferred teachers with a minimum of three years teaching experience in grade 12 at their respective schools and parents who serve on the SGB. During the orientation of the ten selected teachers, four of them indicated that they would prefer to be exonerated from this study for varied reasons. As a result, I was left with six teachers as participants in this study.

Learners as participants were selected by means of snowballing. In this regard, I asked the principals who were the participants to identify learners in grade 12 for participation in this study.

4.8 DATA GATHERING

LeCompte and Preissle (1993:158) show that the complexity and variability of human life in its natural habitat mandates that those who study it, must collect rich and diverse data. Having considered the issues of validity and reliability, I employed more than one data collection strategies.

4.8.1 Observation in schools

Before I began the actual data collection process, the Department of Education, in response to my application for conducting a study in the two selected schools in the Mpuluzi circuit, granted me the permission to observe schools. In May 2002, I went to the selected schools for observations. I spent six weeks in each school in order to observe what transpires in these resilient schools. A number of aspects and situations were observed such as the behaviour of both teachers and learners in terms of teaching and learning, the management of schools and its governance. During the process of observations, I posed several questions to teachers and learners in passing. These questions helped me to get clarity on certain aspects which were observed. I recorded my observations in the field notebook. As I have already developed rapport with the participants, they behaved as they used to before my arrival. As a result, I managed to observe their behaviour in a natural setting. I had already developed a checklist for observation. I used it as a guide to help me to consider the aspects of study which should be taken care of.

4.8.2 Interviews

I conducted interviews with the principals, teachers, learners and parents in order to elicit relevant information with regard to the culture of learning of resilient schools in the rural area of Mpumalanga. The following section discusses briefly how each interview was conducted:

4.8.2.1 Interviews with teachers

At school A and B, I firstly interviewed three teachers individually on different days when they were not in class. These teachers were all teaching grade 12. Secondly, I distributed questionnaires among the same three teachers who were interviewed before to fill them out. They completed it in my presence. Thirdly, after analysing their responses, I interviewed the three educators together in the form of a focus group interview in order to stimulate a conversation. In total, two focus group interviews were held with teachers. These interviews were recorded on the tape recorder and transcribed later for examination.

4.8.2.2 Interviews with principals

The principals were interviewed individually during the day in their respective offices. The interviews were semi-structured. Their responses were recorded on the tape recorder in order not to miss a word of them and were later transcribed for close examination. The principals were also given questionnaires to complete in order to compare the spoken and written responses to ensure the validity of data. The questionnaires were completed in my absentia and returned on the next day.

4.8.2.3 Interviews with parents

In conducting interviews with parents, I made use of semi-structured interviews. I used an interview guide to ask specific open-ended questions in order to elicit the main points during the interviews. However, I did not follow the order of questions as they were. Therefore, the parents were able to talk about what was considered important to them.

The focus group interviews with parents were conducted at the school and home of each parent and were conducted during the day and in the afternoon. At school 'A' a focus group interview was conducted with two parents who serve on the school governing body. This focus group interview was conducted during the day, as these parents were

unemployed. At school B two parents who also serve on the school governing body were interviewed together at the home of one parent in the afternoon. This was mainly because one parent was employed while the other one was unemployed. Therefore, a total of two focus group interviews were held with parents.

Interviews with parents were recorded on the tape recorder and their responses were later transcribed for close examination. I also took field notes in order to help me to facilitate the process of transcription as well as data analysis and interpretation.

4.8.2.4 Interviews with learners

About twenty four questionnaires were distributed among twenty four learners at both School 'A' and 'B'. They all completed it in my presence.

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Johnson and Christensen (2000:317) in qualitative research, the researcher collects data from several individuals and depicts their experience of something. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 224) maintain that what is at issue during data analysis is to make sense of the data in ways that facilitate the continuing unfolding of the inquiry and understanding of the phenomenon being studied in its context. With regard to this study, I analysed data on a daily basis as data were collected and transcribed. Data collected from the interviews and questionnaires were critically analysed. Data analysis in this study involved coding, categorising and clustering.

Coding refers to the process of dividing data according to a classification system (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:486). Categorising on the other hand refers to a stage where the identified codes, which talk about the same thing, are grouped together. I developed a coding system to organise data into units. Developing a coding system in this study involved several steps:

- searching through data for regularities and patterns for topics data cover

- Writing down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:166), these words and phrases are coding categories. I used them to sort the descriptive data I collected so that the material bearing on a given topic were physically separated from other data. Some coding categories came up while collecting data and were jotted down for future use.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Poggenpoel and Schurink (1998:342) mention five stages in data analysis as follows:

- Organising the data;

- Generating categories, themes and patterns;

- Testing the emerging hypotheses against the data;

- Searching for alternative explanations of the data;

- Writing the report.

These stages were followed in this study. According to Best & Kahn (1993:203) in qualitative research, qualitative data analysis involves organising the data before the formal analysis can begin. I also organised and re-read the data for several times, that is, from the beginning to end. This approach helped me to be familiar with data in intimate ways. LeCompte and Preissle (1993:235) maintain that scanning the data may help the researcher to fill in critical gaps left accidentally in the collecting or recording of data.

During the reading process, I listed on note cards the data available and performed the minor editing necessary to make field notes retrievable, thus sorting out what seems overwhelming and unmanageable. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed into a master file. Data collected from the interviews and questionnaires were repeatedly studied and categorised into themes. The interview transcriptions and data collected through observations were compared with the data gathered by the questionnaires and the literature. The data analysis for this study involved using both narrative reconstruction of the participants' accounts and the categorisation of personal accounts into themes that

emerged. I used colour coding where each page of the transcripts is coded at the margin. A one colour strip for each category was used.

Guba (in Patton 1990:403) states that the process of category generation involves looking for recurring regularities in the data These regularities represent patterns that can be sorted into categories of meaning held by participants in the setting. Marshall and Rossman (1995:114) state that when categories of meaning emerge the researcher should search for those that have internal convergence and external divergence, that is, the categories should be internally consistent and distinct from one another. When analysing the data I employed inductive reasoning to discover relationships or patterns through close scrutiny of the data.

A pattern, according to Schumacher and McMillan (1993:495) is a relationship among categories. As I developed categories, I looked for patterns or relationships among them. As LeCompte and Preissle (1993:237) state that patterns emerge once a researcher has established the categories within which the data are organised and has sorted all bits of data into relevant categories. This suggests that related categories be grouped together, thus serving as a frame of reference. This was done in this study. Consequently, I organised the data collected into readable and narrative descriptions. I translated the responses of parents into English to make it accessible to a wider public.

4.10 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In an effort to enhance reliability in data collection for this study, the following strategies were combined to reduce threats to reliability: verbatim accounts, mechanically recorded data, member checking and participant review.

Strategies that have increased the validity for this study are briefly discussed below:

The data collection period for this study comprised of five months. The validity of information in this study was primarily determined by the extent of the participants'

willingness to share with me freely their experiences about the learning culture of resilient schools in the rural communities of Mpumalanga in an atmosphere of trust. All participants voluntarily shared their experiences with me and I gained a high level of rapport.

This was a lengthy period, which accorded me with enough opportunities for continual data analysis, comparison, and corroboration to refine ideas and ensure the match between research-based categories and participant reality.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:48) state that reliability in qualitative research is viewed as the fit between what is record as data and what has actually occurred in the setting under study and not the literal consistency across different observations.

Field research was conducted. Participant observation, questionnaires and in-depth interviews were conducted in natural settings that reflect the reality of the learning culture of resilient schools in the rural communities of Mpumalanga.

Qualitative researchers are concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their data. To ensure reliability, all data collected were critically analysed and uniformly interpreted during the investigation.

4.10.1 Triangulation of methods

I used a triangulation of methods to enhance the validity of data. When using triangulation of methods, the researcher uses more than one method of data collection in a single research study (Johnson & Christensen 2000:212). Johnson and Christensen (2000:213) further assert that when combining two or more methods the researcher will have better evidence because the weakness and strengths of one method will tend to be different from those of a different method. To ensure validity of data, a triangulation of methods such as interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and observations were used in this study.

4.11 LIMITATIONS TO THIS STUDY

The current study does not claim to identify all issues associated with the culture of learning of resilient schools in a rural context, neither does it propose to generalise its findings to other rural areas in South African schools. However, this research aims at gaining some understanding of the complexity of the problem and the extent of the culture of learning of resilient schools as experienced by teachers, learners and parents. In this way an understanding and the knowledge of the resilient schools in the rural areas of Mpumalanga can become more explicit.

4.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the rationale for the choice of a qualitative approach for the study of the learning culture of resilient schools in the rural community of Mpumalanga. This chapter also dealt with the methods used in collecting the data such as observations, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. It also described the research design and data analysis of this study. The data gathered and consequently analysed will be presented and discussed in chapter 5.